

**A
History
of
Muslim Philosophy**

**With short accounts of other
Disciplines and the Modern
Renaissance in the Muslim Lands**

**Edited and Introduced by
M. M. SHARIF
Director of the Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore Pakistan**

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**A History of Muslim Philosophy Volume 1, Book 1:
Pre-Islamic Philosophical Thought**

Preface

About four years ago I received a letter from Mr. S. M. Sharif, Educational Adviser to the Government of Pakistan and now Secretary in the Ministry of Education, drawing my attention to the fact that there was no detailed History of Muslim Philosophy in the English language and inviting me to draw up a scheme for the preparation of such a History. The scheme prepared by me envisaged the collaboration of eighty scholars from all over the world. The blue-prints of the plan were placed by Mr. S. M. Sharif before the Government of Pakistan for approval and provision of funds. The Cabinet by a special ordinance deputed me to edit the History, and appointed a Committee consisting of the following to steer the scheme through:

Mr. I. I. Kazi, Vice-Chancellor, University of Sind (Chairman)

The Educational Adviser to the Government of Pakistan (Member)

Mr. Mumtaz Hasan, then Secretary Finance, Government of Pakistan, and now Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission (Member)

Dr. Khalifah Abdul Hakim, Director, Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore (Member)

Dr. Serajul Haque, Head of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies. University of Dacca (Member)

Professor M. Abdul Hye, Vice-Principal, Government College, Rajshahi (Member)

Myself (Member-Secretary)

The Committee was later enlarged by the addition of Dr. M. Ahmed, Vice-Chancellor, Rajshahi University.

But for the initiative taken by Mr. S. M. Sharif and the constant help and encouragement received from him, a liberal grant from the State, and most willing co-operation from the Chairman and members of the Committee, it would not have been possible for me to bring this work to completion.

From the very beginning I have been aware of the sheer impossibility of doing full justice to such a vast canvas of movements, thinkers, and thoughts. I am most grateful to the large number of contributors who have made at least the outlines of the entire picture possible.

As this is the first major work on the history of Muslim philosophy it is bound to have many deficiencies, but a beginning had to be made and it has been made with the hope that it will pave the way for future improvements.

In a collaboration work like this complete uniformity of language, style, and points of view, and evenness of quality and length, are hard to achieve. How-ever, efforts have been made to keep disparity in these matters as well as in transliteration, capitalization and punctuation as much within bounds as pos-sible. Credit for whatever merits these volumes have must go to those who have joined this venture; responsibility for whatever faults it may have is mine.

I wish to express the Committee of Directors' deep gratitude to Asia Founda-tion for its gift of the paper used in this work, and my personal thanks to its Representative in Pakistan,

Mr. Curbs Farrar, for the keen interest evinced by him throughout the course of its preparation.

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In the end I have to note with great regret that two of the contributors to the work,

Dr. Khalifah Abdul Hakim of Pakistan who was also a member of the Committee of Directors and Dr. Mecdut Mansuroglu of Turkey, have passed away. May their souls rest in peace!

Lahore: August 1, 1961

M. M. Sharif

Introduction

Introduction by the Editor, M.M Sharif, M.A, Director, Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore (Pakistan)

A

Histories of philosophy have been invariably written in the light of the philosophies of history presupposed by their authors. The result of this has been that errors vitiating their philosophies of history have crept into and marred their histories of philosophy. In the present work our effort has been to steer clear of these errors.

Instead of reading history in the mirrors of presupposed philosophies which may give distorted images, it is the study of history itself through which the dynamics of history can be clearly seen and its laws discovered. We hope this study of Muslim philosophy and the empirical survey of its course will spot-light at least some of the misconceptions current among philosophers and historians about the nature of history and the laws governing it.

It will perhaps be generally agreed that human nature is fundamentally the same the world over. All human beings and the cultures they develop have the same fundamental needs, customs, impulses, and desires which, organizer as personalities, determine their march towards their personal and social goals.

The fundamental nature of men being the same, the basic laws of cultural development and decay always remain the same. But owing to different environmental conditions, cultural groups evolve differently in different parts of the world and thousands of years of indigenous experience give those groups their own social and psychological character; and their character in response to environmental stimuli creates all the differences that appear in their re-spective life-histories.

Muslim society forms a single cultural group. It has been subject to the same laws of growth and decay as any other cultural group, but it has also developed some peculiar features of its own.

B

Philosophers of social history individually differ in their views about the universal laws of history. There is a group of fourteenth/twentieth-century philosophers of history who believe that social history is like a wave, it has a rise and then it falls never to rise again, and view a society or a culture as an organ-ism which has only one cycle of life.

Like the life of any individual organism, the life of a culture has its childhood, maturity, old age, and death, its spring, summer, winter, and autumn. Just as a living organism cannot be revived after its death, even so a culture or a society can see no revival once it is dead. Biological, geographical, and racial causes can to a limited extent in-fluence its life-course but cannot change its inevitable cycle.

To this group belong Danilevsky, Spengler, and Toynbee. Our study of Muslim culture and thought supports their view that in certain respects the dynamism of society is like the dynamism of a wave; but are the two other doctrines ex-pounded by these philosophers equally true? First, is it true that

a given society is a living organism? And, second, is it true that it has only one un-repeated life-course?

Let us first take the first. Is a society or a culture an organism? Long ago Plato took a State to be an individual writ large. Not the same, but a similar mistake is being made now. All analogies are true only up to a point and not beyond that point. To view a society on the analogy of an individual organism is definitely wrong.

As Sorokin has brilliantly shown, no society is so completely unified into an organic whole that it should be viewed as an organism. An individual organism is born, it grows and dies, and its species is perpetuated by reproduction, but a culture cannot repeat itself in species by reproduction. Revival of individual organism is impos-sible, but the revival of a culture is possible.

It is achieved by the activization of its dormant vitality, by responses aroused by fresh challenges, and by the infusion of new elements. The first revival of Muslim culture-its revival after the Mongol onslaughts which began when hardly half a century had passed and reached its full fruition in two centuries and a half-was partly due to its inherent vitality which could not be sapped completely even by these unprece-dented events.

They seemed to affect total devastation of Muslim lands, but in fact could produce only a depression. Soon rain-bearing clouds gathered and these lands were again green and teeming with life. Though the challenge itself was the strongest the world has ever seen, it was, nevertheless, not strong enough to destroy all response.

This revival of the Muslim culture was partly due to the infusion into it earlier of the fresh blood of the Turkish slaves and mercenaries and later that of the Mongol conquerors, for they themselves came into the fold of Islam bringing with them the vigour and vitality of their nomadic ancestors.

Each individual organism is a completely integrated whole or a complete Gestalt, but though such an integration is an ideal of each cul-ture it has never been fully achieved by any culture. Each culture is a super-system consisting of some large systems such as religion, language, law, philo-sophy, science, fine arts, ethics, economics, technology, politics, territorial sway, associations, customs, and mores.

Each of these consists of smaller systems as science includes physics, chemistry, biology, zoology, etc., and each of these smaller systems is comprised of yet smaller systems as mathematics is comprised of geometry, algebra, arithmetic, and so on. Besides these systems there are partly connected or wholly isolated heaps within these systems and super-systems.

Thus, a total culture of any organized group consists not of one cultural system but of a multitude of vast and small cultural systems that are partly in harmony, partly out of harmony, with one another, and in addi-tion many congeries of various kinds.

No past empire was as well-knit as the Umayyad Caliphate of Damascus and yet groups like the Kharijites and the Shiites fell apart from its total structure.

After the fall of the Umay-yads in the religious field there appeared some isolated groups like the Qarma-tians and the Isma'ilites, and in the political sphere Muslim Spain became not only independent of but also hostile to the `Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad under which Muslim culture and thought may be said to have reached their golden prime.

So much about the organismic side of the theory of Danilevsky, Spengler, and Toynbee when examined in the light of the history of Muslim culture and thought. What about its cyclical side? Is the life of a people like a meteor, beginning, rising, falling, and then disappearing for ever? Does the history of a society or a culture see only one spring, one summer, and one autumn and then, in its winter, completely close?

The philosophers of history men-tioned above, except Spengler, concede that the length of each period may be different with different peoples and cultures, but, according to them, the cycle is just one moving curve or one wave that rises and falls only once.

This position also seems to be wrong. As the researches of Kroeber and Sorokin have conclusively shown, "many great cultural or social systems or civilizations have many cycles, many social, intellectual, and political ups and downs in their virtually indefinitely long span of life, instead of just one life-cycle, one period of blossoming, and one of decline."

In the dynamics of intellectual and aesthetic creativity, Egyptian civilization rose and fell at least four times and Graeco-Roman-Byzantine culture, several times.

Similarly, China and India had two big creative impulses and the third has now surely begun. The Muslim civilization rose from the first/seventh to the fifth/eleventh century. Then it gradually declined till it received a deadly blow in the form of the Mongol onslaughts. Its chief monuments of political and cultural greatness were almost completely destroyed. And yet it did not die.

It rose again and saw its second rise from the last decade of the seventh/thirteenth century to the end of the eleventh/seventeenth century during which period its domain covered three of the biggest empires of the world-Turkish, Persian, and Indian-only to fall again from the beginning of the twelfth/eighteenth to the middle of the thirteenth/nineteenth century; and as this study will clearly indicate there are now signs of a third rise in almost all Muslim lands (Book Eight).

This shows that there is "no universal law decreeing that every culture having once flowered must wither without any chance of flowering again." A culture may rise in one field at one time, in another field at another, and, thus, as a whole see many rises and falls.

In both periods of its rise Muslim culture was marked by its religio-political and architectural ascendancy; but while in the first period its glory lay also in its commercial, industrial, scientific, and philo-sophical fields, in the second it distinguished itself chiefly in the fields of poetry, painting, secular history, travels, mysticism, and minor arts.

If by the birth of a civilization these writers mean a sudden appearance of a total unit like that of an organism, and by death a total disintegration, then a total culture is never born nor does it ever die.

At its so-called birth each culture takes over living systems or parts of a preceding culture and integrates them with newly-born items. As the reader of this work will find, Muslim culture integrated within itself what it regarded as the intrinsically or pragmatically valuable parts of Arab Paganism, Hellenism, Judaism, Christianity, Hindu mathematics and medicine, and Chinese mysticism and alchemy with its own contributions to human life and thought.

Again, to talk about the death or disappearance of a culture or civilization is meaningless.

A part of a total culture, its art or its religion, may disappear, but a considerable part of it is always taken over by other groups by whom it is often developed further and expanded. The Muslims did not only annex certain areas of other cultures but they expanded their horizons much further before annexing them as integral parts of their own culture. Here it is important to remove a misconception.

If some thought of earlier speculation runs through the fabric of Muslim thought even as a golden thread, it does not mean that, like many Western Orientalists, we should take the thread for the fabric. No culture, as no individual thinker, makes an absolutely new start. New structures are raised with the material already produced. The past always rolls into the present of every culture and supplies some elements for its emergent edifice.

States are born and they die, but cultures like the mingled waters of different waves are never born as organisms nor die as organisms. Ancient Greece as a State died, but after its death a great deal of Greek culture spread far and wide and is still living as an important element in the cultures of Europe.

Jewish States ceased to exist, but much of Jewish culture was taken over by Christianity and Islam. No culture dies in toto, though all die in parts. In respect of those parts of culture which live, each culture is immortal.

Each culture or civilization emerges gradually from pre-existing cultures. As a whole it may have several peaks, may see many ups and downs and thus flourish for millennia, decline into a latent existence, re-emerge and again become dominant for a certain period and then decline once more to appear again. Even when dominated by other cultures a considerable part of it may live as an element fully or partly integrated in those cultures.

Again, the cycle of birth, maturity, decline, and death can be determined only by the prior determination of the life-span of a civilization, but there is no agreement among these writers on this point. What according to Danilevsky is one civilization, say, the ancient Semitic civilization, is treated by Toynbee as three civilizations, the Babylonian, Hittite and Sumeric, and by Spengler as two, the Magian and Babylonian.

In the life-history of a people one notices one birth-and-death sequence, the other two, and the third three. The births and deaths of cultures observed by one writer are not noticed at all by the others. When the beginning and end of a culture cannot be determined, it is extravagant to talk about its birth and death and its unrepeatable cycle.

A civilization can see many ups and downs and there is nothing against the possibility of its regeneration. No culture dies completely. Some elements of each die out and others merge as living factors into other cultures.

There is a group of fourteenth/twentieth-century philosophers of history who confine themselves to the study of art phenomena and draw conclusions about the dynamics of culture in general. Peter Paul Ligeti, Frank Chambers, and Charles Lalo belong to this group.

We may not quarrel with them about some of their conclusions; but should like to make an observation about one of their hypotheses—a hypothesis on which the study of Muslim thought throws considerable light.

According to most of them, it is always the same art and the same type or style of art which rises at one stage in the life-history of each culture: one art or art form at its dawn, another at its maturity, and yet another at its decline, and then gradually both art and the corresponding culture die. We do not accept this conclusion. The life-history of Greek art is not identical with that of European art or Hindu or Muslim art.

In some cultures, like the Egyptian, Chinese, Hindu, and Muslim, literature; in some others such as the French, German, and English architecture; and in the culture of the Greeks, music blossomed before any other art.

The art of the Paleolithic people reached the maturity and artistic perfection which did not correspond to their stage of culture. In some cultures, as the Egyptian, art shows several waves, several ups and downs, rather than one cycle of birth, maturity, and decline.

Unlike most other cultures, Muslim culture has given no place to sculpture and its music has risen simultaneously with its architecture. Its painting is not an art that developed before all other arts. It was in fact the last of all its artistic developments. Thus, it is not true that the sequence of the rise of different arts is the same in all cultures.

Nor is it true that the same sequence appears in the style of each art in every culture. Facts do not support this thesis, for the earliest style of art in some cultures is symbolic, in others naturalistic, formal, impressionistic, or expressionistic.

Another group of the fourteenth/twentieth-century philosophers of history avoid these pitfalls and give an integral interpretation of history. To this group belong Northrop, Kroeber, Shubart, Berdyaev, Schweitzer, and Sorokin. Northrop, however, weakens his position by basing cultural systems on philosophies and philosophies on science.

He ignores the fact that many cultural beliefs are based on revelations or intuitive apprehensions. Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu cultures have philosophies based on revelation as much as on reason. The source of some social beliefs may even be irrational and non-rational, often contradicting scientific theories.

Kroeber's weakness consists in making the number of geniuses rather than the number of achievements the criterion of cultural maturity. Schweitzer rightly contends that each flourishing civilization has a

minimum of ethical values vigorously functioning, and that the decay of ethical values is the decay of civilizations.

Neither the collapse of the Cali-phate of Baghdad was caused entirely by the Mongol invasions nor was the ruin of the Umayyad Caliphate of Spain affected by the attacks of Christian monarchs of the north; nor indeed was the second decline of the Muslim world due merely to the imperialistic designs of Western powers.

These were only contributory factors to these downfalls. The basic conditions of the rise and fall of nations invariably arise from within.

In each case the real cause was the lowering of moral standards brought about by centuries of luxury and over-indulgence in worldly pleasures, resulting in disunity, social injustice, jealousies, rivalries, intrigues, indolence, and sloth-all the progeny of fabulous wealth- and in the case of the second decline from about 1111/1700 to 1266/1850, all- round moral degeneration combined with conformism of the worst type dead-ening all original thought.

Without this moral downfall there would have been no cultural decline in Islam.

As it has been said before a culture may rise in one field at one time, in another field at another, but while it may be rising in one field it may yet be declining on the whole. The politico-social rise or fall of a culture necessarily goes with its moral rise or fall. But the case seems to be different with intellectual development.

A people may decline in the politico-social sphere and yet its decline may itself under suitable circumstances become a stimulus for its intellectual advance.

The political and moral decline of the `Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad began in about the middle of the third/ninth century, and the collapse of the Umayyad Caliphate of Spain and decadence of the Fatimid Caliphate of Egypt in the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century. Yet the deep-rooted tradition of the patronage of learning in the Muslim world kept its intellectual achievements rising from peak to peak right up to the time of the Mongol devastation.

Thus, despite its downfall in other fields, in the field of learning Muslim culture saw its ascendancy right up to the middle of the seventh/thirteenth century. In fact this period of political and moral fall--the period during which Muslims everywhere lost their solidarity and the three Caliphates broke into petty States or sundry dynasties--was exactly the period when the Muslim intellect reached its full flowering.

It was during this period of political and moral decline that flourished such illustrious philosophers as al-Farabi, ibn Sina, Miskawaih, ibn Hazm, al-Ghazali, ibn Bajjah, ibn Tufail, ibn Rushd, and Fakhr al-Din Razi; the famous mystic Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi; great political philosophers like al-Mawardi and Nizam al-Mulk Tusi; renowned scientists and mathematicians like al-Majriti, ibn Yunus, ibn Haitham, ibn al-Nafis, al-Biruni, al-Bakri, al-Zarqah, `Umar Khay-yam, ibn Zuhr, and al-Idrisi; and such celebrated literary figures as al-Tabari, al-Masudi, al-Mutanabbi,

Firdausi, Baqillani, Sana'i, al-Ma'arri, Nasir Khusrau, al-Zamakhshari, Kashani, Niyami, `Attar, and ibn al-Athir.

Though three celebrities, Rumi, Sa'di, and Nasir al-Din Tusi, died long after the sack of Baghdad, they were actually the products of this very period and much of their works had been produced within it.¹ When moral degeneration sets in, a culture's intellectual achievements may stray but cannot avert the evil day.

In this example there is a lesson for those who are using their high intellectual attainments for the conquest even of the moon, Venus, and Mars, for they may yet be culturally on the decline, if superabundance of wealth leads them to luxury, licence, and moral degradation on the whole.

C

In the Introduction to the History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western, it is complained that histories written since the beginning of the thirteenth/nine-teenth century suffer from the defect that they ignore all developments in philosophy before the time of the Greeks.

This complaint, or rather indict-ment, is perfectly justified, not only in the case of the historians of the thir-teenth/nineteenth century but also of those of the twelfth/eighteenth century. Every thinker of these two centuries understood history as if it were identical with Western history.

They viewed history as one straight line of events moving across the Western world; divided this line into three periods, ancient, medieval, and modern; and lumped together the Egyptian, Indian, Chinese, and Babylonian civilizations, each of which had passed through several stages of development, in the briefest possible prelude (in some cases covering not even a page) to the Graeco-Roman period designated as "ancient."

Histories of other civilizations and people did not count, except for those events which could be easily linked with the chain of events in the history of the West. Toynbee justly describes this conception of history as an egocentric illusion, and his view is shared by all recent philosophers of history.

Whatever their differences in other matters, in one thing the twentieth-century philosophers of history are unanimous, and that is their denunciation of the linear concep-tion of progress.

We associate ourselves with them in this. Just as in biology progress has been explained by a trend from lower to higher, or from less per-fect to more perfect, or from less differentiated and integrated to more differ-entiated and integrated, similarly Herder, Fichte, Rant, and Hegel and almost all the philosophers of the twelfth/eighteenth and thirteenth/nineteenth cen-turies explained the evolution of human society by one principle, one social trend, and their theories were thus stamped with the linear law of progress.

The present-day writers criticism of them is perfectly justified in respect of their view of progress as a line, ascending straight or spirally, whether it is Fichte's line advancing as a sequence of certain values, or Herder's and Kant's from violence and war to Justice and peace, or Hegel's to ever-increasing free-dom of the Idea, or Spencer's to greater and greater

differentiation and integ-ration, or Tonnie's advancing from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft, or Durkheim's from a state of society based on mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity, or Buckle's from diminishing influence of physical laws to an increasing influence of mental laws, or Navicow's from physiological determination to purely intellectual competition, or any other line of a single principle explaining the evolution of human society as a whole.

Every civilization has a history of its own and each has its own ancient, medieval, and modern periods. In most cases these periods are not identical with the ancient, medieval, and modern periods of Western culture starting from the Greek. Several cultures preceded the Western culture and some start-ing earlier are still contemporaneous with it.

They cannot be thrown into oblivion because they cannot be placed in the three periods of the cultures of the West, ancient, medieval, and modern. Western culture is not the measure of all humanity and its achievements. You cannot measure other cultures and civilizations or the whole of human history by the three-knotted yardstick of progress in the West.

Mankind consists of a number of great and small countries each having its own drama, its own language, its own ideas, its own passions, its own customs and habits, its own possibilities, its own goals, and its own life-course. If it must be represented lineally, it would not be by one line but several lines or rather bands of variegated and constantly changing colours, reflecting one another and merging into one another.

While the learned editors of the History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western, have endeavoured to remove one flaw in the treatment of ancient history, they have failed to remove similar flaws in the treatment of what the Western writers designate as the "medieval" period of history.

A very large part of this period is covered by the phenomenal rise and development of Muslim thought which carried human achievement in the intellectual field, as in many other fields, to one of its highest peaks.

For this the most glorious part of medieval history not more than four out of forty-eight chapters have been assigned in the history of Philosophy, Eastern and Western.

Nor, indeed, has even a word-been said about the well-recognized role of Muslim philosophy in transmitting Greek thought to the West, in advancing human knowledge, in supplying a mould for the shaping of Western scholasticism, in developing empirical sciences, in bringing about the Italian-Renaissance, and in pro-viding stimulus to the speculation of Western thinkers from Descartes to Kant.

More-over, in the account given of the "modern" period of history, the philosophical achievements of the East, except those in India, have been completely omitted. The reader of this historical work gets the impression that from the time of Descartes to that of Sartre, i.e., the present day, the East, outside India, intellectually ceased to exist.

It is true that the History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western, is not alone characterized by these omissions. The same gaps, even more yawning, are found in the histories of philosophy written by Western scholars; but

while in the works of the Westerners they are understandable, in those of the eastern scholars they are unpardonable.

Nevertheless, in this particular case they became unavoidable for the able editors did intend to have some more chapters on Muslim philosophy, but the writer to whom these chapters were assigned-was also a minister of the State holding an important portfolio and his heavy official duties left him no time to write them.

D

The history of Muslim thought throws a flood of light on the logic of history. A controversy has gone on for a long time about the laws that govern historical sequences. Vico in the twelfth/eighteenth century contended, under the deep impression of the lawfulness prevailing in natural sciences, that historical events also follow one another according to the unswerving laws of nature. The law of mechanical causality is universal in its sway.

The same view was held by Saint Simon, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx and in recent times by Mandelbaum and Wiener. On the other hand, idealists like Max Weber, Windel-band, and Rickert are of the view that the objects of history are not units with universal qualities; they are unique, unrepeatable events in a particular space and a specific time.

Therefore, no physical laws can be formed about them. Historical events are undoubtedly exposed to influences from biological, geo-logical, geographical, and racial forces; yet they are always carried by human beings who use and surmount these forces. Mechanical laws relate to facts but historical events relate to values.

Therefore the historical order of laws is dif-ferent from the physical laws of mechanical causation. To us it seems that both the groups go to extremes. The empiricists take no account of the freedom of the will and the resolves, choices, and goals of human beings and the idealists forget that even human beings are not minds, but body-minds; and though they initiate events from their own inner resources, they place them in the chain of mechanical causality.

It is true that historical events and the lives of civilizations and cultures follow one another according to the inner laws of their own nature, yet history consists in the moral, intellectual, and aesthetic achievements of individuals and groups based on resolves and choices, using causation-a divine gift-as a tool, now obeying, now revolting against divine will working within them aid in the world around them, now co-operating and now fighting with one another, now falling, now rising, and thus carving their own destinies.

E

The thought of Hegel and of Marx is having a great influence on the deve-lopment of the philosophy of history. As is well known, Hegel is a dialectical idealist.

The whole world for him is the development of the Idea, a rational entity, which advances by posing itself as a thesis; develops from itself its own opposite, antithesis; and the two ideas, instead of constantly remaining at

war, get united in an idea which is the synthesis of both; and this synthesis becomes the thesis for another triad and thus triad after triad takes the world to higher and yet higher reaches of progress.

Thus, the historical process is a Process of antagonisms and their reconciliations. The Idea divides itself into the "Idea-in-itself" (the world of history) and the "Idea-in-its-otherness" (the world as nature). Hegel's division of the world into two watertight compartments has vitiated the thought of several of his successors, Rickert, Windle-band, and Spengler, and even of Bergson.

If electrons, amoebas, fleas, fishes, and apes were to speak, they could reasonably ask why, born of the same cosmic energy, determined by the same laws, having the same limited freedom, they should be supposed to be mere nature having no history.

To divide the world--stuff into nature and history is unwarranted. History consists of sequences of groups of events, and we have learnt since Einstein that objects in nature are also groups of events.

There is no essential difference between the two. The only difference is that up to a certain stage there is no learning by experience; beyond that there is. According to Hegel, the linear progress of the Idea or Intelligence, in winning rational freedom, culminates in the State, the best example of which is the German State. Such a line of thought justifies internal tyranny, external aggression, and wars between States.

It finds no place in the historical process for world organizations like the United Nations or the World Bank and is falsified by the factual existence of such institutions in the present stage of world history. Intelligence is really only one aspect of the human mind, and there seems to be no ground for regarding this one aspect, the knowing aspect, of only one kind of the world -stuff, i.e., mankind as the essence of the world -stuff.

The mind of one who rejects Hegel's idealism at once turns to Marx. Marxian dialectic is exactly the same as Hegel's. But, according to Marx, the world-stuff is not the Idea, but matter. He uses this word, matter, in the sense in which it was used by the thirteenth/nineteenth-century French materialists.

But the idea of matter as inert mass has been discarded even by present-day physics. World-stuff is now regarded as energy which can take the form of mass. Dialectical materialism, however, is not disproved by this change of meaning of the word "matter." It can still be held in terms of a realistic dialectic-the terms in which the present-day Marxists hold it.

With the new terminology, then, the Marxist dialectic takes this form: Something real (a thesis) creates from within itself its opposite, another real (antithesis), which both, instead of warring perpetually with each other, get united into a synthesis (a third real) which becomes the thesis of another triad, and thus from triad to triad till, in the social sphere, this dialectic of reals leads to the actualization of a classless society.

Our objection to Hegel's position that he does not find any place for international organizations in the historical process does not apply to Marx,

but the objection that Hegel considers war a necessary part of the historical process applies equally to him.

Hegel's system encourages wars between nations; Marx's between classes. Besides, Marxism is self-contradictory, for while it recognizes the inevitability or necessity of the causal law, it also recognizes initiative and free creativity of classes in changing the world.

Both Marx and Hegel make history completely determined, and completely ignore the most universal law of human nature, the law that people, becoming dissatisfied with their situation at all moments of their lives except when they are in sound sleep, are in the pursuit of ideals and values (which before their realization are mere ideas); and thus if efficient causes push them on (which both Hegel and Marx recognize), final causes are constantly exercising their pull (which both of them ignore).

Our recognition of final causes as determinants of the course of history leads us to the formulation of a new hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, human beings and their ideals are logical contraries or discrepant in so far as the former are real and the latter ideal, and real and ideal cannot be attributed to the same subject in the same context. Nor can a person and his ideal be thought of in the relation of subject and predicate.

For, an ideal of a person is what the person is not. There is no essential opposition between two ideals or between two reals, but there is a genuine incompatibility between a real and an ideal. What is real is not ideal and whatever is ideal is not real.

Both are opposed in their essence. Hegelian ideas and Marxist reals are not of oppo-site nature. They are in conflict in their function. They are mutually warring ideas or warring reals and are separated by hostility and hatred.

The incom-patibles of our hypothesis are so in their nature, but not in their function, and are bound by love and affection and, though rational discrepant, are volitional-ly and emotionally in harmony. In the movement of history real selves are attracted by ideals, and then, in realizing them, are synthesized with them.

This movement is dialectical, but it is totally different from the Hegelian or Marxist dialectic. Their thesis and antithesis are struggling against each other. Here, one is struggling not "against" but "for" the other. The formula of the dynamic of history, according to this conception, will be:

A real (thesis) creates from within itself an ideal (antithesis) which both by mutual harmony get united into another real (synthesis) that becomes the thesis of another triad and thus from triad to triad. The dialectic of human society, according to this formula, is not a struggle of warring classes or warring nations, but a struggle against limitations to realize goals and ideals, which goals and ideals are willed and loved rather than fought against.

This is a dialectic of love rather than of hatred. It leads individuals, masses, classes, nations, and civili-zations from lower to higher and from higher to yet higher reaches of achieve-ment. It is a dialectic which recognizes an over-all necessity of a transcen-dentally determined process

(a divine order), takes notice of the partial free-dom of social entities and of the place of mechanical determination as a tool in divine and human hands.

This hypothesis is not linear because it envisages society as a vast number of interacting individuals and intermingling, interacting classes, societies, cul-tures, and humanity as a whole, moving towards infinite ideals, now rising, now falling, but on the whole developing by their realization, like the clouds constantly rising from the foot-hills of a mountain range, now mingling, now separating, now flying over the peaks, now sinking into the valleys, and yet ascending from hill to hill in search of the highest peak.

This hypothesis avoids the Spencerian idea of steady progress, because it recognizes ups and downs in human affairs and rises and falls of different civilizations and their thought at different stages of world history.

It avoids measuring the dynamics of history by the three-knotted rod of Western cul-ture and does not shelve the question of change in human society as a whole. It leaves the door of future achievement open to all and does not condemn certain living cultures to death.

Briefly stated, the hypothesis to which the study of Muslim thought, as the study of Muslim culture as a whole, lends support has a negative as well as a positive aspect.

Negatively, it is non-organismic, non-cyclic, and non-linear; and, positively, it involves belief in social dynamics, in progress in human society through the ages by rises and falls, in the importance of the role of ethical values in social advance, in the possibility of cultural regeneration, in the environmental obstacles as stimuli to human action, in freedom and purpose as the ultimate sources of change, and in mechanical determinism as an instrument in divine and human hands.

F

The chief aim of this work is to give an account not of Muslim culture as a whole, nor of Muslim thought in general, but only of one aspect of Muslim thought, i.e., Muslim philosophy. But since this philosophy had its beginning in a religion based on philosophical fundamentals and it developed in close association with other spheres of thought, sciences, humanities, and arts, we have thought it desirable to give brief accounts of these other disciplines as well (Book Five).

Book Five has become necessary because in many cases the same thinkers were at once philosophers, scientists, and writers on the Humanities and Fine Arts.

Besides writing on philosophy al-Kindi wrote, to number only the main subjects, also on astrology, chemistry, optics, and music; al-Farabi on music, psychology, politics, economics, and mathematics; ibn Sina on medicine, chemistry, geometry, astronomy, theology, poetry, and music; Zakriya al-Razi on medicine and alchemy; al-Ghazali on theology, law, physics, and music; and the Ikhwan al-Safa on mathematics, astronomy, geography, music, and ethics.

Likewise ibn Haitham left works not only on philosophy but also on optics, music, mathematics, astronomy, and medicine, and Nasir al-Din

Tusi on mathematics, astronomy, physics, medicine, miner-alogy, music, history, and ethics. In Muslim Spain, ibn Bajjah wrote on philo-sophy, medicine, music, and astronomy; ibn Tufail on philosophy and medi-cine; and ibn Rushd on philosophy, theology, medicine, and astronomy. And what is true of these thinkers is true of a host of others.

In the Introduction to the History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western, to which reference has already been made it has been rightly observed that the histories of philosophy written before the nineteenth century might be aptly described as the histories of philosophers rather than the histories of philosophy.

But it seems to us that when a history aims at giving an account of theories and movements, it cannot do without dealing with philosophers, for the relation between them and the movements they start or the theories they propound is too intimate to allow their complete severance.

Therefore, in our endeavour to give a historical account of the movements, systems, and disciplines in Muslim thought we have made no effort to eliminate the treatment of indivi-dual philosophers where it has been called for. In this procedure we have fol-lowed the excellent example of T. J. de Boer who can be justly regarded as a pioneer in this most neglected field.

We have begun our treatment of the subject by giving in Book One a brief account of the whole field of philosophy in the pre-Islamic world in general and Arabia in particular. We have devoted Book Two to philosophical teachings of the Qur'an. This we have done with the express hope that these two books together will give the reader a correct idea of the real source of Muslim philo-sophy and enable him to view this philosophy in its true perspective.

Muslim philosophy like Muslim history in general has passed through five different stages. The first stage covers the period from the first first/seventh cen-tury to the fall of Baghdad. We have dealt with this period under the heading "Early Centuries." This is followed by a shock-absorbing period of about half a century. Its third stage is that of its second flowering treated under the heading "Later Centuries."

It covers the period from the beginning of the eighth/fourteenth to the beginning of the twelfth/eighteenth century. The fourth stage is that of the most deplorable decline covering a century and a half. This is in the truest sense the Dark Age of Islam. With the middle of the thirteenth/nineteenth century begins its fifth stage covering the period of the modern renaissance.

Thus, in the curve of its history, Muslim philosophy has had two rises and two falls and is now showing clear signs of a third rise.

We have said very little about the periods of decline, for these have little to do with philosophical developments. During the first period of its greatness Muslim philosophy shows four distinct lines of thought. The first is the theo-logico-philosophical line, the second is mystical, the third philosophical and scientific, and the fourth is that taken by those whom we have called the "middle-roaders."

These have been treated respectively in Book Three, Parts 1, 2, 3, and 4. In Book Four we have traced the same lines of thought running through the second rise of Islam in order to bring it in clear contrast with the first.

During both of these periods of Islamic rise, considerable activity is notice-able in other disciplines. We have dealt with all these in Book Five.

The period of modern renaissance in Islam, a brief account of which is given in Book Eight, is marked by political struggle for emancipation from foreign domination and freedom from conformism in both life and thought.

The philo-sophers of this period are not mere philosophers. They are more political lead-ers, social reformers, and men of action. Therefore, although chapters 72, 73, 74, 77, 80, and 83 contribute little to aca-demic philosophy, yet they throw a flood of light on the philosophies of life and history, and for that reason have been considered indispensable for our work.

So much about the past. But what about the present and how about the future? The position of philosophy amongst the Muslim peoples today is no worse than it is in the rest of the world. What type of philosophical thought the future has in store for them we shall try to forecast in our concluding re-marks.

Note

1. As Rumi's most important work, the Mathnawi, was written between 659/1261 and 670/1272, we have included him among writers of the centuries following the sack of Baghdad.

Chapter 1:Pre-Islamic Indian Thought

Pre-Islamic Indian Thought by C.A Qadir, M.A, Professor of Philosophy, Government College, Lahore (Pakistan)

Maurice Bloomfield says paradoxically in *The Religion of the Rig-Veda* that “Indian religion begins before its arrival in India.”¹ By this he means to imply that Indian religion is a continuation of the primitive faith of the Indo-European race to which the Aryans that came to India belonged.

“The Sanskrit word *deva* (to shine) for God is similar to the Latin word *deus*; *yaj* a Sanskrit word for worship is common to more than one Indo-European language; while the Vedic god *Mitra* has his counterpart in the Iranian god *Mithra*.”

From a comparative study of the beliefs and practices of the Teutonic, Hellenic, Celtic, Slavonic, Italian, Armenian, and Persian peoples which all sprang from the Indo-European race, it has been established beyond the slightest doubt that the basis of their religion was an animistic belief in a very large number of petty gods, each of which had a special function.

They were worshipped with sacrifice, accompanied with potent formulas and prayers. Magic was highly regarded and much used.

It is greatly regretted that there is neither any formal history nor any archaeo-logical remain to throw light on the early home of this ancient race or on the time when the great historical people hived off from it. Our principal source for the history, religion, and philosophy of the Indian branch is the Vedas besides the Epics and the Puranas.

The Vedas

Among the Vedas, the oldest is *Rg-Veda* which consists of more than a thousand hymns composed by successive generations of poets during a period of many centuries. The hymns are connected in various ways with the sacrifices, the domestic ceremonies, and the religious speculation of the time, and are concerned chiefly with the worship of gods, who represent personification of natural forces, and the propitiation of demoniac beings.

In the Indo-Iranian period the refreshing drink prepared from the soma-plant was offered to gods in a special ritual and the singing of a hymn was a necessary part of the ritual. The Aryans brought this custom with them and continued to compose verses for the sama-ritual and for the occasions of annual sacrifices in their new homeland. As the hymns were to be sung, a class of priests arose whose duty it was to recite poems of praise in honour of gods.

The priests who could sing better hymns and were in possession of a secret lore, which enabled them by conducting sacrifices in the right way to win the favour of gods for their patrons, were in great demand. Consequently, a number of priestly families vied with one another in composing hymns in the best language and metre then available.

The *Rg-Veda* gives evidence of seven such families each bearing the name of a patriarch to whom the hymns are ascribed.

At first the hymn collections of six families were brought together and then of nine. At a much later stage some scholars collected one hundred and

ninety- one poems which were taught as the last section of the oral curriculum of hymns. Thus, there became ten books of the Rg-Veda.

The mantras of the Atharva-Veda consist largely of spells for magical purposes and advocate pure and unalloyed polytheism. The other Vedas are entirely sacrificial in purpose. The Sama-Veda consists of verses borrowed from the Rg-Veda to be applied to soma-sacrifice. The Yajur-Veda consists of ritual formulas of the magical type.

For a long time the number of the Vedas was limited to three, the Atharva Veda being totally excluded from the group of the Vedas. In support of this contention the following verse from Manu can be cited: "From Agni, Vayu, and Ravi, He drew forth for the accomplishment of sacrifice the eternal triple Veda, distinguished as Rik, Yajush and Saman."² Similarly, in Satapatha Brahmanas it is said, "The Rik-Yajush-Saman verses are the threefold science."³

A probable reason for the exclusion of the Atharva-Veda from the Vedas is that "it consists mostly of magic spell, sorcery, and incantations which were used by the non-Aryans and the lower classes to achieve worldly goods such as wealth, riches, children, health, and freedom from disease The Atharva- Veda was recognized later on when hymns relating to sacrifices seem to have been added to it to gain recognition from the orthodoxy."⁴

Vedic Conception of God

The religion of the Vedas is polytheism. It has not the charm and grace of the pantheon of the Homeric poems; but it certainly stands nearer the origin of the gods. All gods whether great or small are deified natural phenomena. The interesting thing about them is that they are identified with the glorious things whose deifications they are and are also distinguished from them.

They are still thought of as being sun, moon, rain, wind, etc., yet each god is conceived as a glorious being who has his home in heaven and who comes sailing in his far-shining car to the sacrifice and sits down on the grass to hear his own praise recited and sung and to receive the offerings.⁵ The hymns sung by the priests were mainly invocations of the gods meant to accompany the oblation of soma-juice and the fire-sacrifice of the melted butter.

The Vedas are not consistent in their account of the gods. In one myth the sun is a male, in another- a female. The sun and the moon are mentioned in one place as rivals, elsewhere as husband and wife. The dog is extolled in one place as a deity and in another mentioned as a vile creature. Again the sun, the sky, and the earth are looked upon sometimes as natural objects governed by particular gods and sometimes as themselves gods who generate and control other beings.

In the Rg-Veda, heaven and earth are ordinarily regarded as the parents of gods, pitra⁶ or matra.⁷ In other passages heaven (dyaus) is separately styled as father and the earth (prithivi) as mother.⁸ At other places, however, they are spoken of as having been created.

Thus it is said,⁹ that he who produced heaven and earth must have been the most skilful artisan of all the gods. Again, Indra is described as having formed them, to follow him as chariot wheels do a horse. At other places the creation of the earth and the heaven is ascribed to Soma and Pushan.

Thus, while the gods are regarded in some passages of the Rg-Veda as the offsprings of heaven and earth, they are at other places considered independent of these deities and even their creators.

In various texts of the Rg-Veda the gods are spoken of as being thirty-three in number. Thus it is said in the Rg-Veda: "Come hither Nasatyas, Asvins, together with the thrice eleven gods, to drink our nectar."¹⁰ Again, "Agni, the wise gods lend an ear to their worshippers. God with the ruddy steeds, who lovest praise, bring hither those three and thirty."¹¹

In the Satapatha Brahmanas this number of thirty-three gods is explained as made up of eight vasus, eleven rudras, and twelve adityas, together with heaven and earth, or, according to another passage, together with Indra and Prajapati instead of heaven and earth.

The enumeration of gods as thirty-three is not adhered to throughout the Vedas. In the Rg-Veda, the gods are mentioned as being much more numerous: "Three thousand, three hundred, thirty and nine gods have worshipped Agni."¹² Thus verse which is one of the many shows that the Vedic Indian believed in the existence of a much larger number of supernatural beings than thirty-three.

The gods were believed to have had a beginning; they were stated to be mortal, but capable of overcoming death by the practice of austerity. The Rg Veda says that the gods acquired immortality by drinking soma. Still the gods are not self-existent or unbeginning beings.

It has been seen that they are described in various passages of the Rg-Veda as offsprings of heaven and earth. In various texts of the Rg-Veda the birth of Indra is mentioned, and his father and mother are also alluded to.¹³

The Vedic gods can be classified as deities of heaven, air, and earth:

1. Celestial Gods

The oldest god is Dyaus, generally coupled with Prithivi when the two are regarded as universal parents. Another is Varuna, the greatest of the Vedic gods besides Indra. It is he who sustains and upholds physical and moral order. In the later Vedas, when Prajapati became creator and supreme god, the importance of Varuna waned, and in the post Vedic period Varuna retained only the dominion of waters as god of the sky.

Various aspects of the solar activity are represented by five gods, namely, Mitra, a personification of the sun's beneficent power; Surya, the proper name of the sun, regarded as the husband of dawn; Savitri, the life-giving activity of the sun; Pusan, a pastoral deity personifying the bountiful power of the sun; and Visnu occupying the central place in this pantheon.

2. Atmospheric Gods

The most important of these gods is Indra, a favourite national deity of the Aryan Indians. He is not an uncreated being. It is said of him, "Thy father was the parent of a most heroic son; the maker of Indra, he also

produced the celestial and unconquerable thunder . . . was a most skil-ful workman.”¹⁴ Again, “A vigorous (god) begot him, a vigorous (son), for the battle; a heroic female (nari) brought him forth, a heroic soul.”¹⁵

His whole appearance is golden; his arms are golden; he carries a golden whip in his hands; and he is borne on a shining golden car with a thousand supports. His car is drawn by two golden steeds with flowing golden manes. He is famous for slaying Vrta after a terrific battle, as a result of which water is released for man and light is restored to him.

Certain immoral acts are also attributed to him. He occasionally indulges in acts of violence such as slaying his father or destroying the car of Dawn. Less important gods of this group are Trita, Apamnapat and Matarisvan. The sons of Rudra, the malignant deities of the Vedas, are the Maruts (the storm-gods) who help Indra in his conflicts. The god of wind is Vayu while that of water is Apah.

3. Terrestrial Gods

-Rivers are deified. Thus Sindu (Indus), Vipas (Bias), and Sutudri (Sutlej) are invoked in the Rg-Veda. The most important god is Sarasvati, often regarded as the wife of Brahma. Another very important god is Agni, the god of fire. The number of hymns addressed to him far exceeds those addressed to any other, divinity with the exception of Indra. In the Rg-Veda he is frequently spoken of as a goblin-slayer. Another god is Soma, the divine drink which makes those who drink it immortal. A priest says in the Rg-Veda: “We have drunk Soma, we have become immortal, we have entered into light, and we have known gods.”

In addition to these, there is a host of abstract deities and also deities of less importance which cannot be described here for want of space. Suffice it to say that an attempt was made by the sages (rsis) to introduce order in the bewildering multiplicity of gods. As several gods had similar functions, they were in some cases bracketed together, so that it might be said that when Indra and Agni performed identical functions, Agni was Indra or Indra was Agni.

Hence arose many dual gods. A farther effort in the direction of systematization was made through what Max Miller has called henotheism—a tendency to address any of the gods, say, Agni, Indra, Varuna, or any other deity, “as for the time being the only god in existence with an entire forget-fulness of all other gods.”

Macdonell has a different theory to explain the so-called henotheism by ascribing to it exaggeration, thus retaining the charge of polytheism against the Veda. Some modern Hindus under the influence of Swami Dayananda repudiate both these theories as inconsistent with the true spirit of the Vedas “¹⁶He is One, sages call Him by different names, e.g., Agni, Yama, Maarishvan.”¹⁷

No doubt, a few verses of this nature can be found in the Vedas; but the consensus of scholars is that monotheistic verses are a product of the later Vedic period and that they do not express the dominant strain of the Vedic thought. Shri Krishna Saksena in his chapter “Indian Philosophy” in A History of Philosophical Systems edited by V. Ferm says that the early

mantras contain a religion of nature-worship in which powers of nature like fire (agni) and wind (vayu) are personified.

In later hymns and the Brahmanas, monotheistic tendencies began to crop up a little. Swami Dayananda was a product of Hindu-Muslim culture and his insistence on monotheism shows the extent to which Muslim thought has influenced Indian religious beliefs.

Vedic Eschatology

The Rg-Veda makes no distinct reference to a future life except in its ninth and tenth books. Yama, the god of death, was the first of the mortals to die. He discovers the way to the other world; guides other men there, assembles them in a home, which is secured for them for ever. He grants luminous abodes to the pious and is an object of terror for the wicked.

Yama is said to have two insatiable dogs with four eyes and wide nostrils that act as his messengers and convey the spirits of men to the abode of their forefathers. After a person's dead body has been burnt, his spirit soars to the realm of eternal light in a car or on wings and enters upon a more perfect life which fulfils all of his desires and grants him unending happiness.

Since the Vedic gods did not have purely spiritual pleasures but were often subject to sensual appetites, it can be said that the pleasures promised to the pious in the world to come were not altogether spiritual. Yama is described as carous-ing with the gods,¹⁸ Gandharvas, a class of gods who are described as hairy like dogs and monkeys, often assume handsome appearance to seduce the earthly females.¹⁹ Indra is said to have had a happy married life.

Brahmanas

Each of the four Vedas has three sub-divisions: the Samhitas (sacred texts), the Brahmanas (commentaries), and the Aranyakas (forest books): The Brahmanas are, therefore, an integral part of the Vedas. Sayana, a great scholar of the Vedas, says, "Veda is the denomination of the Mantras and the Brahmanas."²⁰ (Swami Dayananda differs on this point.)

By the Mantras are meant hymns and prayers; and the Brahmanas are intended to elucidate objects which are only generally adverted to in the hymns. The Brahmanas comprise precepts which inculcate religious duties, maxims which explain those precepts, and arguments which relate to theology.

Considering the fact that the Brahmanas often quote from the Vedas and devote themselves to the clarification of the ritualistic and the philosophical portions of the Vedas, it may be concluded that the Samhitas must have existed in their present form before the compilation of the Brahmanas was undertaken.

In fact in the Brahmanas, we find fully developed the whole Brahmanical system, of which we have but faint indications in the Vedas.

We have the whole body of religious and social institutions far more complicated than the simple ritual of the Samhitas; four castes with the Brahmins at the top and the Sudras at the bottom have been recognized both in theory and in practice-all this shows that the Brahmanas must have been composed a long time after the Vedas.

It is, however, obvious that the Brahmanas were a kind of a scriptural authority for the Brahmanical form of worship and social institutions.

Upanisads

The third integral part of the Vedas, namely, the Aranayakas, intended for the study of the anchorites in the forests in the third stage of their life, led ultimately to the Upanisads or Vedantas as the concluding portion of the Vedas. These were meant for the ascetics in the fourth stage of their lives called the Sannyasa Asrama.

Literally, the word Upanisad means “a sitting besides.” i. e., a lesson taught by the teacher to the pupils sitting by his side. These discourses expounded in enigmatic formulae a series of esoteric doctrines to the selected few students, mainly Brahmins, who were deemed, fit to receive such a course of instruction.

Considering the age which gave birth to the Upanisads for understanding some of the major problems of life, one marvels at the depth and insight of the early Hindu seers. Their attitude towards the Vedas was not one of veneration; it was on the contrary an attitude of doubt and disrespect. While they considered Vedas to be of divine origin, they felt at the same time that the Vedic knowledge was inferior to the true divine insight and could not liberate them.²¹

They were not concerned with the world of phenomena and denounced with all the force at their disposal the rich and elaborate ritualism then pre-valent. Sacrifice, an integral part of the Vedic faith, had no significance for them. Their interest lay not in the outer world but in the inner and, within that, in the mystery of the self.

The introverted Brahmins were accordingly carried far beyond the realm of the anthropomorphic deities of the early Vedic period and devoted attention to that all-transcending principle from which all natural forces and events were supposed to proceed. The Upanisads, however, fall short of offering a coherent presentation of the Brahmanic doctrine of the Universal Soul-in-all-things. “This is only found in them in fragments, some small, some large. And in addition these fragments are the work of various schools and various ages. Those who have described the Upanisads as chaotic are not altogether wrong.”²²

It would be hard to say what philosophical opinions might not be supported on their authority, for the most part contradictory statements find a place in them, yet the tendency is on the whole towards pantheism. The Upanisads teach the identity of the soul of all beings both animate and inanimate with the Universal Soul. Since the Universal Soul dwells in all, one finds one's own self in all things, both living and non-living.

In this light alone can the meaning of the famous *tat tvam asi* (That art thou) of the Upanisads be understood. The human self is not a part of the Divine Self, but is the Brahman-Atman whole and undivided. The Self is consequently a single principle, which, philosophically speaking, can offer an explanation for the entire spectacle of nature.

It is often said that the pillars on which the edifice of Indian philosophy rests are Atman and Brahman. These terms have no fixed connotation in the

Upanisads. Generally speaking, Atman is used to designate self or soul, while Brahman is used to denote the primary cause of things.

What is remarkable about these terms is that though their significance is different, one denoting an inner world of subjectivity and the other an objective principle of explanation, yet in course of time the two came to be used interchangeably-both signifying an eternal principle of the universe.

The notion of the self was arrived at through introspection and it was thought by the Upanisads thinkers that the outer reality should correspond exactly with the psychical reality within. In this way what was simply a psychical principle came to be recognized as a world principle.

This strain of thought was supported by another which objectively traced the visible universe to a single source, namely, Brahman, and Brahman was identified with the Atman. Thus, two independent currents of thought met together and paved the way to monism of an idealistic type which has remained till now the hallmark of Indian philosophy.

By combining subjective and objective principles into one, the ultimate principle partook of the characteristics of both-it became infinite as well as spiritual. All this is very well expressed in Chandogya-Upanisad in a dialogue between a father and a son. The sum and substance of the story is that the primal spiritual principle is all-comprehensive and that the principle is no other than the self of the person then engaged in the discussion.

With regard to the nature of Brahman (the Absolute) there is a great divergence of opinion. At some places He is conceived as cosmic, i.e., all-comprehensive, at others acosmic, i.e., all-exclusive. Further, at some places Brahman is imagined as the impersonal Absolute without attributes; at other places he is recognized as the highest spiritual Being that unites all forms of perfection in Himself.

Hence it would be no exaggeration to say that though the Upanisads contain flashes of insight, yet they are not a self-contained homogeneous system and that they also lack completeness.

It is for this reason that Samkara believes that there are two types of doctrines in the Upanisads: esoteric, understanding God as the impersonal, unknowable Absolute without attributes, and the other exoteric, regarding God as a Person who manifests Himself in the various divinities.

The second interpretation of the Absolute as a Person led to the development of a theology largely theistic in spirit yet polytheistic in practice, since it sanctioned symbol-worship which expressed itself in various forms of idol-worship. The Upanisads are not, however, responsible for the excesses of later theology. In them breathes a spirit of monism. They preach a cult of mystical union with the Absolute, and suggest practical methods for its realization.

In the main the stress is laid upon complete detachment from all that is mundane and belongs to the world of phenomena. Accordingly, one finds in the Upanisads a whole series of sayings in which complete renunciation is recommended. "When all desires which are in his heart disappear, then man becomes immortal.

Here he has already reached Brahman. As the old slough of a snake lies on an ant-hill, so now does the body lie there.”²³ According to the Upanisads, the highest merit called Preryas, which consists in the realization of one's true self, can be reached through knowledge alone. The purpose of ethics, on the other hand, is quite distinct, namely, mundane good called Preyas which is reached by moral actions.

The two ends are consequently poles apart, one concerned with the timeless good and the other with the temporal and evanescent good. It is said in Katha-Upanisad²⁴ that the ethical and the spiritual goals are opposed to each other as light and darkness and cannot co-exist. A man has to renounce all activity for worldly goods if he wants to achieve spiritual unity with the Supreme Being. One cannot, therefore, select both knowledge and action as two ends of life, since the highest end must be -one and not many.

The ideal of detachment was emphasized by the Indian thinkers not only for the reason that it was necessitated by their theory of human deliverance, but also because they regarded the whole phenomenal world of names, forms, and plurality as maya or a mere unreality, an illusion having only a temporary reality which is transcended ultimately in the being of the Supreme Self.

The Upanisads demand the votaries of Brahma to ponder over the illusoriness and unreality of the world of senses and to extricate themselves from its temptations and enchantments by contemplation of a transcendental reality within the soul of each person. Thus can a person get to spiritual heights and achieve mukti or salvation.

Hence along with the renunciation of the phenomenal world another thing required is the concentration of the spirit on the supersensible reality. The Upanisads contain detailed instructions on this subject.

The aim is to reach a stage of ecstasy in which a person has the psychical experience of feeling one with the Ultimate Reality.

The ethics-negating tendencies, however, could not be maintained consistently in face of the demands and concrete realities of life. The ideal of human salvation as outlined by the Upanisads cannot be achieved easily and so many are destined to fail. This is realized by the Indian sages. “What is hard for many even to hear, what many fail to understand even though they hear: a marvel is the one that can teach it and lucky is its obtainer; a marvel is he that knows it when taught by the wise.”²⁵

The majorities are born again after death and can win release from the cycle of births and deaths through the performance of good deeds. Thus ethics rejected by Brahmanic mysticism enters through the doctrine of the Transmigration of Souls-a doctrine unknown to the Vedas.

The doctrine referred to above appears in connection with a myth. “All who depart from this world go to the moon. The waxing half fills itself with their lives; in the waning half it is effecting their rebirth. The moon is the gate of the heaven. He who knows how to reply to it, him it allows to pass by.

He who cannot reply, it sends him as rain down to the earth; he is reborn here and there according to his deeds and knowledge as worm, moth, fish, bird, lion, wild bear, jackal, tiger, man, or whatever it may be. For when a

man comes to the moon, the moon asks: 'Who art thou? 'Then he ought to answer: Iam thou'

If he speaks thus, then the moon lets him get away, out above itself."²⁶ One finds no reference to the myth in the Vedas. From this it is concluded that it is not Aryan in origin but belonged to the religious world of the aboriginal inhabitants of India.

The law which governs the kind of birth a soul is destined to have after each death is the law of karma, which signifies that nothing can happen in the moral world without a cause. But the recognition of the fact that moral events are caused by antecedent factors cannot explain the palpably indemonstrable and poetic way in which the moral causes are believed to operate.

Those moral causes can work in samsara, that is to say, in a series of births and deaths, all of which do not necessarily pertain to human beings, is a hypothesis of a very doubtful nature and utility.

That the doctrine of reincarnation is incon-sistent with the Brahmanic mysticism of the identity of the individual with the Universal Soul goes without saying. Instead of the doctrine that every individual soul returns to the Universal Soul after inhabiting the body once, we are required to believe in a theory which starts from new premises al-together.

This theory is based on the supposition that souls are prisoners in the world of sense and can return to their Primal Source not at once after their first death, as required by the theory of mystical absorption of the Brahmins, but after undergoing a long process of reincarnation necessitating a series of births in the animate and inanimate realms.

Schweitzer thinks²⁷ that the acceptance of this doctrine created insuperable difficulties for Hindu thought. On the older hypothesis of mystical reunion with the Divine Source it was easy to explain world redemption on the assumption that all souls return-ed to their Source after their death.

But if the theory of reincarnation is accepted, world redemption becomes possible only if all souls reach the level of human existence and become capable of acquiring that knowledge and conduct which is required for liberation and of which human beings alone are capable.

The Epic Period - Two great events belong to this period. The first is the expedition of Rama from Oudh to Ceylon to recover his wife Sita who had been carried off by Ravana, the king of that island, and the second is the struggle for supremacy between two rival Ksatriya groups, the Pandavas and the Kauravas, in which Lord Krsna played a significant part.

Rama is an avatar, i. e., a divine incarnation of Visnu, who being the pre-saver of the universe had to leave his celestial abode very often and to assume different forms in order to destroy evil and establish truth. The purpose of this avatar was to kill the ten-headed Ravana, who had pleased the mighty gods through his austerities and as a result had received a boon from them which was that he could not be killed by any god.

Feeling secure, he started a campaign of terror against both gods and men. The gods ap-proached Brahma who had granted immunity to Ravana. He remarked that Ravana could be killed by a god assuming the form of a

man since Ravana had not been granted immunity from mankind. Visnu undertook to be born as a man to rid the world of evil.

He was accordingly born in the house of a king, Dasaratha by name, who ruled over Ayodhya and bore the name of Rama. As he came of age he married Sita, who “was an incarnation of Laksmi, Visnu's wife, and was born of no woman but of mother earth herself, and was picked up by Janaka from a paddy field.”²⁸

Rama became the victim of court intrigues, and for fourteen years had to suffer exile in jungles from where Sita was carried off by Ravana. To rescue Sita from the clutches of Ravana, Rama contracted military alliance with ganuman, the king of monkeys, with whose active support he reached Ceylon and learnt the secrets of Ravana's power from a brother of Ravana. Then ensued a fierce battle in which the armies suffered losses.

At last Ravana came out and met Rama in a single combat. “Each like a flaming lion fought the other; head after head of the ten-necked one did Rama cut away with his deadly arrows, but new heads ever rose in place of those cut off, and Ravana's death seemed no wise nearer than before. The arrows that had slain Maricha and Khara and Bali could not take the king of Lanka's life away.

Then Rama took up the Brahma weapon given to him by Agastya, the Wind lay in its (weapon's) wings, the Sun and Fire in its head, in its mass the weight of Meru and Mandara. Blessing that shaft with Vedic Mantras, Rama set it with his mighty bow and loosed it and it sped to its appointed place and cleft the breast of Ravana and, bathed in blood, returned and entered Rama's quiver.”²⁹

The most popular avatar of Visnu is Lord Krsna, whose main object was to kill Kansa, a demon born of a woman, and who was well known for his childish tricks and many practical jokes on milk-maids. He was, however, a great warrior and a strategist. He killed many demons and kings.

Bhagavad-Gita - It was Lord Krsna who sang the Bhagavad-Gita (the song celestial) to Arjuna, giving the most widely accepted view of life among the Hindus. Says Mahatma Gandhi, “I find a solace in the-Bhagavad-Gita that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount. When disappointment stares me in the face and all alone I see not a ray of light, I go back to the Bhagavad--Gita. I feel a verse here and there and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies, and if they have left no scar on me I owe it all to the teachings of the Bhagavad-Gita.”

According to Sankaracharya, a great scholiast, the main function of the Gita is to epitomize the essentials of the whole Vedic teachings. A knowledge of its teachings leads to the realization of all aspirations. The real purpose of this great song, as Zimmer thinks,³⁰ is to harmonize the non-Brahmanical pre-Aryan thought of aboriginal India with the Vedic ideas of the Aryan invaders.

The Gita, therefore, “displays a kaleidoscopic interworking of the two traditions that for some ten centuries had been contending for the control and mastery of the Indian mind. Its teachings are founded upon the Upanisadic principle of an all-unifying, transcendental reality, but they also

accommodate not only the gods of the earlier Vedic pantheon but also the philosophic and devotional formulae of the non-Aryan and aboriginal tradition.

It was not an easy task. The Gita had to pick up scattered and heterogeneous material to reconcile the irreconcilable tendencies of that age and to present a unified view of life. Little wonder that the attempt has appeared to the Western scholars as no better than an ill-assorted cabinet of primitive philosophical opinions.³¹

There were the Vedas with their belief in multiple divinities; there were the Upanisads with their revolt against the ritualism of the Vedas and their anthropomorphic conception of gods; there was the doctrine of renunciation; and finally there were the Sanikhya and the Yoga principles. And if we add to them the heretical tendencies, particularly those represented by Buddhism, we realize how confusing the situation was and what an uphill task Lord Krsna had before him.

It would be futile to look for a consistent and neat metaphysical system in the Gita, for the Gita is not primarily a book of recondite and abstruse thinking, written with the object of presenting a world-view. It has a much loftier purpose, which is to relate the broad principles of metaphysical reality to the fundamental aspirations of mankind. This is not accomplished through abstract reasoning which only a few can understand but by selecting a specific situation involving a moral dilemma and pointing out how it is overcome.

The occasion was a battle between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The latter were led by Arjuna whose spirits were unmanned and who felt reluctant to start the battle seeing on both sides his friends, relations, and teachers who were likely to be killed in the event of a war. At this juncture his charioteer who was none other than Lord Krsna himself addressed to him the Song Celestial, propounding to him as well as to the whole of mankind the Yoga of selfless action (karma-yoga).

The significance of this teaching will become obvious if we refer to the two ideals which were prevalent then: one, the negative one of renunciation and the other, the positive one, of active life. The first recommended complete withdrawal from the work a day world and the second encouraged living in society undertaking all the obligations implied thereby.

The object of the Gita is to discover a golden mean, to reconcile as it were the claims of renunciation and active participation in the affairs of society. This is done through the doctrine of karma-yoga which means doing one's duty without the thought of consequences.

“Giving up or carrying on one's work, both lead to salvation; but of the two, carrying on one's work is the more excellent,” says Lord Krsna in the Bhagavad-Gita. He also says, “Neither does man attain to (the state of) being without work by undertaking no work, nor does he reach perfection by simply shunning the world.” What is required is a spirit of detachment where the heart of a person is free from the outward motives to action. “Thy interest shall only be directed to the deed, never to the fruits thereof,” says Lord Krsna.

A natural consequence of this theory is that even what is judged as evil from human standards can be approved of, if the agent feels that the task selected by him is one which must be fulfilled. “Even if a thorough scoundrel loves me and nothing else, he must be deemed good; for he has well resolved.”³² “Even if thou wert the most sinful of all sinners, yet thou wouldst pass over all guilt with the boat of knowledge alone.”³³ With these words Arjuna is urged to fight against his relations, for his killing would not be an evil: it would be a necessary consequence of the duty he has to discharge.

The ethics of detachment as preached by the Gita is laudable no doubt, but, as Schweitzer says, “It grants recognition to activity, only after activity has renounced natural motives and its natural meaning.”³⁴ An action loses its significance when it ceases to be purposive. The Gita raises a voice of protest against the soul-killing and life-negating cult of renunciation, but it has not gone far enough.

Renunciation remains when the end of an activity is no concern of a person. “The Bhagavad-Gita has a sphinx-like character. It contains such marvellous phrases about inner detachment from the world, about the attitude of the mind which knows no hatred and is kind, and about loving self-devotion to God, that we are wont to overlook its non-ethical contents.”³⁵

The Heterodox Systems

Among the systems which defied the authority of the Vedas may be mentioned the Carvaka, Jainism, and Buddhism:

1. The Carvaka

This system seems to be fairly old. It is mentioned in the Rg-Veda, the Epics, and the Bhagavad-Gita. The main work on the system, the Brhaspati-Sutra (600 B.C.), is lost and its teachings have to be reconstructed from criticism of it in other works.

The Carvaka is a non-Vedic, materialistic, and anti-supernaturalistic doctrine which holds that only this world exists and there is nothing beyond. There is no future life. Madhava Acharya says in Sarvadarsanasangraha, “The efforts of Carvaka are indeed hard to be eradicated, for the majority of living beings hold by the refrain:

While life is yours, live joyously;
None can escape Death's searching eye:
When once this frame of ours they burn,
How shall it e'er again return?”³⁶

“The mass of men, in accordance with the Sastras of policy and enjoyment are found to follow only the doctrine of Carvaka. Hence another name for that school is Lokayata - a name well accordant with the thing signified.”³⁷

The four elements alone are the ultimate principles and these are earth, water, fire, and air. Only the perceived exists; the unperceivable does not exist, simply for the reason of its never having been perceived. The only source of knowledge and the criterion of validity is perception. Every other

source including that of inference is rejected. Inferential knowledge involves inductive relations and can never be demonstrably certain.

Empirical generalizations may possess a high degree of probability, but their operation in unknown cases can never be guaranteed. To avoid this difficulty, if it is maintained that the empirical laws connect the common features of the particular instances observed by a person, the Carvaka objects to it by saying that such a course would leave the particulars unrelated and that it is the particulars alone which matter.

As against the Upanisads which postulated five elements, the Carvaka admits of only four discarding the fifth one, viz., space. The whole universe including souls is interpreted strictly in terms of these elements. The self is nothing but the physical body as characterized by sentience. "The soul is but the body characterized by the attributes signified in the expressions, I am stout, I am youthful, I am grown up, I am old, etc. It is not something other than that body)." ³⁸

The Carvaka rejects outright all types of spiritual values and has faith in the present world only. "There is no world other than this; there is no heaven and no hell; the realms of Siva and like regions are invented by stupid impostors of other schools of thought ...

The wise should enjoy the pleasures of this world through the proper visible means of agriculture, keeping cattle, trade, political administration, etc." ³⁹ The authority of the Vedas is repudiated not only on the ground that their teachings are irrational, but also because of the inconsistencies which render it impossible to know what they really teach.

The Carvaka is a protest against the excessive spirituality of the early Brahmanic thought. It recognizes neither god nor conscience. It cares not for a belief in the life to come. Hence the ethical ideal is pleasure in this life and that too of the individual.

Since the main trend of Hindu thought: has been idealistic, the Carvaka system has contributed very little to the sum of Indian thought, ⁴⁰ and this is rather unfortunate. In view of the fact that the Vedas, the Upanisads, and the Gita reject the evidence of the senses as illusory, the Carvaka contention might have served as a corrective.

2. Jainism

Jainism, according to Tomlin, ⁴¹ is the most perplexing of all religions, for it is not only incredible but also impracticable. It denies life to the extent of recommending suicide as the most sacred act of which man is capable, and yet it has survived for two thousand years.

The founder of Jainism, Mahavira, was born in a Ksatriya family. His father was a wealthy person belonging to a religious sect which was opposed to the Vedas. This school of thought had materialistic tendencies and sceptical attitude very much akin to that of Carvaka. But it was not a thoroughgoing materialism.

It shared with the masses the horror of rebirth and advocated slow suicide through starvation as a remedy against transmigration. Mahavira's father got his wife converted to his viewpoint and in due course shared with her the martyrdom they desired.

Before following the example of his parents, Mahavira embarked upon a quest of wisdom and adopted an ascetic life. After two years of abstinence and self-denial he withdrew himself from civilized life and dispensed with all the amenities of life including those of clothing. During the first six years of his peregrination, he observed frequent fasts of several months duration.

He voluntarily exposed himself to be maltreated by the Mlechcha tribes of Vajrabhumi and Lat who abused and beat him, and shot arrows at him, and baited him with dogs, to all of which he offered no resistance. At the end of the ninth year, Mahavira relinquished his silence, but continued the practice of self-mortification.

The whole of the time spent by him in these preparatory exercises was twelve years and six months, and of this he fasted nearly eleven years.

The Jains have a tradition that saviours are sent to the world whenever mankind is plunged in corruption and sin. Mahavira was twenty-fourth in the line.

Mahavira denied the divine origin and infallible authority of the Vedas. His religion is, therefore, reckoned as a heterodox religion. Its cosmology and anthropology is non-Aryan. While Brahmanism is the representative of Vedic-Aryan thought and beliefs, Buddhism, Jainism, and a host of other doctrines relate themselves to the native genius and expose the pessimistic dualism which underlies so much of Indian philosophy.

Jainism is a philosophy of the profoundest pessimism. It visualizes the world as a round of endless rebirths, full of sufferings and entirely useless. One shall have to pass through periods of inconsequential pleasures and unbearable pains unless one obtains a release through austerities and self-abnegation.

In the Jaina-Sutras, suicide is called “the incomparable religious death,” requiring in some cases a whole life-time to cultivate a proper frame of mind for its performance.

It is essential that all types of longings including those of death be completely eradicated from one's consciousness. Hence one has to bring about one's extinction in a mood beyond both desire and aversion.

As regards the philosophy of Jainism, it may be said that an eternal and presiding First Cause forms no part of this system, nor do the Jains admit of soul or spirit as distinct from the living principle. They do believe in the independent and eternal existence of spirit and matter, but by spirit they do not mean universal spirit as they have no faith in the Supreme Soul.

The spirits called jivas are eternal but limited and variable because of which they can adjust themselves to the size of the body they happen to inhabit. Their essence is knowledge which is not empirical or sensory. As a matter of fact, perception is a check upon the absolute sight of the soul. In order that the soul may regain its true nature, it is necessary that limitations imposed by the senses be done away with.

The Jains believe in both transmigration and karma. The latter operates by itself. Being a subtle particle of matter, it enters the soul and soils it. Hence no supreme being in the form of God is required to allot rewards and punishments.

Mahavira says, “The world is without bounds like a formidable ocean; its cause is action (karma) which is as the seed of the tree. The being (jiva) invested with body, but devoid of judgment, goes like a well-sinker ever downwards by the acts it performs, whilst the disembodied being which has attained purity goes ever upwards by its own acts like the builder of a palace.”⁴²

Ajiva, the second predicate of existence, comprises objects or properties devoid of consciousness and life. It is regarded as five-fold. Out of these, matter is atomic in the final analysis. It possesses the qualities of colour, taste, odour, and touch.

All the atoms are supposed to possess souls so that the whole universe seems to be pulsating with life. Time, another ajiva, is eternal. The world has neither an origin nor an end.

As already observed, the karmic particles are mingled with the life-monads. It is held that they communicate colours to them which may be white, yellow, flaming-red, dove-grey, dark-blue, or black. These colours are perceived by the Jaina Tirthankaras by virtue of their boundless intuition or omniscience.

Ordinarily, black is the characteristic colour of the cruel and the merciless, dark-blue that of the greedy and the sensual, dove-grey of the reckless and the hot-tempered, red of the prudent, yellow of the compassionate and the white of the dispassionate and the impartial.

In the ethics of Mahavira, social life has no place. It is perfect non-activity in thought, speech, and deed that is recommended. One should be dead to pain and enjoyment and also to all other interests including the intellectual, social, and political to achieve liberation from the bondage of physical existence. Cessation of activity is a stepping-stone to the super-human sphere—a sphere which is not only above human beings but also beyond gods.

The doctrine of ahimsa which means renunciation of the will to kill and to damage is an article of faith with the Jains. In the Ayaramgasutta, a Jaina text, it is written, “All saints and Lords . . . declare thus: One may not kill, nor ill-use, nor insult, nor torment, nor persecute any kind of living beings, any kind of creature, any kind of thing having a soul, any kind of beings.”⁴³

The Jains do not offer bloody sacrifices, do not eat meat, never hunt, and take care that they do not trample on creeping things and insects. The laying down of this commandment is a great thing in the spiritual history of man-kind; but it has to be said that the principle is altogether impracticable. It has been assumed that non-killing and non-harming are possible of fulfilment in this world of ours.

Even on purely biological grounds, if on no others, it becomes necessary sometimes to kill as well as to damage both intentionally and unintentionally. “It is crueller to let domestic animals which one can no longer feed die a painful death by starvation than to give them a quick and painless end by violence. Again and again we see ourselves placed under the necessity of saving one living creature by destroying or damaging another.”⁴⁴

3. Buddhism

As a prince, Buddha's name was Siddhartha and his family name Gautama; his father's name Suddhodana, and his mother's Maya. It is interesting to note that all these names have meanings from which it is conjectured that Buddha might not have been a historical person. Suddho-dana means "he whose food is pure," Maya means "an illusion," Siddhartha means "he by whom the end is accomplished," while Buddha signifies "he by whom all is known."

These meanings suggest an allegorical signification, very much in the style of the Pilgrim's Progress. The city of Buddha's birth, Kapilavastu, which has no place in the geography of the Hindus, lends weight to this supposition.

But, in spite of the allegorical interpretation as suggested by the etymology of the names, the historians are pretty well agreed in regarding Buddha as a historical person who lived six centuries before Christ and who was so much disturbed by the transience and miseries of the earthly existence that he renounced his power and wealth and devoted himself to solitary meditation.

He engaged himself in sacred study under different Brahmins, but dissatisfied with their teaching he retired into solitude. For six years he practised rigorous austerities. Finding their effect upon the body unfavourable to intellectual energy, he desisted from it and adopted a more genial course of life. At last knowledge dawned upon him, and he was in possession of the object of his search, which he communicated to others.

Buddha had no doubt that the mundane existence is replete with sorrows, afflictions, and tribulations. Not only this; he also believed that the misery of life is unending. All fulfilment of desires is attended by pain. The causes of pain, according to Buddha, are not economical, social, or political. They are rooted in the very nature of human life because of the fact that like every-thing else it is ephemeral and transitory.

Even souls are impermanent and our ignorance on this point is the major reason of our suffering. Everything is in a flux. We deceive ourselves into thinking that there is a permanent base for change. It is the Law of Causality which binds together the continuous vibration and infinite growth which characterize this world.

Buddha did not believe in any ontological reality which is permanent and which endures beneath the shifting appearances of the visible world. He also repudiated the Upanisadic view of a permanent Atman and held that search for a permanent soul inside the body is in vain.

Buddha supposed that the law of karma worked into our very nature and that there was no escape from it, the present and the future being the result of the past. Karma is overcome through nirvana which puts an end to the cycle of births and deaths.

Nirvana literally means blowing out; hence it suggests extinction. It is sometimes contended that nirvana is not a negative goal; it has a positive aspect as well. It is not simply extinction but also a state of blessedness or perfection. It is a kind of existence, devoid of egoity and full of peace, calm, and bliss.

To achieve nirvana, Buddha recommended a path of self-discipline which is eight-fold: right faith, right resolve, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right thought, and right concentration. The emphasis is on right living which is different in the case of a layman and a monk. The first four are applicable to all, while the remaining four are applicable especially to the priestly class.

The practical part of Buddha's system has the same duality. Five negative injunctions, namely, not to kill, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to lie, and not to use strong drinks, are binding on all, while not to take repasts at improper times, not to witness dances and plays, not to have costly raiments and perfumes, not to have a large bed or quilt, and not to receive gold or silver, are meant for priests only.

Similarly, the virtues of charity, purity, patience, courage, contemplation, and silence have to be cultivated by all, but there are twelve observances binding on recluses only.

They have to use clothes made of rags picked up from burning grounds, to have only three such suits all sewn by the wearer's own hand, to have a cloak of yellow wool prepared in the same manner, to live only on food given in charity, to take only one meal daily, never to eat or drink after midday, to live in forests, to have no roof but the foliage of trees, to sit with the back supported by the trunk of a tree, to sleep sitting and not lying, never to change the position of the carpet when it has once been spread, and to go once a month to burning grounds to meditate on the vanity of life on the earth.

Thus, there is a complete distinction between the religion for the masses and the discipline for priesthood. The former is quite human while the latter is cold-hearted and unnatural. Ultimate release from transmigration can be attained, in the opinion of Buddha, only after one becomes a monk. The religion of the masses is good for human relationship, but not for the liberation of the soul from the cycle of births and deaths.

For Buddha a Brahmin is one who cares not for others, who has no relations, who controls himself, who is firmly fixed in the heart of truth, in whom the fundamental evils are extinguished, and who has thrown hatred away from him. No doubt, one finds here an emphasis on the cultivation of ethical virtues but renunciation and condemnation of worldly ties are also evident. Buddha wants men to be occupied with their own redemption and not with that of their fellow-beings.

Buddha attaches no importance to such knowledge as entangles a man in the net of life. There are no doubt practical and theoretical systems of knowledge which enable people to acquire skills and crafts, but ultimately they have no value. Says Buddha, "Such knowledge and opinions, if thoroughly mastered, will lead inevitably to certain ends and produce certain results in one's life.

The enlightened one is aware of all these consequences and also of what lies behind them. But he does not attach much importance to this knowledge. For within himself he fosters another knowledge, the knowledge of cessation, of the discontinuance of worldly existence, of utter repose by eman-cipation.

He has perfect insight into the manner of the springing into existence of our sensations and feelings and their vanishing again with all their sweetness and bitterness, into the way of escape from them altogether, and into the manner in which by non-attachment to them through right knowledge of their character he has himself won the release.”⁴⁵

The Philosophical Schools of Buddhism

Religiously, Buddhism is divided into two great schools, the orthodox, known as the Hinayana, and the progressive, known as the Mahayana. The former, representing Buddhism, faithfully believes in the relentless working of the law of karma and refuses to assign any place to God in the scheme of things. The individual has to win his liberation through his own efforts by treading the path of rightness as delineated by Buddha.

The responsibility of achieving salvation falls squarely on the shoulders of the individual. Before Buddha breathed his last, he advised his followers to work out their salvation with diligence. Philosophically, the Hinayana Buddhism advocates pure phenomenalism, maintaining the non-existence of substances or individuals. What exists is merely passing entities, there being feelings but no feeler, thoughts but no thinker.

The Hinayana school could not satisfy the masses because of its abstract, dry, and arid approach to the problems of life and also because of its denial of God. Its ethics smacked of egoism, since the Hinayana Buddhist was exclusively concerned with his own emancipation, having nothing to do with the moral needs of others. The Mahayana school sought to rectify these mistakes by taking a more realistic view of religion.

Instead of the ideal of personal liberation it recommended the “liberation of all sentient beings” as the summum bonum of human life. It also rehabilitated God, by identifying Buddha with a transcendental reality behind the world of phenomena, Gautama being an incarnation of the Buddha.

The Hinayana school denied reality to the Self: but the Mahayana school resuscitated the Self too, by holding that it was the little individual self that was false and not the Self of all beings, the one transcendental Self (Mahatman).

Though Buddha had abhorrence for metaphysical jargon, his religion being an ethical system with no supernaturalism yet his followers failed to keep themselves away from ontological and epistemological questions of abstruse nature. Consequently, there emerged four schools, two under the Hinayana and two under the Alahavana sect, on the basis of their metaphysical predilections.

1. The Madhyamika School of Sunyavada - According to this school, every-thing is void and the universe is totally devoid of reality. In support of their contention they argue that the knower, the known, and knowledge are interdependent and if any one in the series is proved false it will entail the falsity of the other two.

It is maintained by the proponents of this theory that cases of illusion demonstrate the falsity of knowledge; consequently, the truth of the other two factors in this epistemological trinity cannot be guaranteed.

2. The Yogacara School of Subjective Idealism - This school was one with the Madhyamika in dismissing all external reality as illusion, but could not see eye to eye with it in respect of mind. It was urged that if mind was pronounced unreal along with matter, then all reasoning and thinking would be false. It would be as impossible to establish your own position as to demolish the position of your adversary, once mind is dismissed as maya.

To this school, mind is the only reality; the external objects exist simply as ideas. No object can be known without consciousness of it; hence the objects cannot be proved to have an existence independent of consciousness.

3. The Sautrantika School of Representationism - This school believes in the existence of mind and also of the external world. The Sautrantikas maintain that illusions cannot be explained in the absence of external objects. Moreover the objects do not exist as ideas; rather our ideas are copies of objects which exist by their own nature.

4. The Vaibhasika School - This school recognizes the reality of mind as well as of matter and further holds like the neo-realists of the West that unless the object is perceived, there is no means of certifying that the so-called copy is a faithful representation of the original. The only plausible position in that case would be subjective idealism of the Yogacara School; and if for some reason the theory of subjective idealism is untenable, then it should be conceded that objects are capable of being perceived directly.

Systems of Indian Philosophy

There are six systems which are recognized as orthodox. Each is called a darsana or a view because it embodies a way of looking at the world. They are generally treated together, in pairs. The first pair includes the Nyaya or the school of Logic founded by Gautama and the Atomic school founded by Kanada.

There are, however, reasons to believe that the two systems were organized into one in the fourth/tenth century long after the Muslims had settled down in India and had made their mark on Indian thought and culture. The analysis of the ideas incorporated into the systems after their unification will amply bear this out.

Accordingly, these two systems will receive separate treatment after the other systems. The remaining four systems were organized into two pairs before the advent of the Muslims and will be discussed together.

While discussing these systems we shall have to ignore such thinkers as were born after the second/eighth century and whose contributions show unmistakable signs of Muslim influence. Their thinking is not purely Indian; it is at least not on conservative lines. There are radical departures both in the understanding of problems and their solutions, and these departures can be accounted for on no other hypothesis than the impact of Muslim thought on the Indian mind.

The first pair to be mentioned will include the Sankhya or Numeral system said to be founded by Kapila and the Yoga or the Mystic system founded by Patanjali; the second pair will include the Purva-Mimamsa, the original decider, founded by Jaimini, and the Uttara-Mimamsa, the second decider, said to be founded by Vyasa.

The authors of the various schools as given above are generally accepted by the Hindus as real, but there is a great deal of doubt about their authenticity. Rene Guenon writing about Gautama, the author of Nyaya, says:

“This name should not be taken as referring to any single individual and it is not accompanied in this case by any biographical details of the vaguest kind . . . the name denotes what is really an `intellectual aggregate' made up of all those who over a period . . . devoted themselves to one and the same study . . . The same could be said of the proper names that we find associated in a similar way with each of the other darsanas.”⁴⁶

1 & 2. Sankhya and Yoga - These two systems are the outer and the inner aspects of a single discipline. In the Bhagavad-Gita there is written, “Puerile and unlearned people speak of `enumerating knowledge' (Sankhya) and the `practice of introvert concentration' (Yoga) as distinct from each other, yet anyone firmly established in either gains the fruit of both.

The state attained by the followers of the path of enumerating knowledge is attained also through the exercises of introvert concentration. He truly sees who regards as one the intellectual attitude of enumerating knowledge and the practice of concentration.”⁴⁷ Sankhya is a theoretical system describing the elements of human nature, its bondage and release, while Yoga is a practical discipline to gain the same end through the practice of yogic exercises.

According to Zimmer, “The main conceptions of this dual system are (i) that the universe is founded on an irresoluble, dichotomy of `life-monads' (purusa) and lifeless matter (prakrti), (ii) that `matter,' though fundamentally simple and uncompounded, nevertheless exfoliates, or manifests itself, under three distinctly differentiated aspects (the so-called gunas) which are comparable to the three strands of a rope, and (iii) that each one of the `life-monads' (purusa) associated with matter is involved in the bondage of an endless `round of transmigration' (samsara).”⁴⁸

Prakrti is a primal entity, out of which the physical universe with all its infinite diversity has evolved. It is all-pervasive and complex. Its complexity is due to the fact that it is constituted of three gunas, namely, sattya, rajas, and tamas, which, though different, nevertheless work harmoniously to produce an ordered world. Sattya means what is pure, rajas signifies what is active, while tamas stands for what offers resistance.

These three gunas are present in every object since the effect cannot be other than its material cause. This doctrine, according to which nothing new can originate and the effects should be entirely determined. By their antecedent factors, goes by the name of “the doctrine of pre-existent effect.” The gunas do not combine in the same ratio in every object and that accounts for the multiplicity and the infinite diversity of things.

The first thing to evolve from the prakrti was the intellect, which in turn produced egoism or individuality. From the sattya aspect of egoism there preceded five sense-organs, while from the tamers aspect there emerged five motor organs.

Thus, the first to emerge in the course of evolution were those objects which purusa needed. Out of the simple and subtle elements arose gross elements, e.g., space emerged from elemental sound, air from space and elemental touch, fire from these two and elemental colour, so on and so forth.

So far we have naturalism in its most aggressive form, but it is diluted by its recognition of purusa alongside prakrti as an equally important principle in the constitution of the world. Purusa is manifold and simple in contradistinction to prakrti which is single and complex. How can two principles of contradictory attributes come to work together, is a difficult point in this theory.

Purusa is often defined as a pure spirit by virtue of the fact that it is non-matter, and yet it has no spirituality about itself. It can be defined only negatively: it is without attributes, without motion “imperishable, inactive, and impassive.” After a person acquires full knowledge of the purusa, he becomes indifferent to both the subtle and the gross elements of his material existence.

When death comes finally, the subtle and the gross elements dissolve, but the purusa continues to exist having now been released once for all from the clutches of the gunas. This is “final aloofness,” or isolation, the summum bonum of yogic practices.

“Yoga consists in the (intentional) stoppage of the spontaneous activities of the life-staff.”⁴⁹ As the mind is in constant commotion, it assumes the shapes of the objects it cognizes. In order to understand its true nature all impulses from within and without have to be stopped.

The life-monad is so to say in the bondage of life and consciousness; it has to reveal all the processes of the subtle and gross body. In its own nature it is propertyless, without beginning and end, infinite, and all-pervading.

The only problem with man is to realize his actual freedom by separating the life-monad from all distraction and turbulent conditions. To achieve this objective the Sankhya-Yoga philosophy prescribes the suppression of right notions arising from correct perceptions, and wrong notions due to misapprehensions, fantasy, sleep, and memory.

When this is accomplished, the mind is stilled. The goal is isolation which becomes possible when the purity of contemplation equals the purity of the life-monad.

This is explained by a commentator of Patanjali in the words, “When the contemplative power (sattya) of the thinking substance is freed from the defilement of the active power (rajas) and the force of inertia (tamas) and has no further task than that involved in transcending the presented idea of difference between itself (sattya) and the life-monad (purusa) and when the interior seeds of hindrances (klesa) have all been burnt, then the contemplative power (sattya) enters into a state of purity equal to that of the life-monad.

This purity is neither more nor less than the cessation of the false attribution of experience to the life-monad. That is the life-monad's

isolation. Then the purusa having its light within itself becomes undefiled and isolated.”⁵⁰

According to the Yoga philosophy, hindrances to the manifestation of the true nature of the purusa are ignorance; I am I, attachment or sympathy, repugnance or hatred, and the will to live. Moreover, the interplay of the gunas is a source of confusion. All these can be eradicated through asceticism, learning, and devotion, or complete surrender to the will of God.

Asceticism rids a yogi of passions and spiritual inertia; recitation of holy prayers initiates him in the art of religious detachment; while complete surrender to the will of God develops him spiritually, by making him regard God as the real cause of his achievements. Through this programme, the klesa, i. e., hindrances and impediments, are reduced to nothingness, the rajas and tamas are destroyed, and sattya alone remains to recognize the life-monad in its pristine glory.

The yogic exercises of starving and torturing the body are calculated to eradicate not only the conscious but also the unconscious tendencies of our biological existence and so to attune the personality to a supersensible type of experience.

Through meditation and self-torturing practices one reaches knowledge of the Truth, “Neither I am, nor is aught mine, nor do I exist.” Having gained this knowledge the purusa in peace and inaction contemplates nature which is of no interest to him, and at death attains its true life of isolation.

3 & 4. Mimamsa-Purva and Uttara - The object of the Purva-Mimamsa, also called the Karama-Mimamsa, i.e, Action-Investigation, is to reach certainty on the subject of dharma or the religious duty of the Hindus, chiefly about the sacrifices and the methods of offering them. In course of time there came into vogue variant opinions and customs for the performance of every kind of ceremony.

The Brahmins had laid down very detailed instructions with regard to sacrificial duties but alongside them there had emerged local and family customs and conventions. These two were often hard to reconcile. Hence the problem was to bring the Brahmanic instructions into harmony with one another and also with the existing family and local customs. A further problem was to discover in these customs a meaning that should satisfy every new generation.

The Purva-Mimamsa consists of twelve books, all full of positive and negative injunctions about principal and subordinate rites concerning sacrifices. A cursory perusal of the Mimamsa clearly shows that the work is principally concerned with the interpretation of those Vedic texts as are required for sacrificial purposes and that it raises only incidentally, if at all, genuine meta-physical questions.

It does raise the question of the absolute authority of the Vedas together with the doctrine of their eternity, and discusses in this connection the problem of the eternity of sound and the relation between the sound of a word and its meaning.

The Purva-Mimamsa is not a treatise on philosophy. Nevertheless, certain metaphysical ideas are implied, or find incidental expression in it. A

charge of atheism is often brought against this system. The advocates of the Purva- Mimamsa say, "There is no God, or Maker of the world; nor has the world any sustainer or destroyer, for every man obtains a recompense in conformity with his own work.

Nor indeed is there any maker of the Vedas, for their words are eternal. Their authoritativeness is self-demonstrated; since it has been established from all eternity, how can it be dependent upon anything but itself?⁵¹ " "

But in Max Muller's view this charge is based upon a misconception. The system does not attribute the fruit of sacrificial acts to any divine agency, nor does it make God responsible for the injustice that seems to prevail in the world.

Further, it gives evidence of a firm faith in the operation of the law of cause and effect and, consequently, ascribes the inequalities of the world to the working of good and bad deeds. But all this would not make the system atheistic. It simply proves that the Mimamsa has an unorthodox conception of God. Max Muller's contention seems to conflict with the Mimamsa itself, for the latter says, "Wherefore God? The world itself suffices for itself."⁵²

Uttara-Mimamsa or Vedanta - the term Vedanta literally means the end of the Vedas or the doctrines set forth in the closing chapters of the Vedas which are the Upanisads. The Uttara-Mimamsa or Later Investigations as against Purva-Mimamsa which are Prior Investigations is usually called Vedanta-sutras or Brahma-sutras.

The latter name is given to indicate that Brahman is the spirit embodied in the universe. The work is attributed to Badarayana, but in reality many writers of different times appear to have made their contributions towards its compilation. In five hundred and five sutras which consist mostly of two or three words each, the whole system is developed. The sutras are, however, unintelligible by themselves and leave everything to the interpreters.

The Vedanta-sutras discuss the whole theory of the Brahman in four chapters. The first chapter deals with the nature of the Brahman and his relation to the world and the individual souls; the second is polemical; the third deals with the ways and means of attaining Brahman-vidya; and the fourth treats of the fruit of Brahman-vidya and after-life.

Badarayana believes both in the eternity and infallibility of the Vedas. He recognizes two sources of knowledge: sruti and smrti or perception and inference, and maintains that sruti is the basis for smrti. Similarly, he draws a hard and fast line between two realms: one amenable to reason and the other lying beyond it.

The area where reason is competent is that of prakrti together with its manifestations, while the realm of Brahman lies beyond the reach of discursive reasoning. Reason can flourish among properties, relations, and characteristics, while Brahman is devoid of all these things and, therefore, cannot be reached through inferential knowledge.

The only way to reach the Brahman is to cultivate intuition through meditation and devotion. It will reveal that the Brahman is the basis of reality: the material as well as the final cause of the universe. In creating the world God had no purpose to fulfil; what seems to be His activity is nothing

but sport. God is omniscient, formless, and one, in whom the prakrti and the purusa of the Sankhya system combine, both being manifestations or modes of the same Ultimate Reality.

After creating the elements, Brahman entered into them and determined the characteristic manner of their development and production of other things. The Brahman, as it were, transforms Himself into everything that is caused by Him since cause and effect must have similar natures. Two illustrations are given to prove the identity of cause and effect; one is drawn from an inanimate object and the other from an animate object. It is said that when a piece of cloth is rolled up its real nature remains hidden, but when it is spread out it can be known truly.

Likewise a person is paralyzed if his breath is held but becomes active the moment his breath is released. In both these cases the qualities of the antecedent are different from those of the consequent although the object is the same, which shows that despite differences the cause and the effect remain identical. Brahman and the world are not disparate in spite of differences.

The wooden table is not different from the wood in its essential nature; similarly, Brahman is not different from the multiform objects of the universe.

The world is a sport or lila of the Brahman, which means that it is without purpose and without significance. It is hard to assign any meaning to the universe, since Vedantism declares, "Brahman is true, the world is false, the soul is Brahman and nothing else." And again, "There is nothing worth gaining there is nothing worth enjoying, there is nothing worth knowing but Brahma alone, for he who knows Brahman is Brahman."⁵³

In calling the world a sport there is however no implication that God created sufferings for mankind to take pleasure out of them. This would be a very uncharitable view and altogether cynical. Sufferings, woes, and ills of men as well as of other objects, both animate and inanimate, are the result of their own karma - a law of moral causation which works inexorably and leaves no scope for the interference of divine or non-divine agencies. Likewise all evils and sins are due to karma; they are not caused by Brahman.

The self is concealed within five sheaths, that is to say, five superimposed psycho-somatic layers which should be torn away through ethical discipline and self-denial. Avidya (nescience) is lack of insight into the nature of reality and is a major hindrance in the path of moksa or release. It is an article of faith with Vedantism that liberation can be obtained through knowledge.

Since the Self is with us, though concealed and hidden behind five sheaths, when true knowledge is gained it will be seen that one realizes one's own true nature. This realization can be effected through yogic practices, critical thought, or any other orthodox way. Ethical discipline is also directed to the same end. Its object is to cleanse the soul through rigorous self-discipline and impeccable conduct, in a spirit of non-attachment.

The highest knowledge is Brahman-vidya or vision of God which is attained through the realization of the Self. After an individual soul has reached Brahman there is no return for the liberated soul. This goal is expressed through the oft-quoted verse from the Upanisads; “He who realizes Brahman through knowing becomes Brahman.”⁵⁴

5. The Nyaya System - As already observed, because of the singular ab-sence or deficiency of historical data, little is known of Gautama, the author of Nyaya. He is as much a subject of fanciful legend as Kapila, the author of the Sankhya system.

The word nyaya means “propriety” or “fitness.” The system undertakes to declare the method of arriving at that knowledge of truth the fruit of which, it promises, is the chief end of man. The name is also used in a more limited application to denominate the proper method of setting forth an argument.

This has led to the practice of calling the Nyaya the Hindu logic, which by the way does not adequately describe the scope of the system. According to the author of the system, “Supreme felicity is attained through knowledge about the true nature of the sixteen categories (Padarthas).”⁵⁵

The first work of the Nyaya system consists of sixty aphorisms, and the first sutra gives a list of the subjects to be discussed. These are sixteen in number:

(1) pramana or the means by which right knowledge may be gained; (2) prameya or the object of thought; (3) doubt; (4) motive; (5) instance or example; (6) dogma or determinate truth; (7) argument or syllogism; (8) con-futation; (9) ascertainment; (10) controversy; (11) jangling; (12) objection or cavilling; (13) fallacy; (14) perversion, (15) futility; (16) conclusion or the confounding of an adversary.

Of the sixteen categories the first two are important; others are only subsidiary indicating the course which a discussion may take from the start to the finish, i.e., from the enunciation of the doubt to the confounding of the doubter.

The first category by the name of pramana signifies proof or evidence, and denotes the legitimate means of knowledge within the rational order. It enumerates four kinds of proofs, namely, perception by the senses (pratyaksa); inference (anumana) ; comparison (upamana) ; and verbal authority (sabda)including revelation and tradition. Inference, it says, is of three kinds: from cause to effect, from effect to cause, and by analogy.

The argument which is also called nyaya consists of five constituent members. These are: (1) the proposition to be proved (pratijnia), (2) the reason justifying this proposition (hetu), (3) the example cited in support of the reason (udah-rana), (4) the application of the first proposition to the particular case in question (upanaya), and (5) the result (nigamana), which is a statement of the fact that the proposition has been proved.

A typical Indian syllogism would be as follows:

1. Yonder mountain has fire.
2. For it has smoke.
3. Whatever has smoke has fire.

4. Yonder mountain has smoke such as is invariably accompanied by fire.

5. Therefore, yonder mountain has fire.

The linguistic form is not considered necessary to syllogism. This is common to all forms of Indian logic.

According to the Nyaya, a notion or a concept can be either right or wrong. In the first case it is obtained through perception or inference or comparison or revelation. A wrong notion is one which is not derived from proof and originates either from doubt or from false premises or from error. A wise man avoids these as well as passions and aversions and is profoundly indifferent to all action.

Blessedness is deliverance from pain. The primary evil is pain. There are twenty-one varieties of evil which spring from the organs of sense, from the objects of sense, from mental apprehensions, and even from pleasure. "The soul attains to this deliverance by knowledge, by meditation on itself, by not earning fresh merit or demerit through actions sprung from desire, and by becoming free from passions through knowledge of the evil inherent in objects. It is knowledge . . . and not virtue which obtains final deliverance from the body."⁵⁶

The Nyaya is predominantly intellectual and analytical. Its value lies in its methodology or the theory of knowledge on which it builds its philosophy. This theory it applies not only to one system but to all systems with modifications here and there. Chatterjee and Datta observe that "the Nyaya theory of pluralistic realism is not so satisfying as its logic. Here we have a common sense view of the world as a system of independent realities . . . It does not give us a systematic philosophy of the world in the light of one universal absolute principle."⁵⁷

The Indian syllogism bears a close resemblance to Aristotelian syllogism especially when it is simplified or abridged, consisting either of the last three or the first three terms only. It is, therefore, suggested by a good many historians that either Aristotle or the builders of the Nyaya system drew inspiration from the other. It is also possible that the obligation is mutual.

6. The Vaisesika System - Vaisesika is derived from visesa which means difference, signifying thereby that multiplicity and not unity lies at the basis of the universe. It is expounded by Kanada in the Vaisesika-Sutra which contains about five hundred and fifty aphorisms. Book 1 discusses the five categories - substance, quality, action, community or genus, and particularity; Book 2 deals with the substances earth, water, air, ether, space, and time.

Book 3 is concerned with the problems of mind and self and also touches the theory of inference; Book 4 is about the atomic theory and discusses the nature of body and the visibility of quality; Book 5 deals with motion; Book 6 contains duties of the four stages of life; Book 7 treats of quality, the atomic theory, the self, and inherence together; Books 8 and 9 deal with perception and inference; while Book 10 is concerned with causality and other related questions.

A fundamental assumption of this system is that objects are independent of the perceiving mind and also of one another. Philosophically, the doctrine

may be called pluralistic realism. The entire world of experience can be divided into nine dravya or substances together with their properties and relations: These substances are earth, water, fire, air, akasa, time, space, self, and manas.

Besides substances which simply provide a framework for the whole universe there are padartha, or categories, seven in number, namely, guna, karma, visesa, samavaya, samanya, abhava, and dravya, which can be translated as quality, action, individuality, necessary relation, universals, negation, and substance.

Qualities depend upon substances, but they can be independently conceived and so exist by their own nature. No distinction is recognized between mental and material qualities or between the primary and secondary qualities. Quite consistent with its pluralistic standpoint, the doctrine holds that the substances reveal their nature through the qualities in which they differ and not in which they agree.

In regarding earth, air, water, and fire as substances, what is implied is that the entire structure of the universe can be interpreted in terms of material causes which are supersensible. The ultimate stuff of which this universe is made is the mass of atoms that are round, extremely minute, invisible, incapable of division, eternal in themselves but not in their aggregate form.

Even mind (manas) is regarded as an atom extremely small, because of which only one sensation can be conveyed to the soul at one time.

Vaisesika is basically a dualistic philosophy inasmuch as it recognizes the eternality both of atoms and souls. In fact every Hindu system regards matter as eternal. The only exception is the school of the Vedantists which takes matter as the illusive manifestation of the one Supreme Brahman who is Himself the all.

According to Kanada, the summum bonum for man is nothing but deliverance from pain, which can be achieved through knowledge, resulting in the soul getting into a state of a tranquil, unconscious passivity.

The Influence of Islam on Hinduism

From the account of the six systems of Indian philosophy given above, such writers as were born after the advent of Islam in India have been excluded; not that they were in any way less important than those who saw the light of the day before the first /seventh century, but because their thinking shows unmistakable signs, implicit as well as explicit, of Muslim impact.

Details of this impact have been provided in a separate chapter of this volume. Here it will suffice to say that the impact was very deep, firm, and abiding, and left no aspect of Indian thought untouched.

The contact of the Muslims with the Indians began as early as the end of the first/seventh century, and still continues to the advantage of both. Islam was introduced into the Indian sub-continent by Arab traders; it was propagated by mystics and saints; and it was established by Muslim rulers of various dynasties who made India their home like several other Muslim immigrants.

The Muslims brought with them their ideology, their philosophy and religion, their beliefs and practices, and, above all, an unconquerable passion to share this wisdom with others. The Sufis who were thinkers of no mean order succeeded by their example and precept in imparting to the natives that ideology and philosophy which the Muslims had expounded from their understanding of the Qur'an, the hadith, and the Sunnah.

Muhammad bin Qasim is ranked as the first Muslim who entered India as a conqueror in 94/712. His example was followed by a long line of Muslim rulers who wielded the sceptre of authority over the Indian sub-continent till 1274/1857, when Indian "mutiny" took place and the Britishers found a splendid excuse to wipe off the last vestige of the Muslim Empire.

During a period of one thousand years when the Indian sub-continent lay prostrate at the feet of the Muslim emperors, many of whom enjoyed full autocratic powers, it is very unlikely that the culture and philosophy which they cherished and treasured should have left no imprint on the thoughts and beliefs of the native population.

There was, however, no imposition of one culture over another. Culture can never be introduced by the sword, no matter how long and sharp. What happened on the Indian soil was not the replacement of one culture by another but an amalgamation of the two. It was a case of the willing acceptance of the salient features of Muslim culture and making them a part and parcel of the culture of India.

What Sankara and Ramanuja did in the sphere of philosophy was done by others in the fields of religion; ethics, and social polity. The result was a great upheaval in the world of Hindu thought. A re-evaluation and a re-appraisal of old values and thoughts took place on a gigantic scale.

Mono-theism was stressed and so was universal brotherhood of mankind and a positive approach to life. Casteless society became the goal of social reforms and the Sudras, the accursed and the condemned, were accorded the right to live like others. All this was the product of the impact of Islam on Hinduism.

There is evidence to show that the Nyaya and the Vaiseska were organized into one system after Islam had firmly entrenched itself in India. Not only were the two systems welded into one, they also became monotheistic and advanced for the first time in the history of Hindu thought what are known as the Hindu proofs for the existence of God.

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Chapter 2: Pre-Islamic Chinese Thought

Pre-Islamic Chinese Thought by Howard F. Didsbury, Jr., M.A., Ph.D., Associate Professor of History, Newark State College, Union, New Jersey and Adjunct Professor at the American University, Washington D.C (U.S.A)

In the present chapter we shall attempt to survey some of the salient features of Chinese philosophy avoiding any specialized or detailed discussion of the individual schools or of the philosophical technicalities involved. Our purpose is to present, in brief compass, an account of Chinese philosophical thought indicating a number of its peculiar characteristics and its apparent major limitations. This, then, will be a summary of the outstanding peculiari-ties of Chinese philosophy prior to the arrival of any significant foreign influence.

First, a few words with respect to the period of Chinese philosophy we are covering, that of the Chou Dynasty (1122 -256 B.C.). The last centuries of the Chou were marked by political and social turmoil associated with the disintegration of feudalism. The Chinese world was torn by internecine warfare, old political powers were overturned and old values challenged or discarded.

During this “time of troubles,” to use Toynbee's term China produced a great variety of original schools of philosophical thought, such as Confucianism, Taoism, Mohism, and Legalism as well as a Chinese version of Epicureanism, the so-called Logicians, and the Yin Yang school.

Because of the creative freshness and richness of the later Chou, it may be regarded as the classical period of Chinese philosophy. Our discussion is, perforce limited to these classical philosophies and their spirit; Chinese medieval and modern philo-sophies are not delineated, nor are Buddhism in China, nor Chinese Buddhism.

The primary reason for this concentration on the Chou philosophies is that they represent the indigenous Chinese schools of philosophy before they were affected by the advent of other philosophical or religious idea, for example, Buddhism and its attendant Indian metaphysics.

Moreover, though some of these schools did not exercise a lasting influence on subsequent Chinese intellectual life, as was the case with Legalism which passed into oblivion with the collapse of the shortlived Ch'in Dynasty (221-207 B.C.), and with Mohism which died out a few centuries after the death of Mo Tzu, its founder, other schools, such as Confucianism, Taoism, and elements of the Yin Yang school, persisted throughout the history of Chinese philosophy.

Confucianism, though eclipsed at times, slowly gained a predominant position and became a powerful force in the moulding and direction of Chinese civilization.

While these latter schools survived, the others passed into insignificance. For instance, the school of the Logicians never exercised any great influence on the development of later Chinese philosophy.

Also, Yang Chu's thought, somewhat similar to the philosophy of Epicurus, was never a threat to the other schools since it consisted more of an attitude toward life than a philosophy of existence. It was too individualistic, too self-centred for wide acceptance by the Chinese.

To appreciate adequately the peculiar features of Chinese philosophical thought, it is important that one be cognizant of certain facts of Chinese geography, economics, and sociology with regard to its emergence and development. The distinguished contemporary Chinese philosopher and historian of Chinese philosophy, Fung Yu-lan, discusses all three topics at considerable length.¹

From the earliest times the Chinese considered the world and their land, t'ien hsia (all under heaven), to be one and the same. Because of its unique geographical position—a vast continental land mass bounded by a great mountain range, desert, and the ocean—the early culture of China appears to have developed in comparative isolation from that of other great centres of civilization.

At any rate, it seems fairly certain that the Chinese thinkers of the later Chou were not in a position comparable to that of their Greek philosophical contemporaries vis a vis the intellectual, philosophical, religious, and scientific thought of the Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations. In developing their philosophies, the Greeks were undoubtedly stimulated by other highly civilized peoples.

An ancient Greek historian once noted that the Greeks were children compared to the Egyptians. In contrast, in the development of ancient Chinese philosophical thought, there does not seem to have been any significant cross-fertilization from other centres of civilization outside the Chou world.

The Greeks and the Chinese differed considerably in their respective economic conditions. The Greeks were a commercial people to a great extent and were, therefore, brought into contact with a wide variety of ideas, customs, lands and peoples. Their conception of the world recognized the existence of other great civilizations. The Chinese, however, were mainly an agricultural people. None of the Chinese philosophers ventured beyond Chou China.

There was, in consequence, a definite insularity attached to Chinese philosophical thought. In addition to this insularity of thought, there was close affinity between the Chinese thinker and the Chinese peasant; both were attached to the land. The Chinese scholar-philosopher was usually a landowner, while the peasant cultivated the land. “Hence, throughout Chinese history, social and economic thinking and policy have centred around the utilization and distribution of land.”²

In a sense, ancient Chinese philosophy may be said to have had an intimate association with, if not absolutely conditioned by, the peasant mentality. The Chinese thinkers' “reactions to the universe and their outlook on life were essentially those of the farmer.”³ With the aid of their learning and genius, the Chinese sages were able “to express what an actual farmer felt but was incapable of expressing himself.”⁴ Realization of this fact may go long way towards explaining the predominantly practical tone of Chinese philosophical thought. The peculiar problems connected with Chinese economic life tended to limit the spectrum of values in philosophy.

Though Confucianism and Taoism are “poles apart from one another, yet they are also the two poles of one and the same axis. They both express, in

one way or another, the aspirations and inspirations of the farmer.”⁵ Confucianism stressed family obligations, while Taoism emphasized the power, beauty, and mystery of nature.

Just as geographical conditions and agricultural life have exerted an influence on the formation and character of Chinese philosophy, so also has done the Chinese social system, particularly the family. A striking feature of Chinese philosophical thought is its preoccupation with problems relating to the ethics of the family and the Chinese social system.

The most outstanding example of this preoccupation is to be found in Confucianism. “A great deal of Confucianism,” Fung Yu-lan asserts, “is the rational justification or theoretical expression of this social system.”⁶

The mental outlook of the Chinese farmer as well as his values tended to limit the range of philosophical speculation. “The way of life of the farmers is to follow nature. They admire nature and condemn the artificial, and in their primitivity and innocence, they are easily made content. They desire no change, nor can they conceive of any change.”⁷

Here one may discern the source of strength of much of Chinese classical philosophy as well as its weakness. It reflected the attitudes, interests, prejudices, and values of the Chinese peasant.

A study of classical Chinese philosophy discloses that it possesses at least four highly distinctive features which may be a reflection of the dominance of this peasant mentality: lack of metaphysics, dearth of logical sophistication, preoccupation with ethics, and a regressive theory of history.

We shall comment on the last feature first. The traditional Chinese theory of history is regressive. According to the Chinese, the Golden Age of mankind was in the dim remoteness of the past and all subsequent history has been a tragic degeneration from the ancient ideal age.

The Chinese sages sought to find the proper path which would enable mankind to recapture the peace, justice, and harmony of that Golden Age. Associated with this regressive conception of history was the tendency of many of the classical schools to antedate the founder of a rival school of thought.

Apparently, in order to make a school or a point of view more attractive and authoritative, it was felt necessary to increase its antiquity. The Confucianists, for example, referred to the mythological rulers, Yao and Shun; the Mohists, in support of their philosophical position, went back beyond Yao and Shun to the legendary Yu; and the Taoists, for their part, went beyond Yu to the mythical Yellow Emperor. The more ancient the beginning of a school, the more was it to be trusted.

The classical Chinese philosophers, for the most part, manifested an aversion to metaphysical speculation. The Confucianists, Confucius (551-479 B.C.), Mencius (371-289 B.C.), and Hsun Tzu (298-c. 238 B.C.), showed little interest in or even awareness of metaphysical questions. Confucius was not concerned with understanding the character of Ultimate Reality nor with epistemological problems; his concern was with social and political philosophy. Mencius lacks an interest in metaphysics as such, as does Hsun Tzu.

At the risk of over-simplification, one could say that Confucianism was primarily an educational philosophy. Though Confucius was silent on whether or not human nature was good or evil, and, though Mencius and Hsun Tzu differ greatly on this point-the former maintaining that human nature is good, and the latter, that it is evil-all three agree on the need and efficacy of education for inculcating or developing ethical conduct. Subtle metaphysical disquisitions are lacking in all three.

Taoism, as set forth in the Tao Te Ching and the works of Chuang Tzu (399-c. 295 B.C.), frequently approaches a metaphysical analysis of reality, but, more characteristically, ends in a hazy mysticism or appears to be fascinated with the enunciation of paradoxes. The Taoist saying that he who knows cannot say and that he who says does not know the Tao (the Way, or Ultimate Reality) is not particularly conducive to metaphysical discourse.

Mo Tzu (c. 479-c. 438 B.C.), founder of Mohism, does not show any interest in metaphysical matters as such. His philosophy stressed an “all-embracing love” based upon utility. He condemned aggressive war and urged altruism based upon mutual self-interest because the results were more pleasant and useful to society. His reasons were practical and devoid of any metaphysical justification.

As for the Logicians, for example, Hui Shih (c. 380-305 B. C.) and Kung-sun Lung (380-250 B.C.?), their interest comes nearer to being metaphysical than any other school with the possible exception of the Yin Yang.

The Logicians, frequently referred to as the School of Names (Ming Chia), were chiefly concerned with problems relating to the relativity and changeableness of all phenomena, as was Hui Shih, or with the concept of universals-the “names” of things-which, according to Kung-sun Lung, were absolute and unchangeable. Hui Shih contended that concrete things were undergoing constant change and were, therefore, different from one instant to the next. Kung-sun Lung insisted that the “names” of things, similar to Platonic ideas, were absolute and unchangeable. In order to substantiate his position, he employed epistemological arguments. One of his most famous arguments is contained in his discussion concerning “a white horse is not a horse.”

Many of the Logicians arguments posed paradoxes and logical conundrums and, for this reason, were disparaged by the Confucianists. For example, the great Chinese historian of the Han, Ssu-ma T'an, himself a Confucianist described the work of the Logicians as “minute examinations of trifling points in complicated and elaborate statements, which made it impossible for others to refute their ideas.”⁸

Because of the lack of interest in metaphysical questions peculiar to Chinese classical philosophers in general, the influence of the Logicians was not especially significant in the development of later Chinese thought.

The Legalists, whose most important representative is Han Fei Tzu (died 233 B. C.), were not concerned with problems of metaphysics, logic, or epistemology. Their fundamental concern was political: What happens

when a ruler is weak, wicked, or incompetent? How is a State to be unified and governed?

For the Legalists, the answer was impersonal law in the place of personal ethics or moral principles. The Legalists, though at odds with the Confucianists, show a similarly overriding interest in the practical aspects of political and social philosophy. Metaphysical speculation is a pastime which neither of these classical schools pursued.

Tsou Yen (305-240 B.C.) of the Yin Yang school probably represents the extent to which the Chinese were willing to pursue metaphysical speculation without the pressure of foreign ideas. Certainly the Taoist and Yin Yang represent indigenous Chinese metaphysical thinking prior to the advent of Buddhism.

The Yin Yang school, however, lacks genuine metaphysical profundity and, in essence, appears to be based on a dualistic theory of the interaction of the female and male principles of the universe, the Yin and the Yang respectively.

Neither the Yin Yang school nor Taoism possesses a meta-physical presentation approaching the works of Plato or Aristotle. One has the feeling that the thinkers of these two schools educed one or two ideas and then used them uncritically and mechanically to explain various phenomena.

In general, Chinese philosophers either ignored metaphysics or showed only a spasmodic interest in understanding, logically and systematically, the nature and character of the Ultimate Reality. Only after the introduction of Buddhism did the Chinese philosophers concern themselves seriously with metaphysics.

“Even the basic metaphysical problems, such as God, universals, space and time, matter and spirit, were either not discussed, except in Buddhism, or discussed only occasionally, and then always for the sake of ethics.”⁹ Chinese thinkers confined themselves to social and political thought; they had always in mind the capability of their respective philosophies for practical implemen-tation. As metaphysics was, in the main, slighted or ignored, so were episte-mological problems.

An examination of the history of Chinese philosophy illustrates plentifully that Chinese philosophers occupied themselves with questions of human adjustment to nature or the individual's adjustment to society. The Taoists stressed the former, the Confucianists the latter. The Taoists regarded society as unnatural and unnecessary for Good Life. In this respect it resembles Romanticism.

Confucianism maintains that society is natural and necessary for the life of a human being. Society permits a man to satisfy his ethical obligations and also affords him an opportunity to enrich his life with learning, art, music, and moral example. Society is not only a structure of ethical and social relationships but also a product of man's cultural heritage.

Man as a member of society is able to appreciate tradition, literature, ceremonies-all those things which are not absolutely necessary for physical survival but which are nevertheless the very essence of civilized, cultured existence. As Taoism lauds the state of nature, it is akin to Romanticism; Confucianism is allied to Classicism.

In addition to a lack of metaphysical interest or regard for epistemological problems, Chinese philosophical thought, both classical and medieval, is distinguished by its patent deficiency of logical refinement. Chinese philosophical discourses are usually unsystematic and infrequently based upon rigid logical argumentation.

The classical philosopher's approach was simple; his use of an elaborate philosophical method was almost non-existent. The Chinese philosopher was primarily engrossed in questions of ethics and with practical matters relating to the ordering of society according to proper moral principles or, as in the case of Taoism, with the way of nature and naturalness.

The arguments employed by the philosophers were eminently practical in the sense that they made no appeal to complicated logical analysis, theory, or hypothesis, but appealed to man's common sense. It would be helpful to illustrate the type of "logical" argumentation frequently encountered in the works of Chinese classical philosophers.

The ancients, who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered well their own states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts.

Wishing to rectify their hearts they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things.

"Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy."¹⁰

That an over-emphasis upon logical analysis may inhibit novel ideas and conceptions of reality, few will deny. Too great a reliance upon logical clarity precision and consistency may lead to sterile thought. The later medieval period in Europe, which was dominated by Scholastic logic, illustrates sufficiently the perils involved in an over-estimation of the power and validity of logical analysis. The Scholastics appear to have regrettably misunderstood the value of logic.

The medieval Schoolmen erred in the direction of too much emphasis upon logical acuteness whereas, in contradistinction, the Chinese appear to have been blind to the importance of logical refinement. Whether through disinterest or because of the intrinsic difficulties involved in their own written language (pictographs and ideographs), Chinese philosophers do not seem to have understood the proper role of logic in the acquisition of new knowledge.

In one of his works, Alfred North Whitehead states succinctly the crucial part logic may play in the advancement of the frontiers of human knowledge. "Logic, properly used," he writes, "does not shackle thought. It

gives freedom, and above all, boldness. Illogical thought hesitates to draw conclusions, because it never knows either what it means, or what it assumes, or how far it trusts its own assumptions or what will be the effect of any modification of assumptions.”

Continuing, he remarks, “Also the mind un-trained in that part of constructive logic which is relevant to the subject in hand will be ignorant of the sort of conclusions which follow from various sorts of assumptions, and will be correspondingly dull in divining the inductive laws”.¹¹ One can hardly fail to agree with Whitehead's observation when studying Chinese classical philosophy as well as much of the philosophy of the later schools in China.

By confining their attention to the world of everyday affairs and common sense, the Chinese savants felt no need to engage in metaphysical speculation in a systematic manner, nor did they feel any desire to indulge in the luxury of logical subtlety.

“Therefore,” a well-known Japanese philosopher comments, “when their philosophy did not vanish in the mist of vague mysticism, as in the ease of Taoism, it tenaciously clung to the agnosticism of everyday experience”¹² As we study the Taoist classic, Tao Te Ching, we can readily understand what is meant by a philosophy losing itself “in the mist of vague mysticism,” for example:

The Tao that can be told of is not the Absolute Tao. The Names that can be given are not Absolute Names. The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth; the Named is the Mother of All Things. Therefore oftentimes, one strips oneself of passion in order to see the Secret of Life; oftentimes, one regards life with passion, in order to see its manifest results.

These two (the Secret and its manifestations) are (in their nature) the same; they are given different names when they become manifest. They may both be called the Cosmic Mystery:

Reaching from the Mystery into the Deeper Mystery Is the Gate to the Secret of All Life.¹³

This may be an example of “pure speculation” on the part of a Chinese philosopher. If so, one is inclined again to agree with Whitehead who also observed: “Pure speculation, undisciplined by the scholarship of detailed fact or the scholarship of exact logic, is on the whole more useless than pure scholarship, unrelieved by speculation.”¹⁴

The Taoists seem to have engaged in “pure speculation” fairly consistently. For their part, the Confucianists emphasized learning and traditional scholarship and the “business” of social existence and its obligations.

Unfortunately, the excessive engrossment in the realm of the common-place was as detrimental as the marked tendency to mysticism. Both of these extremes tended to stultify the adventure of thought toward new possibilities of achievement. When Chinese thought did not float away in the clouds, it remained earth-bound.

Granted that the confluence of the regressive theory of history, the lack of metaphysical speculation, and a pronounced deficiency of logical refinement are distinctive features of classical Chinese philosophy, in

general, probably the most significant characteristic the one which may help explain why metaphysics and logic languished-is the dominant concern with ethics, for, indeed, there is little doubt that ethics was the main concern of Chinese philosophers.

There were but few exceptions during the classical period and even thereafter. Ethics played a major role in Chinese philosophy. "The moral life," Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki writes, "can be said to have been the only philosophical subject which . . . has seriously interested the Chinese, and which has been considered worthy of their earnest speculation."¹⁵

By focusing their attention on ethical problems-man and his life in society or in harmony with nature-the Chinese seriously restricted the content of philosophy in their culture. The special facts of geography, economics, and sociology exercised a strong influence on the Chinese climate of philosophical opinion and may account, as we have noted, for their almost exclusive concentration on ethic.

In the final analysis, the classical Chinese philosopher's ideal was the attainment of the Good Life here and now on earth. Most classical thinkers assented to Confucius observation:

"While you do not know life, how can you know about death?" The world of the present requires man's full attention, courage, and ingenuity. To the great majority of Chinese philosophers, righteousness, family, economic security, and a stable social order were the main objects of study. During the later periods of Chinese philosophy, though there were occasional lapses from these objectives, they remained permanent features in the Chinese philosophical tradition.

Tang Chung-shu (c. 179-104 B. C.) was the thinker who contributed most to the ultimate triumph of Confucianism over all the other schools of the Chou in the Han Dynasty (206 B. C.-200 A. D.).

Later, it is true that Confucianism was overshadowed by Buddhism during the period of Division (221-589 A.D.) following the break-up of the Han Empire, but, to survive in China as an effective, popular force, Buddhism had to accommodate itself to the peculiarities of the Chinese philosophical temper which we have endeavoured to sketch in the preceding pages.

Those schools of Buddhism which tried to preserve their original philosophical purity failed to achieve currency in China and, hence, remained ineffectual in Chinese intellectual life. Chinese Buddhism enjoyed immense support because it was Buddhism a la chinoise.

In short, the cardinal limitation of Chinese philosophy stems from its inordinate attention to what Whitehead calls "practical reason."¹⁶

Chinese thought was too closely associated with practical matters, with social adjust-ment. It was blinded, so to speak, by the affairs of the present. In concentrating on the "practical reason," it neglected "speculative reason" which is allied with logic and systematic discourse.

Here we must stress that flights of fancy or sheer contemplation are not to be construed as speculative reason or specu-lative philosophy. Speculative philosophy seeks a comprehensive understand-ing of the nature

of reality, of God, of man, and of the universe; it strives for a synoptic vision; while, in contrast, practical reason of practical philosophy is concerned with the empirical approach to concrete problems of living and action.

The speculative philosopher, as here described, often regards his opposite as a victim of spurious knowledge, lost in the hustle and bustle of the market-place. Though the speculative philosopher may frequently be at odds with the practical philosopher, each needs the other. Unfortunately, the practical thinker may be oblivious of what his counterpart is about and may regard his pursuits as quite extraneous to the business of living.

The speculative thinker does not deny the importance of practical reason; he presupposes it and moves along on a plane above the details of the everyday world. It should be noted that the practical activities of the mind produce data which the speculative thinker may utilize in the formulation of new theoretical possibilities, and these in turn may stimulate the activities of the practical philosopher in his desire to implement them in new social programmes and in new technologies.

This interplay between these two types of reason or philosophical endeavour constitutes a kind of creative cultural symbiosis. If a civilization neglects either the practical or the speculative type of reason, it will be affected adversely.

China, until the impact of the modern world was felt, was an example of the harmful effects of a pragmatic, utilitarian philosophical orientation. Though authorities differ on the precise amount of weight to be given to its philosophical orientation as a cause of the somnolence of Chinese society, there appears to be agreement that the stress on practicality and social ethics, especially of Con-fucianism, played a most important role.

Science and technology were retarded; there was no speculative thought to challenge the mind towards new heights of achievement; the scholar class, reared on mundane philosophy, was dominant.

This is not to say that Confucian civilization was not a creative and remarkable civilization in many areas; it is merely an endeavour to point out why a certain type of mind did not flourish. Philosophies which concentrate too completely on social adjustment and utility paralyze, if they do not actually destroy, individual creativity and spontaneity in other avenues of human development.

Just as civilizations have cramped the individual by a preponderant religious or materialistic orientation, so the same cramping may occur when social utility is made the absolute measure of value.

The case of pre-modern Chinese civilization may furnish an example of the great danger attached to continually stressing the “social” or “practical” value of thought. The continued vigour of a culture depends upon how well it is replenished with new insights and challenged by new visions of possibility.

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Chapter 3: Pre-Islamic Iranian Thought

Pre-Islamic Iranian Thought by Alessandro Bausani, Ph.D, Professor of Persian Language and Literature, University of Naples (Italy)

A summary sketch of the philosophical thought of pre-Islamic Iran is both a difficult and an easy task difficult in the sense that the texts on which this study must be based are not philosophical in the proper sense of the word, but rather theological or sometimes even mythological, and we have to abstract from them their philosophical gist, translating their ideas into modern philosophical terminology, through a rather personal work of interpretation; easy in the sense that, in this work of reinterpretation, we have to renounce completely a solution of the extremely complicated historical problems put by Iranic philology.

An attempt at a philosophical reinter-pretation of the Mazdaic outlook can be based, in our opinion, exclusively on the only concrete and systematic form of Mazdaism we know: the late Mazdaism of the Pahlavi books of the Sassanian period and the early times of Islam.

The almost insoluble problems raised by the pre-Islamic religion (or, according to others, religions) of Iran depend chiefly on the extreme confusion of different types of religiosity-local religion, religion of the elite, etc.

Concerning the sources of Mazdaism the only comparatively sure points are (a) that the Gathas of the Avesta are very old and probably date back to Zarathustra himself (e. 700-600 B.C.); and (b) that the most systematic and the richest Pahlavi texts were written in the third/ninth century, i.e., two centuries after the Islamic conquest of Iran.

An accurate dating of the materials between these two chronological limits (the seventh century B.C. and the ninth century A.D.) seems still impossible and all the learned conclusions of the scholars (who often change their minds from year to year) appear to be no more than conjectures.

Moreover, the materials chronologically placed between these two dates are sometimes typologically so incongruous that it is very easy to abstract from them a certain type of religion and attribute it to the founder, making of him, e.g., either an idealistic philosopher or a shaman, and then explain the development of Mazdaism that followed either as the decay or a repaganization of a highly philosophical religion, or as a successive theologization of originally mystical perceptions.

It would be no exaggeration to say that the only comprehensive approach to the enormous and extremely varied religio-philosophical materials contained in the corpus of Mazdaic texts is to consider them synchronistically as a whole. Though one may not agree with many details of Professor Corbin's theories, one cannot but agree with him when he writes:

“A spiritual morphology that attempts a reconstruction and reevaluation of the actually living devotion impels us to consider the canonical Avesta, or at least what we possess of it, its ritual, as preserving at its centre the Psalms (Gathas) of Zarathustra and the middle-Iranic (Pahlavi) and Parsi translations and commentaries as a whole.

Also in this case, it seems that when the believer recites his Bible or when the Liturgy is celebrated, all objections taking historical stratification as a pretext fail to reach their aim. If we always ask: `Whence does it come?' we practically do nothing more than wander here and there, formulating hypotheses vainly following one another. We should rather ask: `At what does it aim?' Then the soul would answer, accounting for what has been its purpose."¹

We shall, therefore, make as the basis of the present chapter the latest form of pre-Islamic Iranian religiosity, the form represented by the whole corpus of the Avestic and Pahlavi Scriptures possessed and venerated by the Parsecs (not in the sense, of course, that we shall follow necessarily their interpretation of them). For it is safer for a philosopher to interpret an actual and concrete corpus of religious scriptures, than to interpret the ever-changing reinter-pretation of them made by the historians.

It will be useful, however, to reproduce, as an introduction; the most widely accepted diachronical explanation of the numerous so-called "contradictions" of the present Mazdaic corpus, even though it does not seem to be completely satisfactory. The difficulty is that much of the materials generally considered being very old are much later or at least they "function" in a much later theological organism.

The branch of the Aryans who in about the eleventh century B. C. detached themselves from their brethren, penetrating afterwards into the jungles of India (a natural place for magic and richest mytho-poetical phantasy) and made the yellow and dry plateau of Iran their country, had obviously brought with them their naturalistic religion, clearly delineated in the Vedas and rather similar to that of old Rome and Greece.

The sacrifices of animals (e. g., the ox) and the ceremonial libation of the fermented juice of a plant, haoma (Skr. soma), were frequent and taken as sacred rites.

At a certain moment, not yet determined with sufficient clearness, though the majority of scholars seem now to fix it at the sixth century B.C., the remarkable personality of a religious reformer, Zarathustra, appeared in the oriental zone of the Iranian plateau.

His name still resists all attempts at etymological interpretation. "The man with the old camels" seems to be the most accepted one. Zarathustra, possibly utilizing a pre-existing naturalistic sky-god (Varuna), created a new monotheism, so strong that the name of the old gods (devas) came to signify "demons."

This was, up to some time ago, a "classical" theory of the historians of Mazdaism, but now it seems to cede to new hypotheses maintaining that the demonization of the devas was prior to Zarathustra. Henning even asserted that Zarathustra's reform was a "protest against monotheism." The seventeen hymns (Gathas), written in a rather archaic language and forming the central part of the Avesta are generally considered to be the work of Zarathustra himself.

The Gathas uphold veneration for a single supreme God, Ahura Mazda, the "Wise Lord" (according to some like Pagliaro, "the Thinking Lord"). He

is accompanied by a cortege of abstract quasi-personified powers or attributes, the six Amesha Spentas (Holy Immortals): Asha (the Cosmic Law or Righteousness), Vohu Manah (Good Thought or Benevolence), Khshathra (Sovereignty), Armaiti (Piety, Docility), Haurvatat (Integrity), Ameretat (Immortality).

The Gathas reject rites and sacrifices, especially the ritual killing of cattle and the Haoma cult, preach a very high personal ethic, and enforce wise social laws, foremost of which is the fostering of agriculture against nomadism.

In order to explain evil in the world, the idea of the influence of the Evil Spirit (Angra Mainyu) is introduced; in front of it stands Spenta Mainyu (the Holy Spirit), not identical (at least in this oldest stage) with the Wise Lord (Ahura Mazda). This monotheism, tendentially dualistic but, in any case, clearly prophetic and anti-naturalistic, “crossed the spiritual sky of Iran as a meteor” (Duchensne- Guillemin).

The religion which will be now called Mazdaic-mazdayasna means “one who worships the Wise (Lord)” reabsorbed in course of time some of the older “heathen” rites and cults, e. g., Haoma's cult, and also accepted the natu-ralistic gods of the ancient pantheon, some of them like Mithra, the god of sunlight and, then, of the Covenant and Oath being just adopted, while others being inescapably transformed into deva's. According to some scholars, how-ever, the religion of Mithra existed as a distinct creed in old Iran.

At the same time dualism, not so strong and systematized in the beginning, was becoming deeper: it became a cosmologico-metaphysical contrast between a good God, Ahura Mazda, and an evil God, Angra Mainyu, both having their own “creations,” the former being accompanied by his Amesha Spentas (ever more clearly personified in course of time) and Yazatas (Venerable Beings, “gods,” like Mithra, the goddess Anahita probably introduced from Babylon, etc.), and the latter by the band of the devils and druj's (literally “lies”). Lying seems to have been the worst sin for Zarathustra.

This religion was at a certain moment monopolized by the Magi. Who the Magi were, is another crux of the historians of Mazdaism. Herodotus speaks of the Magi as a tribe of Media and attributes to them a religion rather different from that of the old Persians. Father G. Messina tried to demonstrate that they formed a closed caste with such characteristic features as those of a “tribe.” According to him, their name (magavan) means “bearers of the gift” of Zarathustra's doctrine.

Their power increased rapidly and it seems that already during the Achaemenid period (558-330 B.C.) the education of the future kings was entrusted to them. They succeeded in spreading among the people certain ethical principles and rites of their founder's religion.

But this success was not complete, and this is one of the many possible explanations of the discrepancies between the visible and popular religion of the Persians and the quasi-esoteric religion of the Magi. According to the

same view, the Magi became afterwards the “philosophers” of their doctrine, and tried to develop it especially to explain its dualism.

Christian sources of the fourth century A.D. (Theodore of Mopsuestia) speak of the birth, in the milieu of the Magi, of the doctrine or heresy called Zurvanism that explained away dualism through the acceptance of a supreme god Zurvan (time) as father of both Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu. But some scholars now speak of Zurvanism as an actually autonomous religion; and others, turning the preceding theory upside down, consider the Magi to be the bearers of the less philosophical, most magical, and punctiliously ritualistic aspect of Zoroastrianism.

In the meanwhile ritual and cult, with complicated precepts of legal purity, were gradually prevailing and when, after a dark period of incubation under the Arsacid Dynasty (250 B. C. 224 A. D.) the caste of the Magi obtained unparalleled power, with the advent of the Sassanians (224-651 A.D.), Mazdaism, now a State religion, became an intolerant faith, persecutor of every form of heresy.

Heresy (as it happened first with Manichaeism supported at its beginnings by King Shahpur, 241-272 A. D., and then with communistic Mazdakism, favoured by King Kavat, 488-531) was sometimes a useful pretext for the warrior caste of the kings—a caste that seemed to possess its own religious tradition different from that of the priestly caste—to escape the excessive power of the Magi.

The discontentment hidden under the outwardly uniform orthodoxy, the unbearable poverty of the peasants, never totally imbued with the religion of the elite, and no doubt possessing their own religious customs and traditions practically unknown to us, and the struggle between Throne and Altar, were some of the causes that rendered the conquest of Iran by the Arabs so astonishingly easy.

The Mazdaic religion is commonly defined as “the religion of dualism.” A deeper analysis shows that dualism is not the only basic feature of Mazdaism.

The account of Mazdaic philosophy that follows is divided in a rather unorthodox way, necessitated by the fact that Mazdaism is not a philosophy, into the following four sections: (1) The Concept of Myth, (2) Mazdaic Angelism, (3) the Double Dualism, (4) the Idea of Time.

1. The Concept of Myth

One of the most interesting features of Mazdaic thought is its being at the same time mythical and theologico-philosophical. The Mazdaic texts are very rich in myths, but these are never narrated ex professo; they are rather hinted at in the texts the chief purpose of which is not that of telling myths. Sufficient attention has not been paid to this “style” of Mazdaic Scriptures.

This is true not only of the later Pahlavi books but also of Avesta itself. In it myths are inlaid in liturgical hymns or legal and canonical texts in the form of explanations and comments. Avesta shows thus a rather “recent” type of myth-telling. The myth has never in Avesta—even in the case of myths having a naturalistic origin—the freshness of the Vedic myth; it is

always in a phase of rational or theological explanation, and is used as a hint or example in texts that remain fundamentally theological.

We have just mentioned “myths having an ancient naturalistic origin.” A sufficiently clear instance of a Mazdaic myth of this type is that of the killed dragon. In the Aban Yasht² a hymn to the angel of Waters, Ardvi Sura Anahita, containing a list of all those who in ancient times made sacrifices to that angel-goddess, we read among other stories this passage, clearly explaining and confirming the efficacy of prayer and sacrifice to that angel:

“To her did Thraetaona, the heir of the valiant Athwya clan, offer up a sacrifice in the four-cornered Varena, with a hundred male horses, a thousand oxen, and ten thousand lambs.

He begged of her a boon; saying: ‘Grant me this, O Good, most beneficent Ardvi Sura Anahita! that I may overcome Azhi Dahaka, the three-mouthed, the three-headed, the six-eyed one who has a thousand senses, that most powerful, fiendish Druj, that demon, baleful to the world, the strongest Druj that Angra Mainyu created against the material world, to destroy the world of the good principle; and that I may deliver his two wives, Savanghavach and Erenavach, who are the fairest of body amongst women, and the most wonderful creatures in the world.’ Ardi Sura Anahita granted him that boon, as he was offering libations, giving gifts, sacrificing, and entreating that she would grant him that boon.”

Comparison with other cultures allows us to reconstruct an ancient myth originally connected with the New Year Feast and with the rites aiming at defeating drought. A divine, Thraetaona (the Faridun of Firdausi's Shahnameh), conquers the fortress of the Dragon and defeats and kills him. The Waters that were prisoners in his castle are now freed and so are the women held by the monster as slaves in his harem.

Now rain falls fertilizing the earth and the young hero-liberator celebrates the hieres gamos with the liberated women. But this is simply a reconstruction and the readers or hearers of the Avesta probably had no idea of the original, authentically mythico-ritual, meaning of this tale; it probably sounded to them simply as a nice example of pietas towards the angel and of national heroism by Thraetaona.

But there are also other myths, utilized exactly like this and in similar contexts, of a purely theologico-symbolical origin. For instance, there is the myth of Vishtaspa who frees the enchained Daena, told always with the same emblematical conciseness in the Farvardin Yasht.³

This Yasht is chiefly a list of fravashis (see below) or holy men, to whom the believer offers sacrifices. The enterprises of some of these holy men are narrated here in order to encourage the worshipper to offer sacrifice to their respective fravashi. Concerning the fravashi of Vishtaspa, the king who protected Zarathustra, accepted his religion (Daena), and spread it, the hymn says:

“We worship the fravashi of the holy king Vishtaspa; the gallant one, who was the incarnate Word, the mighty-speared and lordly one; who, driving the Druj before him, sought wide room for the holy Daena . . . ; who made himself the arm and support of this law of Ahura, the law of

Zarathustra. We took her (i. e., the Daena, or Religion) standing bound from the hands of the Hunus, and established her to sit in the middle (of the world), high ruling, never falling back, holy, nourished with plenty of cattle and pastures, blessed with plenty of cattle and pastures.”

Here we see, contrary to the former instance, a myth germinating from history. The process of mythicization has reached a very advanced stage, but not so advanced as to render it impossible to recognize the historical materials that lie at the basis of a myth. First of all, a Daena means “Religion,” in a quasi-personified sense; secondly, the fact-myth is connected with the work of the Prophet Zarathustra and that of the holy King Vishtaspa.

But it is highly interesting to note that the attributes attached to his name are the same as those of the angel Saraosha⁴ of which Vishtaspa is, in a sense, the terrestrial emblem; in the same way as Zarathustra is the terrestrial symbol of Ahura Mazda. We notice here an important moment of the passage from history to myth in Mazdaism and also, at the same time, an important aspect of the Mazdaic approach to myth and reality.

Mazdaic thought, while denaturalizing and ethicizing naturalistic myths, embodies historical events, in semi-mythical persons, and in so doing “angelizes” history. We are in the presence of a “visionary” theology-philosophy, in which intellectual entities assume personal forms, moving in an intermediate world of vision (probably a heritage of the mystical experiences of the Founder) so organized as to give a characteristic Unitarian savour to the whole Mazdaic thought.

2. Angelism

Once the mythical logic of Mazdaism has been understood, we can proceed to the study of some of the most significant details of the Mazdaic Weltanschauung. The first key to open its shrines is that, in Mazdaic thought, the Absolute is a personal God, the Wise Lord Ahura Mazda, a God that reminds us of the Biblical and Qur'anic God.

But His attributes are not (be they eternal or created) intelligible concepts; rather they are themselves “persons” or angels.” Professor Corbin⁵ rightly remarks that the Mazdean, instead of putting to himself the questions: “What is Time? What is Earth? What is Water?”, asks: “Who is Time? Who is Earth? Who is Water?”

And so we find in Mazdaic texts that Time is a Youth of fifteen, Earth is the Archangel Spenta Armaiti (the Holy Piety), Water is the beautiful goddess-angel Ardvi Sura Anahita. The problem lies in rightly interpreting the verb is: in which sense are these images of vision what they represent? Certainly they are not angels in the Biblical and the Qur'anic sense of mere messengers or servants of God; Corbin compares them rightly with the dii-angeli of Proclus.

The Zamyad Yasht, speaking of the six Amesha Spentas, sings thus:⁶ “..the Amesha Spentas, the bright ones, whose looks perform their wish, tall, quickly coming to do, strong, and lordly, who are undecaying and holy; who are all seven (their seventh is Ahura Mazda himself) of one thought; who are all seven of one speech, who are all seven of one deed; whose thought is

the same, whose speech is the same, whose father and commander is the same, namely the Maker, Ahura Mazda; who see one another's soul thinking of good thoughts, thinking of good words, thinking of good deeds, thinking of Garonmana (the supreme paradise, 'house of the hymns'), and whose ways are shining as they go down to the libations; who are the makers and governors, the shapers and overseers, the keepers and preservers of these creations of Ahura Mazda.

It is they who shall restore the world, which will thenceforth never grow old and never die, will become never decaying, never rotting, ever living, eyes increasing, and master of its wish, when the dead will rise, when life and immortality will come, and the world will be restored at its wish”

Here it seems that the Amesha Spentas play a role not very dissimilar to that of the “persons” of the Christian Trinity. It is remarkable that they are six, but are called seven, Ahura Mazda himself being the seventh. This concept of Ahura Mazda adding himself as the last to every hierarchical series of beings is often found in Mazdaic books. In order to understand it we must remember a sentence in the first chapter of Bundahishn:⁷

“For Ohrmazd is both spiritual and material,” or, according to other translations: “For Ohrmazd both creations are celestial”; in other words, everything is, for him, in trans-cendent, celestial stage. God can descend into all the stages of Being, eternally First and Last of every embodied or disembodied hierarchy, because, sub specie Dei, everything is transcendent and celestial and this descent can in no way “contaminate” Him.

But these six Amesha Spentas are also the archangelic emblem-personification of the primordial elements: Earth (Spenta Armaiti), Cattle (Vohu Manah), Fire (Asha), Metals (Khshathra), Water (Haurvatat), Plants (Ameretat).

They are the elements not as allegories of them, but as living personal symbols, as “Lords of the Species.” The concept of Ratu, Lord of the Species, is present everywhere in Mazdaic books. The Lord of the Species “Woman” is, for instance, the mythico-historical Daena, “religion”; the Lord of the Species “Bird” is the mythical bird Saena meregha, or in modern Persian simurgh.

The theological abstractions that presented themselves to the philosophico-ecstatic mind of the Prophet Zarathustra in a period in which a transformation of the mythico-theological concepts into pure philosophy was premature, assumed the plastic life of the gods of the former naturalistic pantheon.

Holy Piousness, for example, came to be the Earth instead of remaining an abstractly pure intellectual form. Or, better, it did not come to be in the historical sense of the expression, but was probably already so double-faced in the mind of the Prophet, the historical Zarathustra or some other prophet, whose personal mystical experience is fundamental to the understanding of this as of all other concepts.

The connection of the Amesha Spentas with their natural kingdoms is already retraceable in the Gathas. In Yt. 31.9 Armaiti is seen as specially favouring the earth's tiller. A verse after, the thrifty toiler in the fields is called one “who nourisheth Vohu Manah (“the Good Thought” the Cattle),

while in v. 21 Ahura Mazda will give “the fat of Good Thought (Cattle)” to him who is His friend.

But in the same Gathas we often hear that Ahura Mazda created the world through Good Thought, which in these contexts seems to have nothing to do with cattle. Whatever the historical origins of these angelico-symbolical identifica-tions may have been, the fact remains that they had the highly important function of transfiguring the elements of nature into ethical values.

Or, to put it better, there is an exchange of functions: natural elements are coloured with ethos, and ethical values live a cosmic life. This is one of the most typical features of Mazdaism.

The Supreme God of Mazdaism has further interesting aspects that make him rather different from the God of classical monotheisms. He is, for instance, situated in a sort of transcendent Time and Space,⁸ Boundless Time and Space-Light, or Uncreated Light (but the word for Space, gas, could be also mythologic-ally interpreted as “throne”).

There is, in other words, a time-tension in God. But the student of Mazdaism becomes even more astonished when he comes to know that Ahura Mazda has got a soul, or better a fravashi. As the idea of soul is a specially interesting aspect of Mazdaic thought, we shall treat it here as a particular case of Mazdaic “angelism.”

In Mazdaic anthropology, according to Bundahishn,⁹ man was “fashioned in five parts-body (tan), soul (jan), spirit (ruvan), prototype (adhvenak) and fravashi.

Body is the material part; soul, that which is connected with the wind-the inhaling and exhaling of breath; spirit, that which with consciousness in the body hears, sees, speaks and knows; the prototype is that which is situated in the station of the Sun; the fravashi is that which is in the presence of Ohrmazd, the Lord.

He was created in this fashion because, during the period of the assault of the Aggressor, men die, their bodies rejoin the earth, their souls the wind, their prototypes the Sun, their spirits the fravashi, so that the demons could not destroy the spirit.”

This is what happens during the period of the “Assault” or of the Mixture (gumechishn) of the good and evil creations. At the end of this world, however, a real resurrection of the body will take place: the dead will be “reconstructed” (rist virast). The Saviour (born from Zarathustra's miraculously preserved sperm) will perform a sacrifice (yazishn) in which the bull Hatayosh will be killed, and from his fat and the white Haoma the ambrosia (anosh) will be prepared. All men will drink it and become immortal.

A pure concept of the “immortality of the soul,” in the Greek sense of the term, seems extraneous to Mazdaic thought. Every (good) man is already an angel, fravashi, eternally in the presense of Ahura Mazda; resurrection of the body too is not exactly identical with the same idea in Christian and Muslim tradition, for it happens in a moment which is not, properly

speaking, a historical moment; but the epoch of frasho-kereti (Phl. frashkart) which is no more in Finite Time but in Boundless Time.

The metaphysical peculiarity of this epoch is also clearly shown by the immolation of the Bull, otherwise in “normal time, a horrible sin for Mazdaism.”

While the first three parts of the human compound do not need any explanation, we have to consider here the two concepts of prototype (adhvenak) and fravashi. The former is the heritage of an older astro-biological idea, common also in India, according to which the prototypical soul of the different categories of beings is preserved in the heavenly bodies. The race-type of Cattle is preserved, for instance, in the moon (gaochithra, “having the form of Kine,” is an Avestic name for the moon), and that of Plants in the stars.¹⁰

Deeper and more easily interpretable in an ethical and philosophical way is the concept of fravashi. This term does not appear in the Gathas (which also ignore adhvenak, Mazdaicized afterwards), but in the so-called “more recent” parts of the Avesta it has already become the aspect that will remain fixed in the Pahlavi tradition. It is clearly kept distinct from “soul” in passages like Yt. 26. 7, and it seems that, at least in the beginning, only heroes had been considered to be having a fravashi.

Bailey's researches have demonstrated that the idea of fravashi is associated with “the defensive power emanating from a hero, even after his death.” This originally aristocratic idea suffered a process of democratization in the course of time: every (righteous) man thus got his fravashi, whose protective and defensive force is exerted not only in his favour, but in favour of all those who invoke her.

The “fravashis of the Righteous” are seen as protectors of specially sacred places, of the mythical lake or sea (Vouru-kasha, of the white Haoma, which we saw as an important ingredient of future ambrosia, of Zarathustra's semen from which the future Saviours will be born, etc. In their function as welcomers of the righteous souls after death they remind us of the Germanic Valkyrs.

But the fravashis are also something more. In a passage of Avesta¹¹ we read: “And these we present hereby to the fravashi of Zarathustra Spitama, the saint, for sacrifice, propitiation, and praise, and to those of the people who love Righteousness, with all the holy fravashis of the saints who are dead and who are living, and to those of men who are as yet unborn, and to those of the prophets who will serve us, and will labour to complete the progress and renovation of the world.”

Fravashis are, already now, real angelic doublets of the pious and good men, past, present, and future. Also the living seem to have already a fravashi in a sense slightly similar to but not at all identical with the “Guardian Angel” of the Christian tradition. But there is even more: we saw that Zarathustra, the Prophet, the “terrestrial God” as he is called in some parts of Avesta, has his fravashi, and this is obvious. However, it may seem strange to a rationalistic mind that the Archangels and even Ahura Mazda Himself have their fravashis.

In Vendidad 19, 46-48 Zarathustra is invited to invoke the fravashi of Ahura Mazda. This fascinating idea seems to assume a doublet of God Himself in a further hyper-transcendent dimension of Being; but, as is often the case with many original and highly interesting Mazdaic terms and concepts, this idea is mentioned as if by chance and is soon dropped, without any inter-pretation or comment.

These angelic doublets of the Good are also symbols of Free Choice (see also below). According to a typically Mazdaic myth-theologoumenon preserved in Bundahishn,¹² at the beginning of the millennia of the period of "Mixture" (gumehishn), Ahura Mazda asked the fravashis whether they preferred to remain untouched by and protected from every danger in the invisible, trans-cendent world or whether they were ready to descend and incarnate themselves in the visible material world in order to struggle with Evil.

The fravashis accepted the second alternative. In this way a sort of de-doubling happened: now, in this material world the real man is his fravashi, his angelic ego, that is at the same time his destiny and his true transcendental self; the moral responsibility of man is, in a sense, "transcendentalized."

Sin becomes equivalent to the treason of an angel. Metaphysically, every discussion on the existence of soul, etc., is rendered useless by this acceptance of the experienced fact of apriority of angel over man.

We said that the Gathas do not mention the term fravashi. But they contain another idea that certainly contributed to give a new and ethical meaning to the (probably pre-Zarathustrian) heroic myth of the Valkyr-fravashi.

We mean the idea of Daena (Phl. den). This term has been etymologically analyzed in the most discordant ways by philologists, looking for a semantic explanation which may give reason for the double meaning of the word: "religion" and "deep soul," or better angelic personification of human deeds. Here are some interesting Gathic passages containing the term Daena:

"He who renders the Saint deceived, for him shall later be destruction: long life shall be his lot in the darkness; foul shall be his foods his speech shall be of the lowest. This is the life, O ye vile! to which your deeds and your Daena will bring you!"¹³

"Yea, I will declare the world's two first spirits, of whom the more bountiful thus spake to the harmful: Neither our thoughts, nor our commands, nor our understandings, nor our beliefs, nor our deeds, nor our Daenas, nor our souls are at one."¹⁴

"But their (of the Evil ones) souls and their daenas will groan when they will approach the Chinvat Bridge "¹⁵

"Declare to me, O Ahura, that path of the Good Thought where the Daena of the Saviours, i. e., their good works (ya hukereta), will taste the joys of Righteousness ... "¹⁶

A later text of Avesta, the Hadekht Nask¹⁷ tells of the righteous soul meeting, after death, his Daena in the form of a beautiful girl of fifteen; here

we see again the mytho-poetic tendency of Mazdaic thought, making of every intelligible entity an angel.

If we examine the above-quoted passages we shall see that in all of them we could freely translate Daena as “religious works,” ethical acts metaphysically considered. The fact that these acts “groan”¹⁸ is not at all astonishing, if we remember the easiness with which Mazdeans personify ideas. This explains also how a fravashi has been attributed to Ahura Mazda himself. Ahura Mazda has indeed a Daena in the Gathas; in Bundahishun¹⁹ “omniscience and goodness,” i. e., supreme religious actions, are called. Ahura Mazda’s den (Daena, “religion”).

The primary sense of Daena seems to be ethico-religious. It is “religious acting” that (as is the case in quite a different mental environment with the Hindu karma) creates a body, is representable visibly, and for Ahura Mazda is His light²⁰ and for man his angel of light. As pointed out by Pagliano, it was this Zarathustrian Daena that modified the warrior fravashis (Dumezil) into ethical angels.

And it is in our opinion especially the myth of choice that gave also Ahura Mazda a fravashi. In which sense is Ahura Mazda so similar to the righteous man as to have Himself a fravashi? Chiefly in the sense that Ahura Mazda also made a choice of the two primordial Spirits—say the Gathas—“the most holy Spirit chose the Truth.”²¹

This sense of angelic ethos has thus produced one of the deepest ideas of Mazdaism, the image of the “soul-angel-valkyr-religious work.”

3. The Double Dualism

Choice, the central ethical concept of Mazdaism, is a choice between two. This leads us to examine the radical dualism that, according to many, is the basic idea of this religious philosophy. According to a Gathic passage,²² “the two primordial Spirits that, in deep sleep, were heard as Twins, are the Excellent and the Evil, in thoughts, words, and deeds; and between these two the wise, not the foolish, have made their choice

And when these two Spirits met, they first established Life and Non-Life and (they decided) that, at the end, the worst existence would be that of the followers of Lie, and the best spiritual force (Manah) would be that of the followers of Truth. Between these two Spirits the followers of the Druj chose the acting of the Worst One, but the Most Holy Spirit, who covers himself with the firm stones of heaven as his robes, chose the Truth, and those who desired to satisfy Ahura Mazda through righteous actions did the same.”

Good and evil are thus connected with an ethical choice, even if it seems that in the most ancient parts of Avesta, the Holy Spirit is not exactly identical with Ahura Mazda but is probably Ahura Mazda in His choosing, “acting” aspect. Another point that shows the typical ethicism of Zarathustrian dualism is the name, “Lie,” attributed to the evil principle. But in Gathic thought the evil beings and the Evil Spirit are not “fallen creatures” of God, as in the classical monotheism.

They are beings of a purely negative and destructive nature, which it would be absurd to think of as having been created by a good God and the

final destiny of which seems to be that of being reduced to nothing. Ahriman, in a later Pahlavi catechism (Pandnamak-i Zartusht), is-if the translation is correct-“a being who does not exist, who received nothing in himself,” and the same is endowed in Bundahishn with the strange quality pas-bavishnih (“post-existence,” as opposed to the positive “pre-existence” of Ahura Mazda).

This ethos is, however-and here is again the typical feature of Mazdaic thought-strongly “cosmicized”: Goodness means, above all, promotion of Being, Life, and agriculture. It means “growth” (a word often used in the Mazdaic texts) of good material existence too. “Righteousness, the Bundahishn says openly, obeys the same rules as (cosmic) Creation.”²³ Ethos means also material positivity. The evil people (we often hear, in Mazdaic texts, curses against the nomads, the non-producers, and the killers of cattle) are, above at the destroyers of existence.

We can now better understand the second type of dualism, a dualism now not of choice but of transcendence between the invisible (or celestial) menok, and the visible (or terrestrial) getik; for God creates the terrestrial world to protect, foster, or help (adhyarih) the celestial world, which is, in a way, its prototype, its root (bun).

This dualism is, however, radically different from the Platonic dualism. A very instructive passage of one of the most philo-sophical treatises of Mazdaism, the Shikand Gumanik Vichar written in the third/ninth century,²⁴ will show this difference in a very clear way.

“The getik is the fruit (bar) of menok; menok is its root (bun) The fact that getik is the fruit and menok its root becomes clear when one thinks that every visible and tangible thing passes from invisibility to visibility.

It is already well known that man and the other visible and tangible creatures come from the invisible and intangible menok; in the same way, the form, the species, and the height and the breadth of a being are the same as those of the being that generated it; the body of man and other creatures, which is now mani-fested, was hidden and invisible in the semen that came from his parents; the semen itself, that was in the loins of the parents, passed to the stage of manifestation, visibility, and tangibility.

We can therefore know by certainty that this visible and tangible getik has been created from an invisible and intangible menok, and there is no doubt that it will come back from visibility and tangibility to the invisibility and intangibility of the same menok”.

We see from this passage that this Mazdaic dualism differs from the Platonic and Gnostic dualism chiefly in the sense that for it matter and the world are in no way an “inferior” stage of Being. On the contrary, Matter is, in a sense, the most mature and perfect aspect (the fruit) of Spirit. It differs, however, also from the views implied by too simple a creationistic monotheism inasmuch as it seems to admit not only “one” personal God and His immediate creation, but various stages of Being.

Regarding the first point we refer the reader to a text²⁵ in which it is clearly stated that the terrestrial world (getik) is higher in dignity than paradise (vahisht), because it is in this terrestrial, embodied, visible, and

tangible world only that the battle against the powers of Evil can be fought and won-a struggle that makes it possible for the soul “to strive with his thought (ahang-menishn) towards Beatitude.”

One of the most important miraculous deeds accomplished by the Prophet Zarathustra was that of breaking the bodily forms (shikastan-i kalput) of the Devils. Without their bodies the Devils are less perfect and less dangerous in their struggle. And here we find again the fundamentally ethical or rather cosmo-ethical function of the getik-menok dualism. Matter is useful in the struggle against Evil.

Regarding the second point, let us remember that in the first chapter of Bundahishn, which contains one of the most detailed accounts of the double creation of the world, the Mazdaic vision seems to involve various stages of creation, the highest of which are prototypical, emblematical. Even from some passages of the Gathas it may appear that God created first the prototypes of things, the Primordial Ox, the Protoanthropos, the Plant, etc.

Coming back to the last sentence of the above-quoted passages of Shikand -Gumanik Vichar, we see how this life of positive struggle in the material world blossomed forth from the celestial world in a cycle that is at the end destined to be reabsorbed into the celestial and invisible stage, once its ethical task has been fulfilled. Thus it seems that even the first dualism, that between Good and Evil, will become a monism again at the consummation of Time. Here we come to the idea of Time and Cycle as the instrument of a victorious struggle.

4. Time and Cycle

With regard to the question of Time also the Mazdaic thought shows an originality of conception that distinguishes it both from the Indian outlook assuming “flight from Time” as supreme salvation and beatitude, and from the classical Semitic forms of monotheism by which Time seems to be conceived as an irreversible “line.”

In order never to forget the peculiar “angelical” character of Mazdaism, the reader is reminded that in Bundahishn²⁶ Time is an angelic person, a youth of fifteen, “bright, with white eyes, tall and mighty, whose might is from valour, not from robbery and violence.”

In other words, the Mazdean, in order to understand Time, did not intellectually “discuss” it as we do (that is why European scholars rather anachronistically find so many “contradictions” in the Mazdaic texts referring to Time) but rather experi-mented with it in vision. And this vision shows them what is told in the first chapter of the same theological book.²⁷

“Thus it is revealed in the Good Religion. Ohrmazd was on high in omni-science and goodness: for Infinite Time He was ever in the Light. Omniscience and Light are the robes of Ohrmazd: some call them “religion” (den, see above)

The Time of the robes is infinite like Ohrmazd, and Goodness and Religion, during all the time of Ohrmazd, were, are and will be-Ahriman, slow in knowledge, whose will is to smite, was deep down in the darkness: (he was) and is, yet will not be. The will to smite is his robe, and darkness is his place: some call it the Endless Darkness.”

The cosmic drama unfolds itself in a Time and in a Space, but Ahrimanic time is composed of only two moments, past and present. Time and Space have also a transcendent aspect. Transcendent Time is the so-called “Boundless Time” (zaman-i akanarak) or “Time of the Long Dominion” (zaman-i derang -khvatai). Time (not of course our “serial” time) exists even in the heart of the Absolute. There is not, in Mazdaic thought, too simple a contrast between Time and Eternity. But let us continue our reading and see the “aim” of our serial time.

Ohrmazd creates first a purely transcendent prototypical creation. Ahriman rises from the depths, sees it, and rushes forward to smite and destroy it. When Ohrmazd sees that struggle is unavoidable, He says to Himself: “If I do not fix a time for battle against him, then Ahriman could do to my creation even as he threatened, and the struggle and the mixture will be ever-lasting; and Ahriman could settle in the mixed state of creation and take it to himself. And “Ohrmazd said to the Destructive Spirit: ‘Fix a time, so that by this pace we may extend the battle for nine thousand years.’

For He knows that by fixing a time in this way the Destructive Spirit would be made powerless.

Then the Destructive Spirit, not seeing the end, agreed to that treaty, just as two men who fight a duel fix a term saying: ‘Let us on such a day do battle till night falls.’ This too did Ohrmazd know in His omniscience that within these nine thousand years, three thousand would pass entirely according to the will of Ohrmazd, three thousand years in mixture would pass according to the will of both Ohrmazd and Ahriman, and that in the last battle the Destructive Spirit would be made powerless and that He Himself would save creation from aggression.”

Limited time, i. e., serial time (during 9,000 years), is then conceived in an ethical light, just like the material world in which it is manifested. Serial time is something like a great detour, an ample digression from Infinite Time, but a substantially positive detour, because its aim is to render the battle against Evil possible and successful. Hence come some important consequences.

(a) Destiny - If Time is a “youth” and if, as it is said in another text,²⁸ “the creator Ohrmazd dyed Time with colour,” Time cannot be an a priori form in the Kantian sense. Time is objectively coloured; it can be practically identified with “destiny” (bakht, assigned lot). Some Mazdaic texts as, for example, the beautiful myth of the choice of the fravashis already mentioned, seem favourable to free-will, some others²⁹ seem in favour of predestination. Apart from the problems connected with the historical formation of these ideas, we must say that Mazdaic theology solves the problem in a rather consequential way.

Pahlavi Vendidad (5. 9. 33) maintains that “in the material world everything happens according to destiny (pat bakht), whereas in the celestial world everything is according to free action (pat kunishn). This solution of the problem of time is indeed a consequence of the angelic, emblematical outlook of Mazdaism.

Destiny is no more than the visible, terrestrial, getik aspect of its truer transcendent, invisible, naenok prototype, which is freedom. More- over, in

all this a part is also played by the Ohrmazd-Ahriman dualism, in the sense that Ahriman, through the creation of the seven accursed planets (these are for Mazdaism evil entities, while the fixed stars, and especially the Zodiacal signs are good, and called “the generals of Ohrmazd”), inserts himself into the play, trying to change the temporal destinies of men and of the world.

In this he succeeds, however, only temporarily. And there is still an-other interesting concept, that of bagho-bakht or portion allotted by the gods (divine destiny),³⁰ a “supplement,” as it were, of destiny, added to that initially established (or, to put it better, added to the terrestrial emblem of transcendent human freedom) in order to recompense specially meritorious actions. “But the gods, we read in the above-mentioned texts, rarely concede that supplement of destiny, and they manifest it only in the celestial world,” in order to avoid a possible destruction of it by Ahrimanic forces, if it is manifested visibly in the getik.

We must never forget that transcendent entities can struggle, and win and lose, only through their incarnation in the visible world.

It is, however, obvious that such an approach to the problem of destiny and free-will results in a fatalism even more radical than that reproached by some in the classical monotheistic religions.

This is true especially when we think that some theological schools of Mazdaism, e. g., Zurvanism, maintain that both gods, Ohrmazd and Ahriman, are subject to Time's power of destiny. Time (Zurvan) is regarded as supreme God; and even Ohrmazd³¹ is taken to have created the world “with the approval of Infinite Time” (pat afrin-i zaman-i akanark).

(b) The Apocatastasis - When we consider limited Time to be a detour, a digression from transcendent Infinite Time, we are able to understand better the idea of the “cosmic cycle” typical of Mazdaism. Reading theological Mazdaic texts one is impressed by a tendency to connect the facts and happenings of the proto-history with those of the end of the world.

The Heroes who will contribute to the creation of the “Future Body” (tan-i pasen) are the same Heroes as, at the dawn of existence, were the protagonists of the myth of the Beginning.

The Saviour, or, better, the three eschatological Saviours are sons of the first Revealer of the Faith, Zarathustra. They are practically Zara-thustra himself. To justify the enormous distance in time, there is the myth of Zarathustra's sperm miraculously preserved in a lake, protected by the fravashis.

The beginning is the end. There is, in the limited, serial time, a circle leading it fatally towards Infinite Time. Gayomart, the first Man, the Protoanthrope, will also be the first Resurrected man; the ancient hero Yam-shet (Mod. Pers. Jamshid) has already prepared, at the beginnings of history, the mythical Ark (var) to save men from the terrible trials of the End.

Past and Future seem united in an eternal Present, if seen sub specie menok. The Apocatastasis is, transcendently (menokiha), happening already (and some-times, we find in these theological texts future events told- by verbs in the past).

Serial time is like an immense “delay” from metaphysical Time, but there is in it a positive curving towards the Origin. All events of this period of “delay” are eschatologically justified. The ancient victory of Sahr, the Hero, on certain demonic monsters is explained as necessary, because, without it, “it would have been impossible to fulfil Resurrection and Future Life.”³²

It is, however, interesting to remark that the tan-i pasen, the “Future Body” or Future Life, is, though in a transcendent form, a real body and-at least judging by some texts-the renewed world will not be a mere re-identi-fication with the first stage of the prototypical menok creation, when it was “without thought, without touch, without movement in a moist stage like semen.”³³

On the contrary, the idea of the positivity of time, and that of the presence of an “Infinite Time” even in Eternity, seems to confer a colour of novelty and true Life to the new world, prepared by the struggling experience of the embodied creatures.

It would be, however, too risky to proceed in these considerations further; for, as mentioned before, the Mazdaic texts too often leave the reader in the expectation of something that never comes. A really theological and philosophical development of their highly suggestive and inter-esting intuitions is absent.

(c) Ethics - We have not to fix our ideas on the chivalrous ethics of the struggle situated in Time. This struggle, like that of “two men who fight a duel,” is a free one, one in which man can always succumb; but just because Time is also an angel, the struggle is coloured with a metaphysical, supreme, “engagement.” It transcends everyday's secular ethics. The metaphysico - -ethical responsibility of the Mazdean is such that he can pray in the words of the Gatha: “May we be such as those who will bring about the Transfiguration of the World.”³⁴

At the same time, however, and for the same reasons, Maz-daic ethics, rooted as it is in an objective Time, is a heavily heteronomous one. This causes it to be different not only from our modern autonomous ethics; but also from the purely theo-nomous ethics of the classical forms of mono-theism. Mazdaic ethics is still strictly connected with semi-mythical realities and with a moral dualism always in danger of transforming itself into a cosmological dualism.

In other words, Good and Evil mean to the Mazdean something more than what they mean to us. There is an entire series of situations and objects (Time is dyed with colour) intrinsically evil, Ahrimanic. We deduce from various passages in Mazdaic Scriptures that not only the nomad is naturally evil, but also the non-Iranian (aneran) is something objectively evil in comparison with the Iranian; insects and snakes are evil and so on.

The idea that the natural essence (gohr) of certain given beings is radically and metaphysically diabolical is very clear from the texts, and even some characters of history,³⁵ such as Alexander the Greek and Frasiyak the Turanian are no more than devilish creatures of Ahriman. The problem of how much did Evil permeate the creation of Ahura Mazda during the

period of “Mixture” has been solved by Mazdeans in a rather heavy, objective, classificatory way.

There have been, however, acute minds that started to meditate on the origin of that Evil which the traditional Mazdaic texts gave as an unexplained presupposition, or rather considered it a fact not needing any explanation. So was born Zurvanism, a theologico-philosophical school, that is considered by some European Orientalists to be a real autonomous religion.

To solve the problem of the origin of Evil, Mazdaic mind again created a myth: that of the primordial “doubt” of the Time-God (Zurvan), a doubt from which Ahriman was born, as a wicked “twin” of Ohrmazd. This school seems also to have shown a tendency, at least according to recent studies, to unify and sym-metrize the two dualisms already mentioned, in the sense that the material world, the realm of the flesh, begins to be identified with the Ahrimanic creation.

This remained only a very vague tendency in Zurvanism, but the identification, quite in the spirit of Gnosticism, was totally accomplished by Manichaeism, in the Iranian texts in which Zurvan is the name of the Supreme God, while Ohrmazd passes to the stage of Protoanthropos. But such identi-fication completely breaks the frame and organism of Mazdaic thought, that has always considered Manichaeism to be the most dangerous and most Ahrimanic heresy.

5. Conclusion

We have studied in too rapid and perhaps too unphilosophical a way, the mythical logic, the dualistic and angelical metaphysics, the chivalrous and fatalistic ethics of Mazdaism. It is now necessary to say a word on the impor-tance of this thought for the development of the subsequent phases of the philo-sophical history of Iran and Islam.

Those who know the strange and highly interesting world of Muslim “heresies” cannot deny that some features of their theological systems strongly remind us of the Mazdaic Weltanschauung. We mean, above all, their curious angelical approach to metaphysics, their tend-ency to recreate a purely “mental” mythology, identifying, e. g., the first intellect or Logos with this or that historical person, or telling, as the Nusairis do, that `Ali is the Ma'na (Supreme Meaning) and Muhammad is the Ism (Transcendent Name), etc.

Professor Corbin demonstrated in his remarkable essays the influence of pre-Islamic Iranian thought on Muslim thinkers like Suhrawardi Maqtul and on Isma'ilism, but his contempt of history and historical method seems rather exaggerated.

It is indeed very difficult to identify the historical channels through which these influences may have penetrated Islam. Many seem, how-ever, to forget that the most important Pahlavi theological texts were written in Muslim Persia in the most flourishing period of Islam and that discussions among Muslims, Christians, Manichaeans, and Mazdeans are documented in the third/ninth century at the Court of the Caliph al-Mamun.

The influences seem to have been mutual, for it has been shown that some Pahlavi texts constant quotations from the Qur'an and mention contemporary Muslim currents of thought such as that of the Mu'tazilah.³⁶

But apart from this direct influence, we could more surely admit another kind of indirect convergence. The late systematic Mazdaic thought was no doubt influenced by late Hellenism and Gnosticism, in the same way as the first Islamic thought was influenced by Hellenism, Sabaeism, and Gnosticism during the second and third/eighth and ninth centuries.

Hence there resulted, in both the spiritual worlds, a similar functioning that can give the illusion of direct influence, especially when similar languages, Pahlavi and modern Persian, are used.

If these considerations may seem to discourage the exaggerated enthusiasm of some pan-Iranianists (it is sufficiently known that even ancient Iran had been rather strongly "semitized" by Babylonian and old Syrian influences) they also point to the fact that the organic thought of Mazdaism assumed its truer and deeper historical value just because it did not remain the heritage of a single race or a single people, but, being in itself historically a composite product, synthesized itself with the seeds of the extremely original and rich philosophico-theological value, Islam, that was destined in its turn to spread them in their most mature form throughout the entire civilized world.

Note - The quotations from Avesta and Pahlavic texts are given, modifying here and there some rather contradictory European versions, after comparing them with the original texts. The writer is fully aware of the fact that some of them remain personal and rather conjectural interpretations.

It would be useless to reproduce here a more or less complete bibliography of studies and essays related to Mazdaism. A sufficiently large and recent list of reference works is contained in J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *The Western Response to Zoroaster* (Ratanbai Katrak Lectures, 1956), Oxford, 1958.

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Notes

1. Corbin, "Terre Celeste et Corps de Resurrection," *Eranos Jahrbuch*, Vol. XXII, p. 99.
2. *Yt.*, 5. 33 ff.
3. *Ibid.*, 13. 99-100.
4. *Ibid.*, 11. 23.
5. Corbin, *op. cit.*, p. 99.
6. *Yt.*, 19. 15=20.
7. *Bundahishn*; I. 32.
8. Cf. *Bundahishn*, I. 2.
9. *Ibid.*, III. 11.
10. Cf. *Yz.*, 12.
11. *Ibid.*, 24. 5.
12. *Bund.*, III. 21-22.
13. *Yt.*, 31. 20.
14. *Ibid.*, 45. 2.
15. *Ibid.*, 46. 11.
16. *Ibid.*, 34. 13.
17. *Ibid.*, 229.
18. *Ibid.*, 46.
19. *Bund.*, I. 2.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Yt.*, 30. 5.
22. *Ibid.*, 30. 3 ff.
23. *Bund.*, I. 22.
24. P.J de Menasce, *Ed.*, p. 92-94.
25. Madan, *Ed.*, *Denkart*, p. 271.
26. *Bund.*, III. 3.
27. *Ibid.*, I. 2 ff.
28. *Denkart*, quoted in Zaehner, *Zurvan*, p. 381.
29. For instance, *Menok-i Khrat*, Ch. VIII.
30. Cf. *ibid.*, Ch. XXIV.
31. *Ibid.*, Ch. VIII.
32. *Ibid.*, Ch. XXVII.
33. *Bund.*, I.
34. *Ft.*, 30. 9.

35. History, as it is obvious from the Mazdean's point of view, becomes the emblematical prelude to Apocatastasis and at the same time the symbol of a transcendent pugilistic prototype.

36. Their name and their idea of the aslah are mentioned and criticized in Shikand -Gumdnak Vichar, ed. Menasce, pp. 146-47.

Chapter 4: Greek Thought

Greek Thought by M.M Sharif

The Early Beginnings

The thinking of the early Greeks, like that of all ancient peoples, Egyptians, Babylonians, Hittites, Phoenicians, and Indians, was more mythological and speculative, more poetical and theogonical than physical or, metaphysical. It exhibited more the play of imagination than the working of reason. It is true that the basic effort of the Greeks, as of those other peoples, was to understand the origin and nature of things, but, like children, what they understood was a world of their own make-believe rather than the real world around them.

They personified all elements of nature into powerful and immortal divinities, having the same desires, passions, and relationships as themselves, and endowed them with powers more or less proportionate to their magnitude.

The sky, the earth, and the indeterminate space between them, the darkness under the earth, the ocean, river, or water supposed to encircle the earth, thunder and lightning, day and night, air and ether, love and soul, were all divinities respectively named as Ouranos, Gaia, Chaos, Erebus, Okeanos, Zeus, Day, Night, Air, Aether, Eros, and Psyche. Similarly, the lowest region below the earth was named Tartaros, the god of punishment, and the region above that, Hades, the god of the dead.

For Homer, all gods originated from Okeanos (water) and his sister and wife, Tethys. For Hesiod, in the beginning there was shapeless indeterminate space (Chaos) containing the seeds of all things. From him sprang Night, the mother of sleep and subduer of all gods, and the darkness under Mother Earth (Erebus); and the couple produced Day and the upper reaches of space (Aether).

Next came into being Mother Earth (Gaia) and love (Eros) the latter of which rules the hearts of gods and men. Mother Earth then gave birth to Heaven (Ouranos) and then by mating with this son, she produced water (Okeanos). For the Orphics, Night was the first and from her came Heaven and Mother Earth.

Though Eros was produced at a very early stage, reproduction was not always the result of mating. For example, in Hesiodic cosmogony Chaos produced Night and Erebus, and these two produced Ether and Day, and Gaia gave birth to Pontos, either without mating or without sleeping with their mates.

Similarly, in the Orphic account Kronos, the son of Sky (Ouranos), by a deceit as directed by his mother Earth (Gaia) hid himself in a place of ambush and when his father came along with Night and in desiring love spread himself over her, he sheared off his genitals. The drops of blood that fell fertilized Gaia and generated the Furies, Giants, and the Mehan Nymphs, and the blood that fell into the sea produced Aphrodite (Venus).

This element like many other contents of Greek cosmogony is of pre-Greek origin for its variants are found in the cultures of the Hittites and the Hindus as well. From Kronos all other gods sprang. Zeus (Jupiter), the god

of thunder and lightning, was one of his sons from his sister and consort Rhea. Apollo the sun-god, who with his horses and chariot sailed in the golden bowl round the streams of Okeanos, was the son of Zeus from Leto. Apollo's sister Artemis, the hunting goddess, was the mistress of all wild things.

This rough account of the earliest Greek speculation from the dawn of Greek civilization, about 1200 B.C. down to the seventh century B.C., clearly indicates that it concerned itself with (i) the nature of things in the universe, (ii) the nature of gods, and (iii) the origin of the world and the gods. There-fore it can be described to be cosmological, theological, and cosmogonical. Its language was poetry.

Greek Philosophy in the Mainland and the Islands of Asia Minor

Ionic Philosophy

It goes to the credit of the philosophers of Miletus, the metropolis of Ionia, a Greek colony in Asia Minor ruled by Persia, to have divested Greek thought of theogony and cosmogony and made the phenomena of nature and their origin their chief concern. Their thought was, however, more physical and cosmological than metaphysical. Each of them attempted to discover a single basic material from which everything sprang.

Thales

The first of this group of thinkers was Thales (b.c. 640 B.C.) of Miletus, in Ionia which was a commercially developed Greek colony in Asia Minor and had close contacts with the relatively advanced peoples of Egypt and Babylonia. He was a man of great practical wisdom and was one of the seven sages of antiquity.

He is said to have visited Egypt and brought geo-metry from there; foretold solstices and an eclipse, presumably by studying the Babylonian records; measured the height of a pyramid by its shadow; turned the course of a river; and discovered the constellation Little Bear.

Ac-cording to him, the earth floated on water, magnet had life because it could move iron, water is the origin of all things, and all things are full of gods. How he came to these last two conclusions is not known now, nor was it known in antiquity, but the connection of his doctrine of water with Homeric Okeanos is evident. No one knows if he set down these ideas in writing, but if he did, no writing of his has survived.

Anaximander

The second of these Milesian philosophers was Anaximander, a younger contemporary and disciple of Thales. He and a non-Milesian Phere-cydes were the first two Greeks who wrote in prose. For him the first prin-ciple from which arose by eternal motion the heavens, the worlds, the divinities that encompass the earth-a cylindrically shaped centre of all these worlds-and all other things indeed, is an infinite, indeterminate, eternal, all-enfolding, and all-controlling stuff.

From this indeterminate something are separated off the opposites, dry and moist, warm and cold, and these form nature with its separate elements

(air, water, fire, and earth) and opposite qualities which are held in just balance by time.

A sphere of flame formed round the air surrounding the earth, like a bark round a tree, broke off into certain balls, thus forming the sun, the moon, and the stars. All living beings arose on the earth by gradual development out of the elementary moisture under the drying influence of heat. The first living being that appeared thus was a fish.

Anaximenes

The third Ionian philosopher of Miletus was Anaximander's disciple Anaximenes. He wrote just one book of which only one complete sentence has survived. The originative substance, according to him, is one, infinite, and not indefinite but definite. It is air which changes by condensation and rarefaction.

In its finest form it is fire; in being made thicker, it becomes wind, then cloud, then water, then earth, and then stones; and the rest, things and gods, come into being from these. Hot and cold are also due to the same processes, the rarefied being hot and the condensed cold. The earth which is flat and round like a plate rides on air. The heaven is a vault that moves round the earth as a cap round the head. The heavenly bodies are fire raised on high, some fixed like nails in the crystalline vault, others moving like "fiery leaves."

Heraclitus

With another Ionian philosopher, Heraclitus, the problem of philosophy shifted from the nature of substance to that of change. His home was at Ephesus, one of the twelve cities of Ionia famous for their temples. He was in his prime in about 500 B.C. He is said to have written one book covering all knowledge, metaphysical, scientific, and political, and that in a style unparalleled in its brevity and difficulty of interpretation.

This difficulty is embodied in a story that Euripides lent this book to Socrates who, when asked what he thought of it, replied, "Splendid what I have understood; also, I believe, what I have not understood-except that it needs a Dehan diver." Of this book only 139 fragments have survived out of which 13 are said to be doubtful and spurious. His influence in the history of philosophy cannot be over-estimated.

According to him, while things remain the same, they are yet not the same; they constantly change. In the same river we both step and do not step, for those who step in the same river have different waters flowing ever upon them. Thus, it is not possible to step twice in the same river or touch the same material substance twice. There is a perpetual change, a perpetual becoming in which being and not-being are harmonized even God changes.

The universe of change is eternal and everlasting. It is made by no man or god. Its basic substance is fire, which also steers all the changes according to law. There is an exchange-all things for fire and fire for all things, like goods for gold and gold for goods.

There is a Law of the universe that is common to all. It is the Law divine and nourishes all other laws. Though all things come into being according to this Law, most men are always incapable of understanding it. The soul has

its own law which consists in growing according to the nature of its own seed. Everything issues from and goes back to the basic substance, fire, according to the law of necessity.

Fire kindles in measure and is quenched in measure. The sun will not trans-gress its measure; otherwise the Furies, ministers of Justice, will find him out.

Everything comes about also by way of strife, strife between opposites, be-tween cold and hot, dry and wet. We are fundamentally the same whether we are alive or dead, awake or asleep, for the latter of each pair of opposites, having changed by strife, becomes the former and this again having changed becomes the latter. To souls it is death to become water, to water it is death to become earth. From earth comes water and from water soul. Water lives the death of air, air the death of fire, fire the death of earth, and earth the death of water.

That which differs with itself is in agreement: whatever is in opposition is in concert. From opposing tensions like that of the bow and the lyre arises the most beautiful harmony. God (Zeus) is day-night, winter-summer, war-peace, satiety-famine. He changes like fire which when mingled with smoke of incense is named according to each man's pleasure. He alone is wise.

Our knowledge is relative. Everything is known by its opposite. Disease makes health pleasant and good, hunger satisfaction, weariness rest. People would not know; right if they did not know wrong. Moderation is the greatest virtue and wisdom is to speak the truth and to act according to nature. A dry soul is the wisest and best. Character, for man, is destiny. Absolute truth is known only to God for whom all things are beautiful, good, and just.

Heraclitus physics follows from his metaphysics. Fire is the basic material substance from which all things come and into which all things go, and this cycle of creation and destruction goes on for ever. Earth rarefied becomes water and water rarefied partly remains moist and partly gets akin to fire, and by this process the bright fiery parts become the stars, sun, and moon, and the darker parts, being near earth, form the fiery bodies that shine less brightly. The size of the sun is equal to the breadth of a man's foot.

Greek Philosophy in South Italy and Sicily

In about 530 B.C. another centre of Greek speculation arose, and the problem of philosophy shifted from the nature of substance and change to the form and relation of things and permanence. Pythagoras of Samos, an Ionian island in the Aegean Sea off the west coast of Asia Minor, settled down in South Italy at Crotona, a Greek colony, where he formed a society with aims at once political, philosophical, and religious. Xenophanes, an Ionian thinker, who was in the prime of life in 530 B.C., migrated to Elea, a Greek settlement in South Italy. He and his pupil, Parmenides, and grand pupil, Zeno, formed what is generally known as the Eleatic school.

1. Pythagoras

Pythagoras was in the prime of life in 530 B.C. No written work was left by him, but there are references to him in Xenophanes, Heraclitus,

Empedocles, Plato, and others. All teaching was done by him by word of mouth, because one of the rules imposed upon the members of the brotherhood founded by him—a rule equally binding on the master and the disciples—was that of secrecy, betrayal being punishable by excommunication.

He is said to have visited Egypt and Babylon where he learnt the mathematical and religio-mystical elements of his philosophy. One of his chief doctrines was transmigration of the soul. His system had an element of asceticism based on taboos prohibiting the eating of beans, killing some kinds of animals for sacrifice and food, and wearing of woollen clothes at religious ceremonies.

The school did a mass of work in mathematics, the mechanics of sound, and geometrical theorems, but it is difficult to say how much of this work went to Pythagoras himself. According to him, Number was the First Principle and numbers and their relationships were the essence of all things. This idea made the Pythagoreans base their philosophy on mathematics. The original number was Monad, the Principle of Oneness, which was equated to Limit. They developed a dualistic cosmology founded on the pairs of opposites.

These are One-Two (Monad-Dyad), One being the principle of Limit imposing itself upon Two, the principle of the Unlimited ever-existing Void (empty space made of air or vapour), Odd-Even, One-Many, Right-Left, Male-Female, Rest--Motion, Straight-Curved, Light-Darkness, Good-Bad, and Square-Oblong. Things came into existence by the opposition of the Limiting and the Unlimited and their harmony.

From the Monad, the One or the Limiting, and the Dyad, the Unlimited, came the numbers and their relations, from the numbers came the points, from the points lines, from lines planes, from planes solids, and from solids the perceptible elements, fire, water, earth, air, each consisting of particles or atoms of different shapes.

The One by working from within outward created all shapes and by the reverse process of drawing the Unlimited inward created the earth, the counter-earth, a body revolving once a day between the earth and the central fire, the planets, the sun, the moon, the stars, and everything they contained. Everything has a number, the central fire one, the earth two, the sun seven, and so on. Even immaterial substances like the soul and abstract qualities such as justice, courage, right, motion, etc., were assigned numbers.

The school very early saw the relations between the notes of the Octave and the length of the string and designated them as symphonies. The heavens are in harmony and in their motion, they make music which Pythagoras alone was said to be able to hear.

2. The Eleatic School

Xenophanes - The founder of the Eleatic school, Xenophanes, was a contemporary of Pythagoras. He was in the prime of his life in about 530 B.C. He condemned Homer and Hesiod for attributing to the gods all things

that are shameful and a reproach to mankind: theft, adultery, and mutual deception.

There is, according to him, one God among gods and men, the greatest, and He is not at all like mortals in body and mind. He remains permanently the same, not moving and undergoing change; and without toil He sets every-thing in motion, by the power of His thought.

Complete knowledge of gods, men, and things is impossible. No man has ever seen certain truth, nor will anyone ever see it. Whatever we can know, we know after long seeking.

Everything comes from earth and goes back to earth at last. Water also contributes to the being and growth of things. The sea is the source of clouds, winds, and rivers, and the sun moves about the earth and gives it warmth.

Parmenides - Parmenides of Elea was a contemporary of Heraclitus and about twenty-five years his junior in age. He was Xenophanes disciple and, had also a Pythagorean as his teacher. His philosophy like that of his pupil Zeno's was a reaction against the philosophy of Heraclitus. He took up Xenophanes idea of permanence and developed it by the help of rigorous logic.

He gave expression to his thought in a poem addressed to his disciple, Zeno, who was his junior by about twenty-five years. In the prologue of this poem he allegorically relates how in the chariot of the senses, of which the wheels were the ears and steeds the eyes, he was carried to the place of the goddess Night and she revealed to him the way of truth and the way of opinion.

In the way of truth, he is told what reason (Logos) can think, exists; what it cannot think, does not exist. It is not thinkable that what-is-not is. Not-Being, therefore, does not exist and being alone exists. If being alone is, it follows that it does not come into being, for if it did, it would have to come from something which is Not-Being; but from Not-Being it could not come, for Not-Being does not exist.

There being nothing besides it, nothing could bring it into being at one time rather than at another. It is therefore ever present. For it, there is no before and after. It is permanent and eternally continuous. As there is nothing besides it to bring it into being, there is nothing besides it to destroy it.

It is one indivisible whole, for there is no Non-Being to lie between its parts. It is all alike. It is also motionless, for there is nothing besides it to move it and there is nothing in which it can move. It is limited, but why it is so is not explained. There being no Not-Being to stop it, it cannot be more or less in any direction. It is therefore a well-rounded sphere, complete on all sides.

The way of opinion is the way of untruth and false belief. The goddess shows it to him to enable him to guard himself against it. The beliefs mentioned in this connection as false are: the opposites of Light and Darkness are the First Causes; to be and not to-be are the same; for everything there is a way of opposing stress; the moon shines with light

borrowed from the sun; the sun and the moon were separated from the milky way; the earth is rooted in water-beliefs which were held by some of his predecessors and contemporaries.

Parmenides speculation involved four basic canons: (1) that Being not having sprung from Not-Being was itself ultimate, (2) that Void, being non-existent, could not be, (3) that plurality could not come out of the primal Unity, (4) nor could motion and change. These canons were generally regarded as the last word on philosophy till the time of Plato who was the first to expose their fallacies.

Zeno - Zeno of Elea wrote a book called Attacks in defence of Parmenides theory of Being as One, indivisible, and permanent. His method was to take the opposite view and reduce it to absurdity by showing that it led to contradictory conclusions. This method, of which he himself was the originator, is called *reductio ad absurdum*.

He first took up the proposition: Things are many, and then showed that they must be both finite and infinite. If they are many, they must be of a number; they are neither more nor less. If they are neither more nor less, they are finite. Again, if they are many, they must, on the other hand, be infinite, for there are always other things in between them, and again others between these and so on *ad infinitum*.

If things are many, they must be either without magnitude or with magnitude. If without magnitude, then if a thing is added to another thing there would be no addition in magnitude. The unit added is, therefore, infinitely small, as small as nothing. If anything has magnitude, it follows that part of it must also have magnitude and so the part preceding it, and the part that precedes the preceding one and so on *ad infinitum*. Therefore- it must be in finitely large.

If a thing moves, it is neither in the place in which it is, nor in that in which it is not, but either alternative is impossible. If a thing is in a place, it is at rest. Nor can anything happen to a thing in a place where it is not.

If everything is in space, space is either something or nothing. If space is something, then space is itself in something and that something in something else and so on *ad infinitum*.

Zeno argued similarly against motion. In this connection he advanced four arguments: (1) You cannot traverse a given length, for to traverse it you must reach the half-way position and then the half-way position of the remaining half, and so on *ad infinitum*. Again, motion is impossible because it is impossible to pass through infinite positions in finite time. (2) If the tortoise is given a start, Achilles cannot catch up with it, for while he runs that distance, the tortoise will have got further, and so on *ad infinitum*.

(3) If you shoot an arrow at a target, it cannot reach the target, because it has to pass through an infinite number of positions and that cannot be done in finite time. (4) Suppose there are three sets of solids A, B, and C: A at rest, B moving in one direction, and C moving in the opposite direction at equal speeds. Solids in B and C would pass one another twice as quickly as they pass those in A. Therefore equal speeds are at unequal speeds which is absurd.

These dilemmas of Zeno have puzzled the philosophers all through the ages, but the real, solution has been found only in the physico-mathematical developments of modern times.

Melissus - Melissus of Samos was younger than Zeno by about ten years. He did not actually live in Elea or any other Greek part of South Italy, yet he belonged to the Eleatic school, because he accepted most of the views of Parmenides. He wrote a poem On Being some fragments of which have survived. According to him, Being or the One cannot come into being, and change, move, have pain or any multiplicity or divisibility.

If Being had a beginning, it would have been from Not-Being, but nothing can come out of Not-Being. If Being had no beginning, it cannot have an end, for if nothing can come out of Not-Being, nothing can go into Not-Being. Therefore, Being has been from eternity and is everlasting. There is no creation and no destruction. Being is also infinite in magnitude, for if limited, it must be limited by Not-Being which is impossible.

In Being there is no change, for if Being altered, then what was before must have passed away or become Not-Being and what was not before, i.e., Not-Being, must have come into being which both are impossible. Therefore there is no rarefaction and no condensation. Being cannot move, for there is no Void for it to move into. Being cannot feel pain, for pain is felt through the addition or subtraction of something, i.e., by not remaining the same, but Being always remains the same.

3. Empedocles

Empedocles of Acragas, a town in Sicily and capital of the south-western province of Italy, was a contemporary of Zeno and of the same age as he. He wrote two poems entitled On Nature and Purifications. Like Melissus, he was deeply influenced by Parmenides. Agreeing with Parmenides that Being could not come out of Not-Being, that plurality, divisibility, change, and motion could not spring from Absolute Unity, and that there was no Void, he explained plurality, divisibility, change, and motion by denying the Original Absolute Unity.

The original undifferentiated whole, according to him, consisted of four eternally existing elements - fire, air, earth, and water - leaving no Void. Each of the elements is underived and indestructible and of a specific nature. From these elements come all things that were, are, and will be. Change is a mere rearrangement and reshuffling of these elements. It arises from motion and motion cannot arise from Absolute Being.

To explain motion he postulated two motive powers, Love and Strife, existing from eternity along with the four elements and having infinite power. He held that there is no absolute generation or absolute decay. What are called creation and destruction are really commingling and separation of the elements, the former being the work of Love and the latter of Strife.

Existence passes through three stages. In the first stage Love alone was active and the elements were mingled together forming one all-inclusive Whole - a Whole which had no feet, no knees, and no genitals, but was a sphere equal to himself from all sides. The middle stage was the one in

which Love and Strife were both active, but Strife gradually gained the upper hand.

In this stage the elements became separated from the Whole. The first to separate was air that flowed around in a circle and took up the position surrounding the world, and its outermost margin solidified itself to form the firmament. It was followed by fire which ran upwards under the solidified periphery round the air and displaced the air of the upper half. Fire was followed by earth and earth by water.

By further commingling appeared solitary limbs, foreheads, eyes, breasts, arms, feet, etc., wandering about and seeking for union. When Love and Strife more or less mingled together, by their action there was a mingling of these limbs into chance combinations forming monsters and deformed organisms, like creatures having faces and breasts on both sides, cattle with the fronts of men, and men with the heads of cattle.

Later, those things which were accidentally well fitted to one another survived; the rest disappeared. Those things are most suitable for coming-together which are made like one another. It is these which are united by Love.

Those things which differ most from one another in their origin, mixture, and form are made so by Strife and are very baneful. At the next stage gradually appeared "Whole-natured forms" first plants, then gradually fish, birds, wild animals, men, and even gods who are the highest in honour and people said things had come into being.

As the process of separation under the influence of Strife continued, the sexes were distinguished. When Love is completely inactive and Strife alone is operative, the last stage of extreme separation is reached and individual things disappear, and men not knowing the truth call this their death.

This stage of extreme separation is followed by a period when Love regains its ascendancy and reunites the separate elements, and individual things re-appear. But when Love alone rules and Strife is inactive, these things again disappear and the original stage of one all-inclusive Unity is re-established. This cycle of One changing into many and many changing into One is endlessly repeated as appointed by Fate.

In Purifications, Empedocles deals with the relation of man to the universe. He identifies the soul with fire. The soul first existed mingled in the original undifferentiated Whole (God). Then Strife detached it from the Whole. It passes through the stages of plants, wild animals, and men and then, if purified by fasting and continent living, it is taken back by Love to the original Whole and becomes one with God.

In man all the elements, air, fire, earth, water, and Love and Strife are present; and since like perceive like, he can perceive all the elements in the surrounding world through the senses. His blood also contains all the elements.

His thought-consciousness resides chiefly in the blood round the heart. All things give off effluences and when the effluences of two bodies are of the right size to fit into the pores of their respective organs, sensation of the

one in the other takes place. All sense-organs are equally reliable, and it is a mistake not to trust sense-experience.

Thus, to Empedocles goes the credit of basing knowledge on experience and recognizing observation expressly as a method of inquiry. Some of his cosmological, botanical, and embryological findings are remarkable.

The sun, according to him, is not in its nature fire, but rather a reflection of fire like that which comes from water. It is collected in a ball which travels round the great sky. The moon, which is composed of air shut in by fire and solidified like hail, gets its light from the sun. When in her movement round the earth, the moon comes below the sun, she cuts off its rays, and shadow is thrown as much on the earth as the breadth of the moon. The earth makes

night by coming in the way of the sun's rays. The earth is stable in the midst of revolving heavens, like water in a revolving bowl.

Plants are living things and they combine both sexes in One. The substance of the child's limbs is divided between the parents, and the child resembles whichever of the parents has contributed most. All things inhale and exhale. There are bloodless channels in the flesh of them all, stretched over their bodies surface, and at the mouths of these channels the outermost surface of the skin is pierced right through with many a pore, so that blood is kept in, but an easy path is cut for the air to pass through.

Greek Philosophy back to Asia Minor

1. Anaxagoras and Diogenes of Apollonia

Anaxagoras - Anaxagoras was a contemporary of Zeno and Empedocles, about ten years older than both. At the age of twenty he migrated to Athens and stayed there for thirty years and, being prosecuted for impiety because he maintained that the sun was a red-hot mass of metal, he withdrew to Lampsacus in Asia Minor where he died in about 408 B.C.

He was an associate of Anaximenes and Protagoras and teacher of Euripides and Pericles by the latter of whom he was defended in his prosecution which resulted, according to some, to a fine and his exile and, according to others, to condemnation to death in his absence. He wrote only one book some fragments of which are still extant.

Anaxagoras could not see how Empedocles drew an infinite variety of things from only four elements and two motive forces, Love and Strife. He, there-fore, postulated that the first undifferentiated whole contained mixed together all the opposites of Anaximander, Heraclitus, and the Pythagoreans, all the four elements of Empedocles, and, besides, seeds, infinite in number and small-ness and in every respect different from one another, of all things that were ultimately to emerge.

For explaining the separation of things and their growth from their seeds he substituted Empedocles motive forces of Love and Strife by the single intellectual motive force of Mind. Mind is infinite, all alike, self-ruled, and all alone by itself. Though it is mixed with nothing, it is none the less present where everything else is, whether as mixed or separated off.

If it were mixed with things, they would have limited it from controlling everything the way it does. Mind has knowledge of all things, mixed and

separated, past, present, and future; has the greatest power; controls every-thing that has life; and sets everything in order, including the rotation of the air, aether, the sun, and the moon. It is the finest and the purest of all that is.

He agreed with Parmenides and Empedocles that nothing can come out of nothing. As the seeds of all things are present in the Original Whole, nothing new comes into existence. Nor is anything destroyed. Change means only mixture and separation.

He held that all things are infinitely great and infinitely small-ininitely great because they contain an infinite number of parts, and infinitely small because even the smallest of parts is infinitely divisible into smaller and still smaller parts.

His cosmogonical findings were as follows. The blind imparted at first a rotary movement to the mixed Whole (Caos) and this movement caused the separation of all bodies in the Cosmos. The first things to emerge were air and aether the latter of which he identified with fire. The dense was then separated off from the rare, the hot from the cold, the bright from the dark, and the dry from the moist, the light, hot, and dry bodies occupying the upper position and the dense, moist, cold, and dark taking the lower position where the earth is.

But nothing was completely separated off from the other except Mind. Air is solidified into cloud, cloud into water, water into earth, and earth into stones under the agency of cold. The sun, the moon, and all the stars are red-hot stones which the rotation of the aether carried round it. The heat of the stars is not felt by us because they are far from us.

The moon is beneath the sun and nearer to us. She has no light of her own but derives it from the sun. The stars in their revolution pass beneath the earth. The eclipse of the moon is due to its being screened by the earth, and that of the sun to its being screened by the moon when it is new. The moon is made of earth and has plains and ravines on it.

The earth is flat and stays suspended where it is because of its size, because there is no void, and because the air keeps it afloat. Rivers owe their origin partly to rain and partly to the waters under the earth which is hollow and in its hollow contains water. The reflection of the sun in the clouds forms the rainbow. The moisture of the cloud either creates a wind or spills forth rain.

First after separation air contained the seeds of all things and those seeds, when carried down by the rain, gave rise to plants. Animals first arose from moisture and then from one another. All living things, plants at the bottom and man at the top, have a portion of Mind. Anaxagoras formulated two principles which enabled him to propound his theory of nourishment and growth.

These principles are: (1) that a portion of everything is in everything¹ and (2) that things alike attract one another. Things that are eaten already contain the ingredients which are produced in an organism, e. g., blood, sinews, bones, flesh, and so on.

These ingredients reason alone can know. Those seeds in which blood predominates proceed, by the attraction of like to like, to join the blood of

the body, and those in which flesh predominates proceed by the same principle to join the bodily flesh. The same holds true of all other parts.

Diogenes of Apollonia - Diogenes of Apollonia, a town in Asia Minor or Crete, lived in the later half of the fifth century B.C. He was an eclectic thinker chiefly influenced by Anaximenes, Anaxagoras, and Heraclitus. He first laid down two principles, one with regard to energy, the other to the language used. He said, one must begin one's investigation with something incontrovertible and one's expression should be simple and dignified.

Well within the Milesian tradition he held that all things must be modifications of one basic substance, for if they were different in nature and were not fundamentally the same, they could neither mix with one another, nor influence one another favourably or adversely, nor could one thing grow out of another. This basic substance for him as for Anaximenes is air which is infinite and eternal and generative of the worlds.

From its condensation and rarefaction-guided by its purposive intelligence-all things come into being and become of different kinds at different times, and to it they return. Air is, in short, God who has power over, steers, inheres in, and disposes all things. It is the soul of all living things, for when they cease breathing, they die.

It is air that creates all sensations. When air is mixed with blood, it lightens it and, penetrating the body through and through, produces pleasure. When it does not mix with blood, the blood gets thicker and coagulates, then pain results. Diogenes also gave quite an acute account of the anatomy of veins.

2. The Atomists

Lucippus

Lucippus who belonged to Miletus in Asia Minor was in his prime of life in 430 B.C. He was a pupil of Zeno and is said to have associated with Parmenides, though their philosophies were poles apart. He evolved the theory of atoms which was accepted and further refined by Democritus, who belonged either to Miletus, or according to some accounts to Abdera, and was in the prime of his life in 420 B.C. Democritus had met Lucippus and perhaps also Anaxagoras to whom he was junior by about forty years.

He visited Egypt, Chaldaea, Persia, some say even India and Ethiopia. He was a prolific writer, though nothing of his works has survived except about 290 fragments mostly from his ethical writings.

Democritus

In Democritus the scientific spirit of Ionia found its culmination. His theory became the basis of all subsequent materialism right down to the present day. The Atomists made their theory explain our experience of the coming-into-being, perishing, and motion of things and their multiplicity; and this they did by postulating, against the Eleatics, the existence of Void, a Not-Being which nevertheless exists as much as Being.

Both Being and Void or Not-Being are the material causes of all existing things. Being is not one, but consists of invisible, small atoms of infinite

number and shapes. The atoms are to be regarded of infinite shapes, because there is no reason why an atom should be of one shape rather than another.

They are indivisible because they are very small. They are compact and full, because there is no Void within them. They move in the Void, and by coming together they effect coming-into-being, and by their separation, perishing. They differ from one another not in quality but in shape, arrangement, and position and, according to Aristotle's reading, also in weight. These differences are responsible for all the qualitative differences in objects.

The whole of existence is infinite; a part of it is filled with atoms and a Part is Void. A large number of atoms of different shapes move in the infinite Void. They come together there like to like and produce, in the same way as the Mind of Anaxagoras, a whirl in which colliding with one another and revolving in all manner of ways, they begin to separate, like to like.

But when their multitude prevents them from rotating any longer in equilibrium, those that are fine go out towards the surrounding Void, while the rest get en-tangled, abide together, unite their motions, and make the first spherical structure.

Thus the earth came into, being when the bulkier atoms stayed together. It is flat but tilted downward towards the south. Some of these bodies that get entangled form a structure that is first moist and muddy but as they revolve with the whirl of the whole they dry out and then ignite to form the substance of the heavenly bodies. Thus arise innumerable worlds which differ in size and are resolved again into atoms.

In some worlds there are no sun and moon, in some they are larger than those in our world and in others more numerous. The intervals between the worlds are unequal, in some parts there are more worlds, in others fewer, some are increasing, some at their height, some decreasing, in some parts they are arising, in others falling. They are destroyed by collision with one another. Some worlds are devoid of living creatures or plants or any moisture.

In compound bodies the lighter is one that contains more Void, the heavier that which contains less. The soul consists of spherical atoms spread through the body. We inhale and exhale soul-atoms, and life continues so long as this process goes on.

All objects animate or inanimate flock together with their kind, dove with dove, crane with crane, and pebbles with pebbles on the seashore.

The process by which the worlds come into existence and everything moves is not random. Nothing occurs at random; every change in existence is for a reason and only by necessity.

According to the Atomists, knowledge is of two forms, genuine and obscure, sensuous knowledge being of the latter type. They explain sensation by a kind of effluence that is said to proceed from everything. In the case of sight it proceeds both from the object seen and the observer's eye and produces an impression on the air, the solid part of which remains outside but the finer and lighter part, the image, enters the pupil of the eye if the eye also throws out a like image.

Other sensations are explained by the size and shape of the atoms. Sensible qualities being the result of this process show how things affect us, not what they are. As later on held by Locke, shape, arrangement, size, and weight are the qualities of things, and are therefore objective, but colour, sound, taste, smell, etc., are subjective.

The ethical fragments of Democritus which have come down to us in the form of aphorisms are mostly sparkling jewels of wisdom and common sense. According to him, happiness is the highest good. In theology he believed in the existence of gods, but the gods, he holds, are made of atoms and are as material and mortal as men. Only they live longer and have greater power and higher reason. They do not interfere in men's affairs and, therefore, need not be feared.

Philosophy at Athens

1. Early Record

So far all philosophical development took place in Greek settlements in the islands and the mainland of Asia Minor which were under the imperial rule of Persia and in Magna Graecia (the Greek cities of South Italy and Sicily). Before the beginning of the fifth century B.C. Athens had not produced a single great man in the spheres of art, science, literature, and philosophy except the lawgiver Solon.

Archelaus (c. 450 B.C.) did belong to Athens but he was a minor thinker who followed the principles of Anaxagoras with some modifications based on Anaximander's primacy of hot and cold, Anaximenes' condensation and rarefaction of air, and Empedocles' four elements. His chief claim to a place in the history of Greek philosophy is that he was a pupil of Anaxagoras and teacher of Socrates.

However, the victory of Athens against the Persian King Darius in 490 B.C. and of the combined Greek navies under Athenian leadership against his son Xerxes in 480 B.C. brought Athens politically to the forefront. Political pre-dominance brought with it flourishing trade and commerce which resulted in great prosperity.

During Pericles' wise rule of thirty years from 460 to 430 B.C. Athens was at the height of her glory. It was during this period that Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides produced their tragedies, Aristophanes his comedies, and Pheidias his statues—all masterpieces of unsurpassed beauty. Herodotus by writing the history of the Persian wars became the father of history and Thucydides by producing his History of the Peloponnesian War secured for himself the rank of the greatest historian of antiquity.

In philosophy, however, the record of Athens up to the end of the fifth century was far from brilliant. She produced only one great philosopher. Socrates, and suffered another from Asia Minor, Anaxagoras, to live and teach there. But her people by bringing up the charge of impiety and corruption of the Athenian youth against them condemned the former to death and the latter, despite Pericles' defence, to banishment for life. Besides, it was here that the sceptical movement started by the Sophists brought philosophy, partly justly and partly unjustly, under the shadow of disrepute.

2. The Sophists

The Problem of Knowledge and the Study of Man

While great but conflicting philosophical systems were being developed with almost equal force by the Asian Greeks in the islands and the mainland of Asia Minor, and the Western Greeks in South Italy and Sicily, by about 450 B.C. dissatisfaction began to appear with system-building in a certain section of talented men.

The paradoxical conclusion of these systems made this group of thinkers sceptical about philosophy as a truth-finding discipline. The leader of this group was Protagoras of Abdera in Thrace who was at the prime of his life in the later half of the fifth century B.C. He was a friend of Pericles and used to teach in Athens. He doubted the existence of gods and, therefore, like Anaxagoras, was banished from Athens on a charge of impiety. In addition, his books were burnt in the market-place.

According to Protagoras, we experience neither the ultimate principles of the schools of Ionia or the First Cause of the school of Elea, nor the “atoms” of Democritus or the “seeds” of Anaxagoras. At best they are unverifiable hypotheses. Therefore, all talk about them is idle. Instead of wasting energy on discussion regarding the nature of the objective world a man should occupy himself with himself.

All knowledge, for what it is worth, depends upon the senses. But our sense-experience is deceptive. It reveals only what passes away and yields no universal truth. Nor can we rely on reason, for reason is also based on sense-experience and is a mere continuation of it. As all knowledge is based on a man's sensations, it is true only for him, and not for all. A proposition may at the same time be both true and false, true for one, false for others. There being no absolute truth, each “man” as an individual “is the measure of all things.”

Ethical truths are equally relative. What is of benefit to me may harm another, and thus what is good for one may be bad for others. The individual's good is only what he considers good for himself. With everyone personal benefit alone should count. Although one opinion cannot be truer than another, it can yet be better than another. As sensuous knowledge, however uncertain, is alone possible for us, it should be acquired for use in practical life. Similarly, it is not known whether the gods exist or not; they should nevertheless be worshipped.

Protagoras only doubted the possibility of certain knowledge, but his contemporary Gorgias went to the extent of maintaining that nothing what-ever exists and if anything exists, it is not knowable and if it is knowable, it is not communicable.

Following these leaders all Sophists became sceptical about the universality and objectivity of truth itself and began to concern themselves mainly with teaching the practical arts of arguing and speaking with effect for success in public life, and receiving payment in return. The subjects they taught with this end in view were logic, rhetorics, and grammar.

As there was no regular system of education only the sons of aristocracy could afford to take lessons from them. They were hated by the masses because of their relations with aristocracy and their radicalism in matters of religious beliefs, and by the philosophers of other schools because, against

the prevailing practice, they charged fees for giving instruction. They were called by their opponents the Sophists.

Though the word “sophist” means a wise or learned man, it was used for them as a term of reproach to mean a quibbler who used fallacious arguments to make truth appear falsehood and falsehood truth, and argued not to find the truth but only to win a point against a disputant. This reproach was definitely justified, at least in the case of the later Sophists.

From the purely philosophical point of view, the sceptical movement of the Sophists was not an unmixed evil. It was quite a natural movement and of positive gain in two ways. A period of feverish intellectual activity resulting in great systems is naturally followed by a period of criticism—a criticism which paves the way for further developments. The critical scepticism of the Sophists led to the philosophies of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle who represented the highest point that Greek speculation could reach.

There was another gain. The main problems to which the system-builders paid attention were the problems of Being and Not-Being, substance and number, permanence and change, One and many and man did not figure in the picture at all. The Sophists made the study of man, as an individual and as a member of the State, their chief concern. This turn in Greek speculation widened the horizon and partly determined the course of subsequent Greek thought.

3. Socrates

Socrates was born at Athens in 469 or 470 B.C. and was condemned to death in 399 B.C. He spent most of his time in high philosophical discussions in public places.

“In the case of Socrates,” says Bertrand Russell, “the uncertainty is as to whether we know very little or a great deal.”² The reason is that for his teaching he used the method of conversation and wrote no book. All our knowledge of him is based on the writings of his pupils, Xenophon, a soldier whose philosophical equipment was not high enough to enable him fully to appreciate his teacher's ideas, and Plato who idealized him and made him the chief character of his Dialogues, but left no hint to the extent to which the contents of the Dialogues relate to his own ideas and to what extent to those of Socrates.

Socrates was the greatest thinker of his generation. He was high-minded, eminently pious, frank to a fault, amazingly indifferent to worldly success and comforts of life, and remarkably high in the estimation of youth. Physically, he was extremely ugly and went about shabbily dressed and barefoot.

Although he never took any fees for his teaching and was opposed to the Sophistic way of thinking, he was sometimes mistaken for a Sophist. This was due to the fact that, like the Sophists, he discarded metaphysics, natural science, and mathematics, made the study of man as a citizen his main concern, and regarded the individual's culture as the goal of education, irrespective of its effect on State, religion, and traditional beliefs.

Socrates believed in God, immortality of the soul, and, for the noble and the great, a happy life after death. He was religious to the extent of being superstitious, for he went to the Delphic Oracle to find out who was the wisest man in Athens. The Oracle's reply that it was he himself came to him as a complete surprise, for, he thought, a god could not be wrong, and yet he who knew nothing had been declared to be the wisest man.

To see that there was no error he visited all the men reputed for great wisdom, engaged them in discussion only to be disappointed and to discover that the Oracle was right, because those who claimed knowledge actually knew nothing, while he who claimed no knowledge knew at least one truth, the truth that he knew nothing.

He also claimed that ever since his childhood he had heard a divine voice that always told him what not to do and that he was commissioned by God to fulfil the philosopher's mission by searching into himself and other men.

In spite of his religious-mindedness and his ennobling influence on the youth, he was prosecuted for denying the gods of the State, worshipping new divinities, and corrupting the young, and was in the end condemned to death by poison.

Socrates used and developed the Dialectical Method invented by Zeno. It is the method of seeking knowledge through the clarification of ideas by questions and answers. It is a useful method for discovering logical inconsistencies in order to reach what is logically consistent. It is suitable for the clarification and definition of non-empirical ideas and the right usage of words, but, as Bertrand Russell says, is of no use in the discovery of new facts.³

He was interested neither in physical nor in mathematical or metaphysical speculation. His interest lay mainly in ethics, of which he is rightly said to be the founder.

Opinions greatly differ in moral matters, but for Socrates it is the philosopher's duty to dig out the eternal and universal truths hidden beneath the confused mass of opinion. Beginning with real or professed ignorance (his irony) and making self-consistency as the criterion of truth, he brought under discussion opinions about such matters as good, beauty, ugliness, nobility, wisdom, justice, courage, friendship, State, and citizenship, in order to know their real moral significance and to arrive at their precise definitions.

He was convinced that all evil-doing is due to ignorance. If people knew what was right, they would do no wrong. As knowledge alone is needed to make people virtuous, he declared that knowledge is virtue. It is the highest good and the sole end of life and its pursuit is the only source of abiding happiness.

By over-emphasizing one aspect or another of Socrates system, his followers developed divergent lines of thought. The school of the Cyrenaics, founded by Aristippus of Cyrene, lay hold of his idea of happiness and joy in the pursuit of knowledge, and made the greatest amount of pleasure the highest good for man, a view later on taken and modified by the Epicureans.

His emphasis on knowledge as virtue, as the supreme good worthy of being sought for its own sake, irrespective of the joy that it brings, made the

school of the Cynics, established by Antisthenes, couple their doctrine of virtue and duty with asceticism, i.e., with extreme self-restraint, self-renunciation, and freedom from want a doctrine later on developed by the Stoics. Euclides and Plato combined his idea of the highest good with the Eleatic conception of the unity of Being and developed the doctrine that matter and change and motion are unreal, and the one ultimate Being—the Good—is the essence of all things.

4. Plato

Plato (427-347 B.C.) was a descendant of Solon from his mother's side and, if his father's claim is accepted of the last kings of Athens from the father's side. He was a disciple of Socrates and teacher of Aristotle. He remained attached to the Socratic circle from his own age of twenty to the death of Socrates. His works were exceedingly well preserved. Out of these, twenty-six authentic Dialogues have come down to us.

At the age of forty or forty-one he founded an educational institution known as the Academy, where he taught till his death at the age of eighty. The Academy flourished till 529 A. D. when, 926 years after its inception, Justinian, Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, which had been converted to Christianity nearly two centuries before, closed it “because of his religious bigotry” and brought Greek philosophy officially to an end “and the Dark Ages descended upon Europe.”⁴

After more than half a century of sceptical criticism, Greek thought went back to system-building and produced two of the most comprehensive and integrated systems the world has ever seen. Of these Plato's was one and the other was that of his disciple, Aristotle. The fundamentals of Plato's system are the same in all his Dialogues, but, owing to development of his thought, the details differ from Dialogue to Dialogue. An exceedingly well-written passage in Frank Thilly's History of Philosophy brings out very clearly Plato's relations to his predecessors. It runs as follows

“Within the framework of the Platonic system, we have a combination and transformation of the teachings of the leaders of Greek thought. With the Sophists, Plato agrees that knowledge-if knowledge be restricted to appearances-is impossible; with Socrates, that genuine knowledge is always by concepts; with Heraclitus, that the world is in constant change (sensuous appearances are characterized by change); with the Eleatics, that the real world -for Plato the world of ideas-is unchangeable; with the atomists, that being is manifold (Plato admits a plurality of ideas); with the Eleatics, that it is one (the form of the Good is a unity): with nearly all the Greek thinkers, that it is basically rational; with Anaxagoras, that mind rules it and that mind is distinct from matter. His system is the mature fruit of the history of Greek philosophy down to his time.”⁵

Knowledge, according to Plato, is grasping the true being of a thing. As the Sophists have conclusively shown, the true nature of a thing cannot be known through sense-perception. The true being of a thing is its idea, its eternal, unchangeable, and universal nature and it can be known only by a special method of inquiry.

The method he employs for acquiring the knowledge of true beings is the Dialectical Method of Socrates; but not only that; he also developed the theory of this method. Dialectic is not discussion for the sake of discussion. Its procedure of questions and answers is aimed at examining opinions based upon the apprehension of particulars in sense-perception in order to discover, by the help of reason, their true nature, the universal idea that is true of all such particulars.

It is a gradual process by the aid of which we pass from the sensible to the ideal. After these universal ideas have been discovered, their sub-divisions (species) are ascertained. Thus, by a process of synthesis and analysis we pass upward and downward from idea to idea and view the whole range of ideas.

Theory of Ideas - Ordinarily, it is thought that the idea or concept of a horse is formed by abstracting the common qualities shared by all particular horses. This idea or concept is regarded as a piece of knowledge existing in the mind of the knower. This is not Plato's view. He holds that this universal idea which is true of all horses is not a piece of knowledge but a piece of reality.

It transcends particular horses and lives in a separate world, the world of ideas. It is present in its transient, changing appearances in sense-perception only in so far as they participate in it. What is true of the idea of a horse is true of all other ideas.

They all exist in the world of ideas and, by viewing the world of ideas in this way, we apprehend the whole of reality, the whole of rational cosmos. In this rational cosmos, there are ideas of all things (even such things as tables and chairs), qualities, relations, virtues, and values. The highest idea is the Idea of the Good which is identical with the Beautiful and the highest knowledge is to apprehend the Idea of the Good.

Plato illustrates the relation between the rational cosmos, the world of ideas, and the world of sensuous experience by his famous allegory of the cave. Imagine a cave with an opening at one end outside which there is burning a bright fire. At the other end there is a screen and between the fire and the screen there are men facing the screen so chained from childhood that they can make no movement of legs and necks, but can see only what is in front of them on the screen.

As these men cannot turn their heads round, they will see only the shadows of one another and of the things they carry, which the fire throws on the screen, and will consider them real objects.

But suppose one of them is released and goes out of the cave; first he will be dazzled by the glare of light, but soon his eyes will get adjusted to light and enable him to see, then he will see the shadows of objects on water, then the objects themselves, then he will gaze upon the light of the moon and the stars and the spangled heaven by night, and last of all he will be able to see the sun by day and will contemplate it as it is.

And when he remembers his condition when he was imprisoned in the cave and the condition of his fellow-prisoners, he will felicitate himself on the change and pity them.⁶

The cave is the world of sight, the light of fire is the sun, and the man's journey is like the upward ascent of the soul into the intellectual world, the world of ideas. "The Idea of the Good," like the sun, "appears last of all" and, "when seen, is inferred to be the universal author of all-things beautiful and right, parent of light in the visible world and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellect; and this is the power upon which he who would act rationally either in public or private life must have his eyes fixed."⁷

If eternal ideas are the only pure beings and the world of ideas is the only real world, from where has appeared the changing world of sense? To explain this Plato postulates another principle-the principle of Not-Being which means what is other than Being.⁸ Not-Being is the same thing as matter. It is unreal and yet exists as a formless substratum of the phenomenal world.

When this formless Not-Being receives the impression of ideas, the world of sense-perception appears. It has reality only in so far as it has the impress of ideas. In so far as it is material, it is unreal. It is therefore, wrong to call it the real world. It is merely a world of shadows.

Cosmology - In the sphere of cosmology Plato does not find himself on solid ground and, therefore, claims only probability for his cosmological views.

God, the maker of the world, fashioned its body out of the four elements leaving no part of them outside, after the pattern of the world of ideas. In order to make it as perfect as possible, He put intelligence into it and placed in its centre the world-soul, which had been created earlier to be its ruler and mistress.

Thus, the world became a veritable living creature endowed with intelligence and soul. As there could be only one best possible, copy of the original, there is only one world and it is in the best of all forms, the spherical form.

Then by some mathematical manipulation of the parts of the world, the Creator made the orbits of the seven heavens. He sought to make the world eternal so far as it might be. Now, to bestow eternity, an attribute of the ideal world, in its fullness upon a creature was impossible. Therefore He created time as the moving image of eternity.

He then made the sun to measure the movement of the planets, and thus brought about day and night: Thus was followed by the creation of the heavenly race of the gods (the stars and planets) and the species in air and water and the wild animals on land.

Thus having been done, the Creator Himself, made the divine part of man, reason, mixed it with the four elements, divided the mixture into souls equal in number to the stars, and assigned each soul to a star. He then ordered the gods, His children, to do the rest to complete the universe by interweaving the mortal with the immortal.

These children of the Creator, obeying the Father's order, made each separate body by welding the portions of the four elements, temporarily

borrowed and to be restored in due course, and fastened the immortal souls to these mortal bodies which are perpetually in flux.

It is remarkable that this mythical account of the creation of the universe, about which Plato himself was uncertain, exerted an extraordinary influence on medieval thought.

Psychology - The soul is immaterial and prior to the body. The body is intended by nature to be its servant and to listen to its commands. Once the soul lived with God in the world of ideas. Owing to its desire for the sensuous world, it was brought down and engaged in a material body and condemned to pass through a stage of purification.

On release from the body it has to give an account of itself before the judgment-seat. Those who have been virtuous in this world are sent after death to the Isles of the Blessed, to their respective stars, and the wicked to Tartarus to suffer punishment.

A few great sinners like potentates are, however, kept in Hades as a salutary terror to others.⁹ If after undergoing full punishment a soul becomes wiser, it has a better lot; but if it still persists in folly and does not see the truth, it goes down lower and lower transmigrating from the body of one animal to that of another, never passing into human form.¹⁰ The middling souls may pass from human to animal form and, vice versa, from animal to human form.

As the soul can know pure and eternal ideas and only like can know like, it must also be pure and eternal, at least in part. Its pre-existence in the world of ideas is proved by the fact that it is originally endowed with certain principles and axioms which are not given by sense-experience and therefore can only be explained as recollections from the previous life of the soul occasioned by sense-experience.¹¹

The soul is also immortal. Its immortality has to be accepted on these grounds: (1) The soul is simple and indivisible; therefore, it can neither be produced by composition nor destroyed by decomposition.¹² (2) The soul is a principle of life; it, therefore, cannot become its contradictory, death.¹³ (3) Everything is destroyed by its peculiar evil. Ignorance, injustice, and intemperance are the peculiar evils of the soul, but they do not destroy the vicious soul; the soul is therefore indestructible and immortal.¹⁴

(4) The soul is self-moving and ever in motion and that which is ever in motion is immortal.¹⁵ (5) The soul is rational and moral. It must have an after-life in which by rewards and punishments the injustices and imperfections of this life may be rectified. (6) In yearning for the eternal ideas of beauty and truth, the soul is yearning for immortality, since what is passionately desired and cannot be fully achieved in this life must be attainable in the life hereafter.

The soul has three parts: reason, spirit, and appetite. The spirited part sometimes sides with reason and obeys its commands. Spirit includes such impulses as ambition, anger, and righteous indignation, and appetite includes desire for sensuous pleasure, wealth, and all forms of bodily satisfaction. Sometimes appetite gets the better of it and the two conspire and rebel against reason. The harmonious soul is that in which all the three

parts work harmo-niously, each discharging its own function, the rational part commanding and the spirited and appetitive parts obeying its commands.

Ethics - The soul is in essence rational and immortal. The world of true beings, the world of ideas, is the source of all its goodness. The body is material and Not-Being and is the ground of all evil. It is only a temporary prison- house. Release from the body and contemplation of the beautiful realm of ideas is the ultimate goal of life.

The embodied soul is wise if reason rules all its impulses. It is brave if its spirited part aids and obeys the rational part, tem-perate, if both spirit and appetite obey the dictates of reason, and just if all the three parts perform their respective functions in unison. The ideal of this life is achieved when a man is wise, brave; temperate, and just. The highest good of life is the harmony of the soul which is attained by the exercise of all the four virtues, wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice, under the guidance of reason. The greatest happiness attends the life that achieves the highest good and contemplates the highest ideas.

Aesthetics - All art is functional. Its function is to imitate, but not to imitate the objects of experience, but ideal realities. The artist, therefore, must learn to contemplate the ideal world. Sensible objects only participate in the ideas. They are only shadows of reality. If art-were to imitate these objects; it would produce nothing better than the shadows of shadows, and if it created illusions and distortions it would be thrice removed from reality.

All art, intellectual or useful, must be subordinated to the good of the State and the moral life of its citizens. Only these art-forms should be encouraged in every art which express the simplicity of a rightly and nobly-ordered mind. On their simplicity depends their style, harmony, grace, and rhythm, which qualities elevate the soul and instil true and noble ideas into it.

Our artists should be only those who are gifted to discern the true nature of the beautiful and graceful. In poetry only hymns to the gods and praise of famous men should be permitted. Excessive devotion to art is not desirable. It creates effeminacy.

Exhibition of vice, intemperance, meanness, and indecency and all that is base and impure should be banished from the State. Sorrowful tunes and tales create weakness in the soul and the comic art turns men into buffoons. Some painting creates illusions and some sculptura and architecture exhibit false proportion.

The former creates falsehood and the latter disorder in the soul. All art which shows these tendencies should be banned. To effect this all art-productions should be brought under strict censorship.

Theory of Education - The Platonic theory of education aims at making the individuals belonging-to-the two higher-classes truly cultured and well equipped for discharging their respective functions, in the State by drawing out what is already dimly known to them because of their having lived before birth in the real world, the world of ideas.

It envisages a careful selection of the most promising children and their training under a rigorous discipline backed by careful censorship in (1) music, covering everything within the province of the Muses including poetry and literature, and (2) gymnastics, meaning physical culture. The teaching of music forbids stories without moral significance in Homer and Hesiod, because they depict gods as doing evil deeds, and anything that does not inculcate sobriety, temperance, control over laughter, willingness to die for the State, and the belief that slavery is worse than death.

Drama should depict only faultless characters of high birth, and any play in which an actor is made to take the part of a villain, a criminal, a woman, or a slave should not be permitted. That music which is expressive of courage and harmony is to be encouraged, and the songs which express sorrow or induce relaxation are to be prohibited. Up to a certain age the young should get no chance of seeing what is bad, ugly, or terrifying.

The study of music and gymnastics is to be followed by that of mathematics and dialectics right up to the age of thirty-five. Then come fifteen years of practical experience in subordinate offices leading at the age of fifty to the pure study of philosophy. When this study is completed, only then is a person accomplished enough to hold the highest office of the State and become a philosopher-king.

Theory of the State - According to Plato, there are five types of political organisations: aristocracy, the rule of the best; timocracy, in which the rulers are motivated by honour; oligarchy, in which the rulers seek wealth; democracy, the rule of the masses; and tyranny, the rule of one man advancing solely his own selfish interests.

In the Republic Plato gives an outline of what he regards as the Ideal State. It is a form of intellectual aristocracy. The State is the individual writ large. On the analogy of the tripartite division of the soul, society is stratified into three classes, the rulers, the auxiliary, and the artisans, each class having its own specific virtue: the rulers wisdom, the auxiliary valour, and the artisans self-restraint and willing obedience.

To keep people contented in their respective classes the State would have to propagate "a royal lie" that God has created human beings of three kinds: the best are made of gold, the second best made of silver, and the common herd of brass or iron, the first fit to be administrators, the second warriors, and the rest manual workers - a myth which would become a common belief in about two generations.

The function of the rulers is to mould the State in the likeness of the State "of which the pattern is laid up in heaven," in the realm of ideas, of the auxiliaries to help the rulers by military service and protect the State in times of war or revolt, and of the artisans to carry on trade, manual labour, and craftsmanship. Since it is only the philosopher who has knowledge of reality, he alone deserves to be a king. He should be persuaded to accept the office, though he would be generally unwilling to do so.

As selfishness is the root of all social evil, the guardians, i. e., the rulers and warriors, are to live a common life with a common mess as one family without any private property, wives, or children. Men between 25 and 55 and women between 20 and 40 (i. e., when they are in the prime of life) are

to be brought together on ceremonial occasions specially arranged for intercourse, in numbers suitable for the required population.

The pairing on these occasions is to be determined apparently by lots, but actually by secret manipulation in such a way that the braver get the fairer.

As in a society of communism of property, wives, and children, no child would know his parents and no parents their children, all those belonging to an older generation would be called fathers and mothers by the younger generation and all those belonging to a younger generation would be addressed as sons and daughters by those of the older generation. Those children who were begotten at the time when their fathers and mothers came together will be called by one another brothers and sisters.

The children born will be brought up by nurses in quarters specially provided for them. They should get only the necessities of life, and be so brought up as to be able to bear the roughness and hardships of life. The State on the whole should not be allowed to become too rich or too poor, for both riches and poverty lead to social evils. Nor is the State to be allowed to be too large or too small.

Its size "shall not be larger or smaller than is consistent with its unity" which indeed is its greatest good. Women are to take equal part in education and State services as administrators or warriors.

This is an outline of Plato's Ideal State. But he himself acknowledges that it is not fully realizable. Therefore in a later work, the Laws, he modifies it in several important ways and gives a more practicable plan of what he regards as the second best State. In this State he places freedom and friendship side by side with reason.

All citizens should be free and given a share in government. Of course, slaves who should be only foreigners are not counted among the citizens. The administration he now recommends is a mixture of aristocracy and democracy. Women are now included in the community meals of the guardians. Marriage is also permitted and family life and private property restored.

5. Aristotle

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) was born at Stagira in Macedon, where his father who belonged to a family of physicians was employed as Court physician to the King. At the age of seventeen he became Plato's pupil at the Academy at Athens which he left twenty years later at Plato's death. In 334 B.C. King Philip of Macedon engaged him as his son Alexander's teacher and he worked in that capacity for seven years.

Thereafter he came back to Athens and opened a new educational institution at the Lyceum. Because of Aristotle's habit of walking while teaching, this institution came to be known as the Peripatetic school. Aristotle remained the head of this school for twelve years during which he wrote most of his works. At the close of this period he was indicted for impiety and compelled to flee to Chalcis in the Greek island Euboea where he died a year later.

Aristotle wrote on every subject then known in the world and most of his writings have come down to us. The collection of his logical works is entitled the Organon. His writings on what he called First Principles were

collected by a compiler and named *Metaphysica*, for they were placed after the writings on physics.

He wrote several works on physics, including the one called *Auscultationes Physicae*, and several on the natural history of animals. On psychology he wrote many treatises, including three on the soul. His chief ethical writing is the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and his works on literary arts are named the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics*.

According to Aristotle, there are three divisions of philosophy: (1) theoretical studies in which the attempt is made to know the existent, (2) practical, which relate to conduct and the rules of conduct, and (3) poetic, relating to the creative works of art. The first is again divided into mathematics, physics, and the "first philosophy." There is, however, a study which precedes all these as a precondition. That is the study of logic.

Logic - Aristotle has been justly said to be the founder of logic. The principles of correct reasoning were employed in practice by his predecessors in their search for knowledge, but it was he alone who made their theoretical study, clarified them, and organized them into a well-rounded system which had an amazing influence on subsequent thought both in the East and the West. But for a few spasmodic revolts, the *Organon* ruled supreme for over two thousand years.

In the *Organon*, Aristotle shows that a simple or compound word expresses a meaning or a mental representation of a thing. This meaning or mental re-presentation is called a term. A proposition consists of a subject word expressing the mental representation of an existent, a predicate word expressing the mental representation of something that is asserted (or denied) of that existent, and the mark of assertion, is (or of denial, is not).

A true proposition is the verbal expression of a true judgment which is a combination or separation of two terms (expressed by the subject and the predicate) which corresponds with the combination or separation of two real things. A false proposition is the expression of a false judgment which is a combination or separation of two terms which have no such correspondence.

The mental representations of subjects are combined in several ways. These ways are determined by the categories, the ten ultimate modes of being. These categories are substance, quality, quantity, relation, where, when, position, possession, action, and passion. Nothing can be predicated of any existent which does not fall in one of these categories. Simple substances, e. g., first essences and individuals, can be expressed only as subjects of propositions, never as predicate.

Two propositions in one of which a predicate is affirmed of a subject (A is B) and the other in which it is denied (A is not B) are called contradictories. Of such propositions one must be false and the other must be true. This law is called by Aristotle the Law of Contradiction. Again, "one can either deny or affirm every predicate of every subject."

Between its denial and affirmation there is no middle course. This principle is called by him the Law of Excluded Middle. Both of these laws are based on the metaphysical principle that "the same thing cannot at the same time and in the same respect belong and not belong to the same thing." This principle is known to us immediately and intuitively and, therefore,

requires no demonstration. All demonstration and all certain knowledge depend on this principle.

The mental representations of the essential attributes common to all the individuals in a class constitute a class-concept. The contents of this concept form the definition of the class. The essential attributes of man, rationality and animality; form the concept and constitute the definition of man.

Logic for Aristotle is a necessary process. It is a process of reasoning which consists in proving a proposition by showing that it is such and such and it cannot be otherwise. This, proof is provided in the following two ways.

The first way in which a proposition is proved or demonstrated is that of deduction the unit of which is a syllogism, a name given by Aristotle himself to a process by which the truth of a proposition is established by showing that it necessarily follows from its presuppositions called the major and the minor premises, by virtue of their possessing a common term.

John's mortality is established by showing that John is a man (minor premise) and man is mortal (major premise), man being a common or middle term by the help of which a connection is established between John and mortality.

Thus, by syl-logism it is shown that what is true of a whole class (i. e., the universal truth expressed by "all") is true of each individual or a smaller group, on the ground that the individual or the small group belongs to that class. So the fundamental principle of syllogism is "whatever is affirmed (or denied) of an entire class or kind may be affirmed (or denied) of any part" thereof - the principle called the Dictum de omni et nullo.

This principle, like the basic principles of all sciences, is known intuitively. Its application enables us to derive the particular from the universal. How the conclusions of syllogisms are affected by the differences in quality (affirmation or negation) or quantity (extension to all, some, or only one) of the premises, is worked out with remarkable precision.

All scientific conclusions are ultimately drawn by syllogistic reasoning from premises which are themselves known immediately and intuitively to be absolutely certain, requiring no proof.

The second way of proving a proposition is that of induction, a process by which universal principles are derived from particular experiences by their complete enumeration. In experience, sensuous particulars are prior and more knowable to us, but absolutely prior and more knowable are the concepts which are the most general and the more remote from sensations.

Therefore, deduction which takes us from the universal to the particular is more scientific, prior in nature, and more rigorously demonstrative. Those who cannot follow - the deductive way may, however, employ induction. Thus, syllogistic deduction was over-emphasized by Aristotle and induction was given only a secondary place and its details were not worked out by him.

Metaphysics - Every object of experience consists of two factors, a sub-stratum (matter) and a universal element common to all objects of the same type (its form or essence), the mental representation of which is its

concept. Plato does not deny the existence of this form or essence in individual objects, but there it is only as a copy of the form or essence existing in the world of ideas.

Aristotle argues that if, to explain the form of man, it is necessary to postulate the ideal form in the world of ideas, it would be necessary also to postulate a third form of which both of these forms are copies.

Besides, these independent essences are not of any help to things in their existence, motion, or change. Again, if the ideas are the essences of things, how can essences exist apart from the things of which they are the essences? He concludes that Plato's world of ideas is an unnecessary duplication of the world of sensible things. It is a mere poetic fiction. The essences or forms of things exist only in those things: they are immanent in them. The world of sensible things is, therefore, the only real world.

There are four fundamental principles which run through all spheres of the real world. These are (1) Matter or Substratum, (2) Form or Essence, (3) Efficient cause, and (4) the End or the Final cause. These principles are according to Aristotle, the causes of everything that exists in the world.

Matter is the principle of imperfection and individuation of things. It is not non-existent as Plato had thought, but exists as a potentiality. Form consists of essential elements common to all individual objects of the same type and is the actualization of material potentiality. As forms are eternal and unchanging, they are the most knowable and the most worthy subjects of knowledge.

All movement is change from potentiality to actuality, and for everything in existence there is a moving or efficient cause. In organic things, the essence, the efficient cause, and the end are one. The essence is shape; it shapes, and its own completion is its end. The soul is the form of the body and is also its moving and final cause.

There are things in existence that both move and are unmoved. There are things also which are only moved. Therefore, there is a third something (*tertium quid*) which moves, but is not itself moved. This something, this unmoved mover is God Himself. He is the Pure Eternal Form without any alloy of matter, the absolutely perfect actuality.

He is the Absolute Spirit identical with Reason, loved by everything, and sought as the perfect ideal by every-thing. He produces all motion by being loved, and so is the final cause of all activity. In Him the distinction of the individual and the universal completely disappears.

God is the unmoved mover, but Aristotle is not certain that there is only one unmoved mover. At another place astronomical considerations lead him to conclude that every sphere has an unmoved moving spirit and there are forty-seven or fifty-two such spirits in all.

Physics - The earth is the centre of the universe. Around this centre are the concentric layers of water, air, fire, and ether. In the ethereal layer are the celestial spheres, carrying planets, the sun, and the moon. Some of the spheres are backward-moving. The outermost sphere is that of the fixed stars which God touches without being touched, and to which He gives the best of motions, the uniform circular rotation, and that with a purpose, for the motion is not mechanical but teleological.

The motion of the outermost sphere determines the motion of all other spheres, which is imperfect in a descending scale. Rather inconsistently Aristotle also assigns a spirit-an unmoved mover-to every sphere.

Motion exists in three categories, quantity (increase or decrease), quality (transformation), and space (change of place). The motion of the universe is not linear but circular. There are two conditions of motion-space and time. Space is the limit by which a body is bound, the boundary by which it is enclosed.

From this definition it follows that there is no Void and that space is not unlimited but limited. Beyond the sphere of the stars there is no space. Time is the number and measure of motion according to before and after. It is infinite. The universe which moves in time is also eternal. It has always been and shall always be.

Biology and Psychology - The soul is the form of the living body as well as the principle of its motion and its end. It determines the structure and movements of its specific body and uses it as an instrument for itself. As each soul develops its own specific body, there is no transmigration of a soul from one body to another.

There are different grades of souls as there are different grades of life. The souls of plants determine their functions, of lower animals theirs, and of men theirs. The functions of plants are assimilation, growth, and re-production, those of lower animals are, in addition to these, sensitivity, appetite, and locomotion, while those of men are all these together with their specific function, reason.

As the human soul combines within itself the function of all animate existence, it is a veritable microcosm. There is development within each species, but there is no evolution from species to species. Each organ has its own end and this end is its specific activity. The heart is the seat of sensations; from sensations arise memory, imagination, and pleasure and pain, and from pleasure and pain, desire.

Reason is either passive or active. In passive reason concepts are potentially present; in active reason they are actualized. All lower functions and whatever arises in consequence, being connected with the body, cease with the death of the body. Even passive reason which deals with images that create potentiality for the arousal of concepts perishes with the body. Only active reason, for it is universal, not individual and personal, remains untouched by death. It alone is imperishable and immortal. How it is related to the individual and to God, is not made quite clear.

Ethics - In the theory of morality Aristotle raises the question of the good for man¹⁶ - the good which is the end of all human ends. His reply is as follows: As in all living beings, the essence, the principle of activity, and end are identical, the ultimate end or the good of an organism must consist in its essence, in its highest actualization.

The highest realization of the essence of man consists in active exercise of the faculty distinctive of him, the faculty of reason. The supreme excellence of man or the good for him, therefore, consists in the proper performance of his functions as a rational being throughout the whole of his life.

The ultimate end of man so defined is called by Aristotle happiness. From this definition of happiness it follows that it is not the same thing as pleasure. Pleasure is only an accompaniment of happiness, as beauty is the accompaniment of the perfect physical development of youth.¹⁷ The highest pleasure attends the highest happiness.

While happiness in all its degrees is good, pleasure may be good or bad according as it accompanies good or bad activities. While there is nothing more valuable than happiness, there are things which are more valuable than pleasure. Virtue, for example, is one, truth another.

The ethical goal of happiness cannot be attained without some non-ethical prerequisites, such as the proper discharge of mental and bodily functions and the satisfaction of economic needs. No child or slave or poverty-stricken person can achieve this goal.

Human excellence expresses itself in virtue. By virtue is meant the habitual direction of the will to the guarding of the golden mean, the balance between excess and defect. For example, the virtue of courage is a mean between fool-hardiness and cowardice and that of liberality between prodigality and meanness.

Human happiness or excellence manifests itself in two ways: first, in the habitual subordination of the animal side of man's nature, his appetites, desires, and passions, to rational rule; secondly, in the exercise of reason in the search for knowledge and contemplation of truth. In the former case, happiness expresses itself in moral virtues (courage, temperance, liberality, magnanimity, love of honour, mildness, truthfulness, friendship, and, the highest of them all, justice).

In the latter case, it manifests itself in intellectual virtues which are of two types: (1) those of theoretical reason which we use in our inquiry in the nature of what is necessary and in the intuitive apprehension of truth (science and reason), and (2) those of practical reason by which we exercise deliberation in such matters as are possible for us to change (art and practical wisdom). Science is used in demonstration, and reason in the immediate apprehension of principles. The highest virtue consists in the exercise of theoretical reason.

For virtuous life some non-ethical goods are also needed. Art is productive of something beyond itself and its value lies in the product. Practical wisdom relates to conduct which is an end in itself and the worth of which lies in intention; it finds the right means for the end in view and is deliberative, critical, imperative, and formative of judgment by the use of intelligence.

Aristotle's attitude towards some human relations is rather odd. He regards the son as the property of his father and the slave the property of his master.¹⁸ The father may repudiate his son, but the son cannot repudiate his father.¹⁹ The master cannot be a friend to his slave in so far as he is a slave, but he can be so in so far as he is a man.²⁰ Sympathy for the suffering of mankind, except when it is the suffering of a friend, leaves Aristotle emotionally un-moved.²¹

Politics - The first natural community for him is the family, which, when complete, consists of father, wife, children, and slaves. The family is based

on two relations, the relation between man and woman and that between master and slave, both of which are considered to be natural.

To all members of the family the father is an absolute ruler, but he should rule the slaves with mildness, the wife as a free member of the community, and children by right of affection and seniority.²² The most comprehensive human society is the State.

The aim of the State is to produce good citizens, individuals living a virtuous and happy life. As the highest virtues are intellectual, it is the duty of the State not to create warriors, but men capable of making the right use of peace which is conducive to intellectual activity. Yet the State should be strong enough to protect itself.

Its size should neither be too large nor too small for its existence as an articulate whole. Its whole territory should be surveyable from a hill-top (which is, of course, possible only in a City-State). The State should wage no wars except in self-defence or to subjugate "natural slaves," i.e., inferior people.

The Greeks combine courage with culture and are, therefore, superior people; and the superior people are alone justified in extending their rule over those who are inferior.²³ The State should be self-sufficient and yet have import and export trade—an apparent inconsistency.

The aim of education is virtue, not utility. It should be provided for free children, but not in any skill that might enable them to earn money or give them professional efficiency or deform their bodies, for citizens should neither lead the life of mechanics or tradesmen, which is ignoble and inimical to virtue, nor the life of professional athletes, which is detrimental to health. The slaves may, however, be trained in useful arts such as cooking and farming.

The citizens should own land, but the tilling of it should be left to the slaves for it leaves no leisure and the citizens need leisure for their development. They should be made to learn drawing so as to be able to appreciate the beauty of form and of painting and sculpture expressive of moral truth; and to learn music no more than just enough for critical enjoyment.

The treatment given to citizens should be determined by the differences of capability, property, birth, and freedom. Equals should be treated as equals and unequals as un-equals. Although the individual citizen is prior to the State in point of time, the State is prior to the individual in significance, for the whole is prior to its parts.

As man is a social animal, the natural aim of the individual is to live in society. The rational aim of society is the happiness of man. So in a rational society the interests of the individual and the State are harmonized.

The worth of the individual citizens depends on the kind of government under which they are brought up. Governments are good or bad according as they seek the interest of all or only their own interest.

Judged by this criterion, there are three forms of good government (monarchy, aristocracy, and polity), and three forms of bad government (tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy), according as the rule is of one man, of

a few, or of many. The best form of government is a monarchy in which the ruler is a man of intellectual eminence and moral worth.

Next best is aristocracy in which there are a few persons possessed of such qualities. Aristocracy is better than polity in which the citizens are politically, intellectually, and morally nearly equal. The worst form of government is tyranny, for the corruption of the best is worst; next is oligarchy which is the rule of the rich few. Democracy is the least bad of all bad governments.

Art - Goodness and beauty are different, for the former is found only in conduct and the latter also in things that are not moved.²⁴ Beauty is created by art. Art is the imparting of formal elements to a material. The formal elements so imparted correspond to two primary impulses of man: (1) imitation, and (2) harmony, rhythm, and melody.

Imitation is pleasing to us even when it mirrors the most horrid of objects, for it involves learning and knowing by recognition, and knowing is always pleasant. By harmony, rhythm, and melodies even new-born babies are attracted, because these are natural movements, and natural movements like those of actions are always pleasing. Nature has made man capable of all varieties of artistic skill.

The object of art is imitation, but not merely so. It is the imitation of the universal aspects of things, and an imitation in which the artist can go even as far as to make the copy of the handsome "handsomer" by combining scattered elements and, thus, partly imitating and partly completing what is left by nature incomplete.²⁵

The pleasure of art. is due to relief by catharsis or release of pent-up emotions. For example, tragedy, which is the imitation of serious action, morally significant and of some magnitude, affords such relief by the catharsis of pity and fear. Comedy which is the imitation of people inferior in some fault or deformed, which is not painful or a cause of pain to others, liberates laughter. The purgation of emotions in both tragedy and comedy leaves the spectators minds calm and serene.

Poetry is more important and of greater philosophical significance than history, for it tells us something about the universals, while history speaks of the particulars. The universal with which poetry deals is that which a person would necessarily or probably do or say, and the particular is that which a person actually does or says. The poet is either a man of sensibility or of inspiration. In the first case he has ready sympathies, in the second he is possessed.

6. The Decline

The most glorious period of Athenian cultural and political ascendancy was the age of Pericles. In 430 B.C. Athens was ravaged by plague. In the same year began the Peloponnesian war between Sparta and Athens which after twenty-seven years struggle ended in the complete overthrow of Athens. This was followed by the defeat of the Athenians and their allies, the Thebans, by Philip of Macedon in 327 B.C. and the annexation of Greece to the Roman Empire in 146 B.C. In the wake of this political decline came the general demoralization of private and public life.

Intellectual activity, however, did not cease with social and political decline. Thinkers of different mental make-up reacted differently to this fall. Some of them reacted positively and sought remedy for all social evils in social change, practice of virtue, and pursuit of truth, and built great philosophical systems.

To this group belonged the great Trio, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, in whom Greek philosophy reached its highest point. Some, like Antisthenes and Dio-genes of Sinope, became cynical about the world as a whole; some others, Pyrrho and Timon, became sceptical about the very possibility of knowledge. Zeno and his followers found tranquillity in the life dedicated to virtue, while Epicurus and his followers turned their eyes from the prevailing evils and sought relief in the pursuit of pleasure.

Thus, during the period of political decline and social and moral disintegration, besides the great systems of Plato and Aristotle and their trails, there arose four other modes of thought, Cynicism, Scepticism, Stoicism, and Epicureanism. Despite some critical revisions and re-examination, three of them at least were the philosophies of retreat, and all four of them taken together were symptoms of Greek intellectual decline.

The Cynics - The founder of the Cynical school at Athens was Antisthenes, about twenty years Plato's senior. He despised the pleasures of the senses, dressed like a labourer, and moved amongst the working classes. His motto was "back to nature," by which he meant return to a state of life in which there was no government, no marriage, no private property, no luxury, no established religion. His disciple, Diogenes of Sinope, surpassed him in fame.

Diogenes was about twenty-seven years older than Aristotle and died a year after him. While still very young, he went to Antisthenes in search of wisdom and followed him like a dog. The old cynic did not like him and even beat him with a stick to drive him away, but the lad would not move.

His father was a money-changer who had been sent to prison for defacing coins. Diogenes' aim was "to deface all the coinage current in the world. Every conventional stamp was false. The men stamped as generals and kings, the things stamped as honour and wisdom and happiness and riches: all were base metals with lying superscriptions."²⁶

He discarded all conventions regarding dress and behaviour, procured food by begging, and lived in a tub. He declared brother-hood not only with all human beings but also with animals. It is said that "he once went through the streets holding up a lantern looking for an honest man"; and when Alexander the Great visited him at Corinth and asked him if he could do anything for him he replied, "Yes, stand from between me and the sun."

The Sceptics -The sceptics were under the influence of the pre-Socratic philosophers of nature. The founder of the school, Pyrrho, was about twenty- three years younger than Aristotle. All our knowledge of him comes from his pupil, Timon, for he himself never wrote any book. He maintained that from the senses we know only what a thing appears and not what it actually is.

Nor can we know anything through philosophy, for no two schools agree on any major problem and in every case an affirmation and its denial can be proved with equal force. Philosophy is fruitless because it can create no certainty, and impossible because it leads to endless contradictions. It is equally impossible to know any ethical truth and, therefore, there is no rational ground for the preference of one action to another. Hence in all matters, moral or metaphysical, we should have an attitude of complete indifference.

Timon denied even the possibility of logical reasoning. In order to avoid an endless chain of pro-syllogism to establish a conclusion, we must start from self-evident principles, but there are no self-evident principles and all starting points of reasoning are merely hypothetical. All speculation should, therefore, be suspended.

The school of Pyrrho ended with Timon, but strangely enough his doctrines found their way to the very heart of Plato's institution, the Academy, for they deeply influenced its head, Arcesilaus (316-241 B.C.) and his successor, Carneades (214-129 B.C.). The Academy under the former came to be known as the Middle Academy and under the latter the New Academy.

According to Arcesilaus, nothing should be assumed unconditionally. Socrates had said before him that one thing alone he knew, and that was that he knew nothing. Arcesilaus went further and declared that he did not even know that with certainty. His successor, Carneades, admitted that although there is no certainty in knowledge, some judgments have a degree of probability and can be made to guide practice.

According to him, the idea of God is full of contradictions and the argument that God exists because the world is rational, beautiful, and good is fallacious. He fully mirrored the moral decadence of Attica in maintaining that unjust aggression against a weak neighbour was the right course of action and that it would be foolish if in a dangerous situation the stronger did not save themselves by sacrificing the weak.

The Stoics - The Stoic school was founded at Athens nineteen years after the death of Aristotle by Zeno of Citium (in Cyprus) who at the time was twenty-eight years of age. His followers were Cleanthes (third century B.C.), Chrysippus (c. 282-209 B.C.), and Diogenes of Babylonia (second century B.C.). It was Chrysippus who perfected the Stoic system on all sides. After Diogenes the Stoic doctrines moved from Athens to Rome. The school acquired its name from Stoa Poikile (the Painted Porch) where it used to assemble. Zeno, like Heraclitus, was a pantheist.

He maintained that the universe is a perfect sphere floating in empty space and is animated by its own soul, the Logos or Cosmic Reason. Form or the force that moves and matter that is moved are both corporeal; only the former has finer corporeality than the latter. Both are combined in the individual.

The soul is material-a spark of divine fire. It is a tabula rasa, a blank tablet, which receives impressions from things. It retains these impressions as memory-images, and from these memory-images forms ideas by

abstraction. Thus, while things are objective, concepts are subjective. All our knowledge of objects depends upon percepts and the concepts derived from these percepts. Its criterion is the compelling force of impressions.

The range of Stoic interest was rather narrow. It lay chiefly in ethics. Other studies were taken only as ancillary. According to Stoicism, man's highest duty is to regulate life in accordance with the laws of nature, which manifest the rational purpose of the universe, and thereby reach the highest measure of perfection.

Neither pleasure nor self-interest should determine any of his personal or social actions. Reason should rule him and everything in him as the Logos rules the world and all its laws. The laws of his life are virtues. He should master all his passions and emotions and lead the life of perfect virtue. Virtue is the only good and vice the only evil, and the life of virtue alone is the life of happiness.

The Epicureans - The term "epicureans" is nowadays used to mean those who are seekers of sensuous pleasures. There is no such implication when it is used in connection with the school opened by Epicurus at Athens seventeen years after the death of Aristotle. There is no doubt that Epicurus identified happiness with pleasure and regarded it as the natural and rational goal of life, but he maintained that it consists in the pleasures of the mind, the pleasures of rational living or the pleasures which only men of culture can enjoy.

These comprise virtuous conduct, aesthetic appreciation, and friendship of the gifted and the noble. The pleasures consistent with reason bear the marks of moderation, calm, and repose. An intelligent and prudent man can easily see that pleasures of a life-time are preferable to pleasures of the moment and pleasures of the mind, which include, beside the present ones, these of the past as recollections and those of the future as anticipations are better than those of the body.

Momentary pleasures have to be sacrificed for the abiding ones. The function of society is to secure the self-interest or personal happiness of individuals. The value of all laws and all institutions is to be judged by this criterion.

Epicurus, like the Stoics, subordinated philosophy to ethics. The aim of philosophy, according to him, is to enable men to lead a happy life. To lead a happy life, free from all fear and worry, people must know the criterion of truth (sense-perception) given by philosophy, and the causes of things discovered by physics.

In metaphysics the Epicureans followed Democritus in every respect except that they gave the atoms the power to deviate from their determined path, and so introduced an element of contingency in an otherwise mechanically-determined world.

They shattered many of the religious beliefs prevalent in their times. According to them, the gods did not create the world, for, being supremely happy, they were not in need of it. Nor is there any reason to believe that they trouble themselves about the affairs of men. The soul is not immortal; it perishes with the body.

To the Epicurean school belonged Metrodorus of Lampsacus (d. before Epicurus), Hermarchus (fl. 270 B.C.), Apollodorus (2nd century BC), and Zeno of Sidon (about 150-78 B.C.). None of them added anything to the teachings of the master. In the first century B.C., Epicureanism, like other philosophical systems, passed down to Alexandria and Rome, Athens lost its position as the intellectual centre of the world, and Greek philosophy in Greece virtually came to an end.

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Notes

1. Rather inconsistently he also holds that natural substances consist solely of parts which are like the whole and like one another.
2. Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, p. 102.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 80
5. Frank Thilly, *A History of Philosophy*, p. 73.
6. *Republic*, VII, 514-16.

7. Ibid., 517.
8. Sophist, 258.
9. Phaedo, 113 E; Gorgias, 525.
10. Phaedrus, 249.
11. Meno, 86; Phaedo, 73.
12. Phaedo, 78.
13. Ibid., 80.
14. Republic, X, 609.
15. Phaedrus, 245.
16. Nicomachean Ethics, 1, 2.
17. Ibid., X, 4.
18. Ibid., 1134b.
19. Ibid., 1163b.
20. Ibid., 1161 b.
21. Bertrand Russell, op. cit., p. 206.
22. Politics, I, 5.
23. Ibid., VII, 7.
24. Metaphysica, XII, 3.
25. Physics, 119a, 15.
26. A. W. Benn, Philosophy of Greece, Vol. 11, p. 117; Bertrand Russell, op. cit p. 254

Chapter 5: Alexandrio Syriac Thought

Alexandrio Syriac Thought by C.A Qadir

The Neo -Pythagoreans

The great conquering sweep of Alexander the Great eastwards not only destroyed the old, intense and narrow life of the self-contained Greek City-States but also marked a decisive change in the intellectual and spiritual life of Greece.

With the spread of Greek civilisation over the Near East, the hori-zons of the individual Greeks were greatly enlarged; but the break-up of the old City-States engendered a sense of isolation and rootlessness which made people look inward for stability and security, rather than outward as hitherto done.

Another and a more potent reason for this shift in Greek thinking can be discovered in widespread scepticism after the death of Aristotle. True, scepticism also prevailed when Socrates was born, but the metaphysical speculations of pre-Socratic thinkers led them into the inextricable confusion of doubt.

Socrates asked people to look at man instead of nature, for in the domain of human problems the competence of reason could be demonstrated more easily than in that of the physical or the metaphysical. But the protest which scepticism made after Aristotle was more devastating. It was declared by the sceptics that the entire philosophical venture of their predecessors was hopelessly wrong and also that their error was without a remedy.

This was indeed very saddening. It amounted to the confession that not only were the solutions of the so-called perennial problems of philosophy nonsensical but also that no satisfactory solution was possible, at least with the techniques and methods hitherto pursued.

Reason thus assailed could find refuge only in faith. In the period that follows we find philosophy renouncing its independence and becoming merely an instrument of theology.

Ritter says, "The feeling of alienation and the yearning after a higher revelation are characteristics of the last centuries of the ancient world; this yearning was, in the first place, but an expression of consciousness of the decline of the classical nations and their cultures, the presentiment of the approach of a new era, and it called into life not only Christianity but also before it pagan and Jewish Alexandrianism and other related developments."¹

No longer finding Greece a cordial home for philosophy, the philosophers went over to Egypt and Rome, carrying their doctrines with them. They delivered courses of lectures which were attended with great zeal and enthu-siasm by the populace. But the venture did not succeed so well in Rome as it did in Alexandria. In Rome philosophy could lend its weight to poetry, oratory, jurisprudence, and some topics of conversation, but it was in Alex-andria that it produced men who gave it originality, vigour, and drive.

Alex-andria was not simply a centre of Greek culture and scholarship, but also and more significantly a meeting-place for Greek and Eastern

thought. It took a cosmopolitan character and showed a marked leaning towards Oriental thought. The result of this interpretation of Greek and Semitic cultures was the syn-thetic civilization known as Hellenism in contradistinction to the Hellenic or purely Greek civilization. Hellenism rose to supremacy not only in Alexandria and Syria but throughout Western Asia.

It would be incorrect to identify the present geographical boundaries of Syria with its old ones. In Roman days, at the beginning of the Christian era Syria denoted the country west of the Euphrates and north of the Arabian Desert, including Palestine and Palmyra and extending north to the Taurus. The usual language of Syria was Aramaic, a language akin to Hebrew.

The Hebrew word "Aram" is rendered as "Syria" and originally the words Aramaean and Syrian were synonymous. After the Hellenization of the country, the Greek language was used by the ruling class and the officials with very little influence on the masses who continued using their dialect. This state of affairs con-tinued till the first/seventh century when after the Muslim conquest Syriac gradually gave way vernacularly and to some extent liturgically to Arabic, though it had great influence on the vocabulary, pronunciation, and even the grammatical forms of Arabic which supplanted it.

For purposes of studying Alexandrian and Syriac philosophy, for the two run together and interpenetrate, we can divide our subject into:

- (1) Neo-Pythagoreanism,
- (2) The Jewish-Alexandrian Philosophy,
- (3) Neo-Platonism, and
- (4) Early Christianity.

To all these speculations what is common is the dualistic opposition of the divine and the earthly; an abstract conception of God excluding all knowledge of the divine nature; contempt for the world of sense, on the ground of the Platonic doctrines of matter and the descent of the soul of man from a superior world into the body; the theory of intermediate potencies or beings through whom God acts upon the world of phenomena; the requirements of an ascetic self-emancipation from the bondage of sense; and faith in a higher revelation to man when in a state called Enthusiasm."²

Both Neo-Pythagoreanism and the Judaic-Alexandrian philosophy are found together in the beginning of the Christian era. The Neo-Pythagoreans who were fundamentally religious in their outlook and practices were represented by P. Nigidus Figulus, Sotion, and particularly Apollonius of Tyana, Modera-tus of Gades, and, in later times, Nicomachus of Gerasa and Numenius of Apamea.

The Neo-Pythagoreans were highly eclectic in character. They were greatly influenced by Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, not to speak of ancient Pytha-goreans whose doctrines they attempted to revive.

Neo-Pythagorean doctrines could not flourish in Rome, where, Seneca says they could not find a professor to teach them, but gained a stronghold in Alexandria. The Neo-Pythagoreans combined monotheism with the fatalistic cult of gods and demons but transformed it at the same time with

the help of Platonic-Aristotelian teachings into a reverence for God as a pure spirit who is to be served not by outward sacrifices but by silent prayers and with wisdom and virtue.

Like Plato and Aristotle, the Neo-Pythagoreans distinguished between unity and plurality and also between the divine and the earthly. Several attempts were made to get rid of this dualism. There arose consequently a great diversity of opinion with regard to the nature of God and the relation He bears to the world. Some identified God with the world-soul of Plato.

Others thought of Him as an ineffable "Monad" from which flowed both unity and plurality. Still others considered Him immanent but free from all contacts with matter which might pollute Him. It was, therefore, imperative for the Neo-Pythagoreans, especially the last ones, to introduce a Demiurge as a mediator between God and matter.

The metaphysics of the Neo-Pythagorean school required four principles. viz., God, the world-reason, the world-soul, and matter, out of which the first three helped in formulating the Christian conception of triune God, while the fourth one paved the way for the doctrine of emanation.

The Neo-Pythagoreans gave a deeper metaphysical meaning to Number. The ultimate ground of all good as well as the order of the universe was provided by the Monad while the Dyad was held responsible for all disorder and imperfection. The Monad became the symbol for Godhead and the Dyad for matter. The gulf between the two, viz., the Monad and the Dyad, was bridged by the introduction of the idea of a world-soul which was built upon the Stoic, Aristotelean, and Platonic conceptions.

Certain numerological conceptions of the Neo-Pythagoreans appear grotesque to the modern mind. It was held by them that the movements of the heavenly bodies were harmoniously adjusted by number-an idea of Egyptian origin-and so certain numbers were regarded as having a sacred character, particularly number 10 which represents the sum of a pyramid of four stages, $4-3-2-1=10$.

In such conceptions, their imagination ran riot to such an extent that one can gain the impression that Neo-Pythagoreanism is nothing more than astrology, occultism, and twaddle about the mysterious properties of numbers.

In epistemology they closely followed Plato, classifying knowledge into spiritual perception, discursive reason, opinion, and sensuous perception. Science, we owe to discursive reason; inference, to opinion; and beatific vision, to spiritual perception.

Nicomachus of Gerasa who lived about 140 A.D. was one with Plato in holding that ideas were temporally prior to the formation of the world and also in holding that ideas were numbers. But, whereas Plato had accorded an independent existence to ideas, Nicomachus was content with giving them dependent role. He conceived of ideas as existing in the divine mind and so acting as patterns according to which the things of this world are fashioned.

Another thinker who attempted a synthesis of Plato and Pythagoras was Maximus of Tyre who taught in the first half of the second century. He was a Sophist and a rhetorician besides being an eclectic. Like other Platonists

he opposed God to matter and made demons play an intermediary role between God and man.

A long hierarchy of demons and angels was instituted by him which served as ministers to God and guardian-angels to man. He identified God with pure reason and considered matter to be a source of imperfection of the universe. Sins were due to the misuse of free-will by man and were not the result of any evil agency acting from without. Maximus did not believe in any evil world-soul, to whom human lapses could be attributed.

Maximus thought, very much like Rumi and other Muslim mystics that the soul is temporarily imprisoned in the human body and is ever yearning for release and reunion with the Divine Source.

Still another eclectic thinker from Syria by the name of Numenius of Apamea, who lived in the second half of the second century, is by many regarded as the real founder of Neo-Platonism. Hitti says

“Plotinus the Greek philosopher of Egypt, credited with that distinction, was popularly accused of basing his teachings on those of this Apamean and of strutting around in his feathers.”³

In his writings, Numenius combined Pythagorean and Platonic opinions in such a manner that while granting Pythagoras the highest authority and even accusing Plato of borrowing from him, he yet gave a predominant place to Platonic ideas. He traced the philosophy of the Greeks back to the Orientals and called Plato an “Attic-speaking Moses.”

Numenius, however, was not simply a camp follower of Plato. He differed from him too, since he distinguished the world-builder as a second god from the highest Deity. The basis of this distinction is to be found in his metaphysics where God who is identified sometimes with the Reason of Aristotle, some-times with the Monad of Pythagoras, and sometimes with both, stands against the creation which because of its imperfections is far inferior to Him.

The universe is created by a second god, the Demiurge, who is good by participation in the essence of the first. He acquires knowledge by gazing at the super-sensible archetypes and brings the world into being. The universe which is created by the second god is regarded as the third god by Numenius. Thus considered, God becomes a cosmic triunity comprising three divinities: Father, Creator, and Creature, which Numenius termed father, son, and grandson.

The psychology of Numenius is as dualistic as his metaphysics. Man, being both spiritual and corporeal, participates in both the world-souls. Numenius was wise enough not to condemn body outright. It had to be condemned only when it stood in the way of reason and served as a cat's-paw in the hands of the evil world-soul.

But in spite of his better thinking Numenius could not completely shake off the influence of the prevailing mode of thinking. He held that the encasement of the rational part of the soul in the human body did indicate a fall for the soul and that the liberation of the soul could be effected through a long series of reincarnations:

Hence the present life should be one of self-denial and renunciation, that is to say, a life of reason devoid of pas-sions. In his stress upon transmigration as a means of liberation, Numenius betrays, like his teacher, Pythagoras, the influence of Hindu thought.

A passing reference may be made to P. Nigidius Figulus for his interest in the Pythagorean philosophy and also to Apollonius of Tyana who distinguished the one God from other gods. The First being ineffable and absolutely pure could not come in contact with earthly things on account of their material constitution.

Apollonius did not like offerings to be made to the one God these he reserved for the lesser gods. We may also briefly mention Moderatus of Gades who incorporated Platonism and non-theological doctrines into Pythagoreanism. Number one he regarded as the symbol of unity and two as that of difference and inequality.

The Jewish-Alexandrian Philosophy

Among the precursors of Neo-Platonism are to be counted Neo-Pythagorean-ism and Jewish-Alexandrian philosophy in addition to a host of other tendencies which cannot be discussed here for want of space. Even out of the Jewish thinkers we shall pick out Philo, leaving other luminaries altogether, again for want of space.

Philo, a Jew, was born at Alexandria a few years before Christ. His philo-sophy is an attempt to find an adjustment between the traditions of Israel and those of the Greeks. Philo felt that the aesthetic elements in Greek culture were repugnant to some of the elements involved in Jewish religion. To smooth out differences and to show the concordance between the two systems of thought and practice, Philo adopted the allegorical method of interpreting the Scriptures already in use among the Alexandrian Jews.

On this interpre-tation, circumcision, for example, would signify and hence serve as a symbol for the cutting off of passions and ungodly opinions. Philo often criticized the literalists for their word-picking habits. But Philo was not a thoroughgoing symbolist. He knew that if once you defend an external practice on the ground that it is useful as a symbol, it is very hard to assert that it is obligatory for all times to come.

Philo, therefore, recognized that the literal sense is often accompanied by a more profound sense and that both the senses have to be accepted since both go together. "Although circumcision properly symbolizes the removal of all passions and sensibility and impious thoughts, yet we may not, therefore, set aside the practice enjoined, for in that case, we should be obliged to give up the public worship of God in the temple and a thousand other solemnities," says he in *De Migratione Abrahami*.⁴

Philo was primarily a religious preacher rather than a philosopher. He had no desire to propound a theory of the universe which could stand the scrutiny of logical reason. He was essentially concerned with the life of soul and its attaining the beatific vision. Keeping this objective in view he demarcated the mystical experience from all other psychological experiences on the ground that while the former lifts you out of the ordinary plane of life

and brings you in direct contact with some tremendous reality, the latter keeps you earth-bound and sense-bound.

In this Philo was following in the footsteps of Plato who exhibits a religio-mystic vein in the Symposium and the Phaedrus, with the difference that Philo being a Jew first and last could not identify God with the impersonal divine reason of Plato. However, in suggesting methods for “soul-cultivation,” he again turned his attention to the Greeks, borrowed their psychology, and on its basis framed rules for the systematic training of the soul to receive the vision of God.

The theology of Philo is a blending of Platonism and Judaism. The Jewish doctrine shows God as intimately concerned with the world; the Platonic, though insisting upon the divine governance and divine formation of the world, does not hold that the relation which God has to the world-is necessary or automatic. The Middle Platonism recognized a hierarchy of divine beings, insisted upon the transcendence of God, and regarded the visible world as being governed and made by lower intermediary divine powers. Philo had to reconcile these two conceptions.

Philo believed in one God, eternal, unchanging, passionless, far removed above the world of phenomena as the First Cause of all that exists. Causation, however, implies change and so God could not be regarded as directly creating the universe. Intermediary powers are, therefore, needed to explain the governance and formation of the world and what it contains. These powers Philo described very confusedly. Sometimes he talked of powers, sometimes of two powers, sometimes of one.

The problem before Philo was that of the development of multiplicity from absolute unity. The solution was sought in the inability of the contemplating mind to reproduce the absolute unity in itself. Philo gives an account of the “multiple” apparition of God to human intellect in the *De Migratione Abrahamae*. When the soul is illumined by God, it sees Him triple, one with a double shadow; but at the highest point, the shadow vanishes and God is seen as One.

In the *Quaestiones in Genesim*, Philo says that the mind “sees God triple” due to the weakness of its vision. “Just as the bodily eye sees a double appearance from one light, so the eye of the soul, since it cannot apprehend the one as one, makes a triple perception, according to the appearance of the chief serving powers which stand beside the One.”⁵

The highest of all the divine forces is the Logos (Word). Sometimes Philo, in common with Aristobulus and other earlier commentators gave to it the name of Sophia, but the more commonly used word by him is the Logos.

In some of his writings he gives to Sophia the highest of the parts into which the Logos is divided. Logos has a dual nature. In man it is reason and also the spoken word. In the All it divides itself into the incorporeal and arche-typal ideas of which the intelligible world consists, and the copies of these incorporeal ideas constitute the world of perception.

In other, passages Philo has called Sophia the mother of the Logos--ordinarily he calls it divine Logos without qualification or distinction--the mediator between God and man. It is so to say the instrument by which God

makes the world and the intermediary by which the human intelligence after being purified ascends to heaven.

Philo is not clear on the independent existence of the Logos: On all accounts it seems that in Philo's mind the powers had little or no existence apart from their function. "His conception of them is affected by contemporary Greek ideas, but perhaps they really belong to that mysterious class of instrumental and subordinate quasi-beings which accompany the Divinity in Semitic and Persian thought, the Angel, the Wisdom, the Breath of God in the Jewish Scriptures, the Uncreated Law of the Rabbis and the quasi-personified Divine Virtues or the attributes of Persian (Zoroastrian) theology, the Amesha Spentas."⁶

Anyhow Philo was not clear on this subject. As Ueberweg says in his History of Philosophy, Philo wavered between, the attributive and the substantive conception of the Logos. He both hypostatized the Logos into a person and reduced it to a mere attribute or function of the first person.⁷ What is, how-ever, important for subsequent thinking is not the nature of the Logos as such but the identification of the Logos with the Platonic world of forms and the use of this conception in explaining the creation of this world.

This led to a very great development in the thought of the medieval theologians. Philosophically speaking, the Philonian Logos is nothing but the principle of unity in diversity, of the separating and uniting of contraries in the material world. But perhaps Philo would not like to be judged philosophically.

The idea of Logos was not a metaphysical necessity for him; it was psychologically needed for coming in contact with God.

Philo's doctrines of "pneuma" and mystical union are equally important. The former is a free creative in-breathing by God, becoming the image of God in man and constituting thereby the highest part of man's soul, superior to the "psyche."

Other schools outside Jewish circles were also emphasizing one God, eternal and invariable, as the Source and the First Cause of the universe. The Gnostic sects which were of philosophic origin accepted God as the First Cause, above the imperfections and variations of the mundane world and, therefore, re-quiring an intermediary or an emanation to explain the production of an imperfect and variable world.

Neo-Platonism

Plotinus

The ancestry of Neo-Platonism can be traced to Neo-Pythago-reanism, Jewish Gnosticism, and other tendencies including Christianity, which so to say had become the Weltanschauung of most of those who had any living religion in the world of Greek culture: cruder and more superstitious forms of it in the lower strata of society, more refined and Hellenized forms among the educated.

The founder of Neo-Platonism was Ammonius Saccas, the teacher of Plo-tinus. Saccas means the sack-bearer and as a surname indicates the occupation by which Ammonius earned his living. Nothing definite can be

asserted with regard to his philosophic convictions. Some have asserted that he proclaimed the identity of Aristotelian and Platonic doctrines and also the immortality of the soul.

But there is no historical evidence to decide one way or the other. Nor is there any justification for holding that Ammonius was the first to formulate the doctrine that the One is exterior to the world of ideas—a doctrine of fundamental importance in the system of Plotinus.

Plotinus was an Egyptian of Greek speech and culture, born probably in 205 A. D. About his race and parentage nothing is certain, for he was, as Porphyry says, “like a man ashamed of being in the body.”

At the age of twenty-eight he went to Alexandria to receive philosophical training. He was surely disappointed till at last he came to Ammonius whose teachings satisfied him completely. With Ammonius he remained for eleven long years and left him only to accompany the Emperor Gordian in the hope of studying Persian and Indian philosophy.

The mission proved unsuccessful and Plotinus had to flee for his life to Antioch. At the age of forty, he went to Rome where he succeeded in winning the king and queen over to his doctrines. With the approval of the king he wanted to found a Philosopher's City, where the inhabitants should live according to the teachings of Plato.

The timely intervention of the nobles dissuaded the king from accepting such a silly proposal. In Rome he established his own school and taught there for the rest of his life. A painful death, probably cancer of the throat, marked in 270 A. D. the end of his illustrious career.

It is certain that Plotinus was conversant with the principal doctrines of all the philosophical schools of the Greeks, particularly Aristotelian and Platonic. He had read very assiduously the works of Numenius and came under his influence. This probably accounts for the complexities and tensions that one finds in his writings. It was not an easy task to synthesize the extremely complicated traditions that Plotinus had inherited.

There is a double purpose in his philosophy, the cosmic and the religious. He purports to give a complete account of reality which should also serve as a guide to spiritual life. These two strains go together and can be kept apart for theoretical purposes only. However, there is no denying the fact that the double task put a great strain on Plotinus' philosophical endeavour and led him to say much that sounds bizarre to the modern ear.

Reality, for Plotinus, is an ordered hierarchical whole comprising two movements, one of descent and the other of ascent. The first is an automatic creativity by which the higher generates the lower, while the second is a movement of return by which the soul attains reabsorption in the Divine Source.

The first is a movement from unity to multiplicity, the second is a reverse movement, that is to say, from multiplicity to unity. Plotinus sometimes emphasizes the one and sometimes the other and says things which are hard to reconcile. It is evident from his writings that he imposed upon himself a task which by its very nature was impossible to accomplish.

At the head of his system stands a transcendent First Principle, the One which is ineffable and incomprehensible to the discursive as well as the

intuitive reason. Below the One lie the two hypostases which are the universal correla-tives of the whole range of human life, physical and intellectual.

These are Nous, Aristotle's active intellect, and the world-soul whose function is to contemplate as well as to direct the material world. The hypostases are united with each other and with the One, first, by emanation which is the radiation of the lower from the higher and, second, by return in contemplation by the lower upon the higher.

Plotinus conception of the One is very complicated and has been variously interpreted. The One may be regarded as the Neo-Pythagorean Absolute Unity from which all plurality proceeds. The One cannot be said to have a being, for this way of thinking introduces a duality between subject and object and there can be no duality in Pure Unity. In the absolute state, in its first and highest hypostasis, the One is neither existence nor thought, neither moved, nor movable; it is simple unity or, as Hegel would say, the Absolute Nothing, the Immanent Negative.

There is a tendency in Plotinus derived from the Platonists and Middle Stoics to deny all predications to the One for fear of compromising Its unity. This tendency is, however, corrected by another much more positive approach. If the One is called God, then God is God not because He is nothing but because He embraces everything. He is, however, better than the reality of which He is the source.

The ideas no doubt form the content of His mind but they are nevertheless imperfect images as compared to the one Good, and receive radiance, "a grace playing upon their beauty" from the Primal Source. The positive aspect of the One is stressed so much at places that it seems to contradict Plotinus basic assumptions.

The One, he says, is pure will, loves Itself and is the cause of Itself. This characteri-zation conflicts with his earlier stand and justifies the use of human language for the basic reality.

In Plotinus, the negative and positive aspects go together. The positive aspect is, however, more pronounced The One may be transcendental, but if It is a reality, It should not simply be a Great Denial about which nothing positive can be asserted.

This point can receive further clarification from an examination of the reli-gious life of Plotinus. There is no doubt that he had a genuine mystical ex-perience. Porphyry bears testimony to it and the whole spirit and the tenor of the Enneads lends weight to it. But what is the nature of this experience and what is its goal? Some make Plotinus a pantheist and an anti-rationalist, for whom the goal is dissolution of the self into nothingness.

Some think that he was trying to realize his pre-existing identity with the One through his own efforts, while others think that his experience was genuinely mystical, akin to that of the great Christian and Muslim mystics. The first interpretation is absurd, the second is partially true. It is, however, the third one which truly explains his viewpoint.

Plotinus was torn so to say by the conflicting traditions he had inherited.

The One was both transcendental and the Unity-Absolute. Again, the One was both inaccessible and also the goal of our own self-realization. Plotinus contradictions and tensions are the product of these irreconcilable strains in his Weltanschauung. In both cases the positive aspect predominates. But it should not be ignored that the tension is real and fundamental.

How did the world originate from the One? Thinkers before Plotinus had assumed dualism; they had distinguished the world from its creator. But dualism was no answer to the problem. If the creator and the created differ in essence the question whence came the world remains as unsolved as ever Plotinus answered the question by saying that the world is distinct from God in act rather than in essence. The world is God but God is not the world. To explain it Plotinus had the theory of emanation.

Plotinus found it very hard to explain emanation except through metaphors. Both Nous and soul are produced by a spontaneous and necessary efflux of life from the One. They leave their source undiminished. The relation between the One and the other hypostases is described as being like that of the sun and its light or “in similes from the radiative effect of fire, snow or perfumes.

Can any philosophical meaning be given to this conception? It is difficult to see what meaning can be attached to emanation or radiation when attached to spiritual beings. Again, why, if the process is eternal, can one emanation be inferior to another? These are points which pass comprehension.

Plotinus has another way to explain his theory of emanation. He represents the One as a root or seed, the potentiality from which all things evolve into actuality. This comparison is used to describe the relation of the lower hypostases to the higher. About the soul, he says, it has potentialities which can only be actualized in the material world. Plotinus writes, “If then it is necessary that not only the One should exist . . . in the same way it is also necessary that not only souls should exist in the absence of those things which come into being through them; that is supposing that every nature has this inherent quality of making that which comes after it and of unrolling itself as if proceeding from a sort of partless seed as a beginning to the perceptible end.

The prior being remains always in its proper place and that which comes after is as it were generated from an ineffable power (or potency).”⁸ This will show that the comparison to a seed is applied to all the hypostases including the One Itself. But it will be evident to every student of Plotinus that the comparison sets up an impossible contradiction to the rest of the Enneads.

The One may be the beginning of everything, but it cannot be the spermatic beginning. The system of Plotinus is teleological rather than evolutionary: the main thrust of the universal forces is upwards and not downwards.

The second hypostasis, the first emanation of the One, the Nous, is a very complicated notion. It is an image of the former and turns towards It to grasp and comprehend It. Through turning, it becomes Nous (reason)-

sensory perception when the object of comprehension is sensible, and rational apprehension when the object of comprehension is supersensible. The Nous includes in itself the world of ideas. Consequently, the ideas are immanent in the Nous and do not exist as external to it.

It is clear that Plotinus needed an emanation in order that the First Cause should remain unchanged. It is the Nous which is the reality behind the world of phenomena; the things perceived are only the shadows of the real ones.

From the Nous proceeds the third hypostasis, viz., Psyche, the principle of life and motion, the world-soul, which is in the universe and is shared by every living creature. The whole world is alive, he held, and seems to participate in a life similar to our own. Further, life requires a cause which must be found in intelligence, for everywhere one finds intelligent activities. Plotinus maintains that the intelligent activity is nothing but a soul.

Porphyry

The most important of the disciples of Plotinus was Porphyry, born in 232 A.D., probably at Batanaea in Syria. He was altogether a lesser man but all the same a very loyal disciple and a devout follower, who by his pleasing diction brought within the range of understanding of all men the doctrines of Plotinus, which in the language of its author had seemed difficult and obscure. Porphyry was more practical and religious than his master.

He declared the end of philosophizing to be the salvation of the soul. The cause of evil is the desire for the low and the base, and the means of deliverance are self-purification, asceticism, and philosophic cognition of God. While in Sicily, he wrote a book in which he criticized the doctrines of Christianity, especially the divinity of Christ.

He is the first among the successors of Plotinus to defend Hellenic paganism against Christianity. His interest in demons as intermediaries between God and man is very much pronounced and he has a great deal to say about them.

Iamblichus

Iamblichus was a native of Chalcis in Coelesyria and a pupil of Porphyry. Like his master he taught at Rome after the death of Plotinus but retired in later life to Syria where he died in 330 A. D.

The philosophy of Iamblichus is marked by an inrush of Syrian theology with its grosser conceptions, its wild and nonsensical trick of playing with numbers, and its craving for the baser forms of the supernatural. Iamblichus put faith above history and revelation, renounced the later Greek philosophy, and asserted that God could do everything.

After Plotinus, the Neo-Platonists were up against the mighty surge of Christianity. To stem it, they worked to bring about a complete and thorough theology based on the Dialogues of Plato, Chaldaean oracles, and the ancient myths: Greek, Egyptian, or Near Eastern. They were also concerned with elaborating the system of Plotinus and making it absolutely complete.

Iamblichus assumes still another absolutely ineffable and indeterminate first One above the One of Plotinus. The latter has produced the intelligible

world, out of which the intellectual world has emanated. The objects of thought belong to the intelligible world while thinking belongs to the intellectual world. Then there is further splitting up, sub-division, or classification which makes the whole system nonsensically abstract and hopelessly unreal. Plotinus had distinguished Being, Life, and Intelligence, but had never gone so far as to break the complex unity into three hypostases. This was done by Iamblichus and his followers.

Hence complications arose not because their philo-sophical principles were fantastic-which indeed they were-but because they tried to accommodate every god, demon, and hero of the pagan mythology into their system. The motive behind this attempt was a genuine desire to explain the emergence of multiplicity from unity which was accomplished by the interpolation of the intermediate terms.

It was, however, forgotten that no such attempt was destined to succeed as there can be nothing intermediate between the Absolute and other things. Increase in the number of deities, demons, and spirits cannot, philosophically speaking, solve the old riddle of the One and the many.

In the hands of Iamblichus and his followers philosophy became a conglomeration of mythical beings, an amazing metaphysical museum with entities labelled and classified, leaving no room for any free intellectual and spiritual quest.

The philosophy of Iamblichus and his followers was the last Neo-Platonic attempt to provide an alternative scheme of thought and life to Christianity which was forging ahead among the masses and the intellectuals. After a brief success Neo-Platonism failed to capture the imagination of the common man, with the result that the centres of its teaching in Syria, Alexandria, and Athens were closed by a royal edict in 529 A. D.

Early Christianity

A great part of the Christian belief was formed of notions current in the Hellenic world. When the early preachers of Christianity explained the position of Jesus in the totality of things, they did so in terms which bore a close resemblance to conceptions already current in the pagan and the Jewish worlds. Christianity had to assimilate elements from its Hellenistic environment. Its theology was influenced by gnosticism, which has been aptly termed as Hellenistic theology.

It was common to all forms of Hellenistic theology that the material world accessible to senses is evil and consequently very much inferior to the transcendental world; further, that the soul which has divine origin could win its way back through self-denial and purification.

While talking of evil the gnostics primarily thought of the material world and evils connected with sensual passions and not the injustice of the actual state of things or the inequality in the distribution of economic goods or the pains of poverty, disease, and oppression which are ordinarily associated with evil by the modern man.

With regard to the person of Jesus, there is a difference of opinion in the Hellenistic theology. It is argued that in Jesus a pre-existing heavenly being

was present upon earth, but as to the manner of his corporeal manifestation, there is a variety of speculations. All alike regard Jesus Christ as a compound; they differ, however, with regard to the nature and mode of the combination of the human and divine elements in his person.

All these beliefs and controversies were taken over to the Christian Church and formed a basis for their understanding of the Testament. The Christians had their own philosophers too who endeavoured to reconcile philosophy and Christian theology. The prominent among them at Alexandria were Clement and Origen.

The former was a Platonist of the older type who shows in his *Stromateis* how the general body of the Christian doctrine is adapted to the theories of Platonic philosophy. The latter also undertook a defence of the Christian faith against the objections of a Platonist. He was first among the Christian theologians to set forth the doctrines of the Christian faith in a systematic form.

Both Clement and Origen founded the Christian school of philosophical theology. But the attempt did not find favour with the people. The same Justinian who closed the school of the Neo-Platonists in 529 A. D. condemned Origenism in nine anathemas in about 540 A. D.

Having been made to quit Alexandria, Origen returned to Palestine and founded a school at Caesarea, on the model of that in Alexandria. It did not succeed like the original one but nevertheless exercised a potent influence on the Syrian Church. A rival school was set up at Antioch by Malchion. Fifty years later another school was established at Nisibis, right in the heart of the Syriac-speaking community. It was here that the text-books studied at Antioch were rendered into Syriac.

The Church had no philosophy of its own. It had to adapt itself to the Alex-andrian philosophy, particularly to Neo-Platonism and Aristotelian meta-physics and psychology. This led to senseless controversies as the Arian doctrine shows. Both the Alexandrian and the Syrian Churches agreed that Christ was an emanation, eternal like God, but differed in their interpretation of eternity.

The school of Antioch thought that God being the cause, there was a time when God existed but not the Son. This was denied by the Alex-andrians who maintained that eternity does not admit of before and after. If God is Father He is so from eternity and the Son should for ever be issuing from the Father as the source.

The Arian controversy died by the fifth century A. D. giving place to another which concerned the person of the incarnate Christ. It was largely a question of psychology. In *De Anima* Aristotle had defined soul as the first actuality of a natural body having in it the capacity of life “and described its four faculties as the nutritive, the sensible, the locomotive, and the intellectual.

The first three are common to men and animals, being concerned with the intake of food and with knowledge through sense and desire. The fourth one which is the intellect, *Nous*, or the rational soul is peculiar to man. It is independent of the body and the presumption is that it has its source not in the body.”

Man is therefore a compound of psyche and the rational soul, the first signifying the first three functions of the soul, the second, the fourth one which later philosophy regarded as the emanation of Logos or the Agent Intellect. Difficulty arose about the co-presence of these elements in the personality of Christ. What would be the relationship between the Logos and psyche, its own emanation, when they come together in the same person? The question was discussed by the gnostics too.

They regarded human nature, that is, the psyche of Jesus Christ, either as a mere illusion or so detached from the divine that we have really two persons. On the second view the man Jesus is regarded as having been originally distinct from the heavenly Christ. The latter descended into him at his baptism and the compound Jesus Christ came to be. Some people put the coalescence of the two at an early date.

Both these positions were taken by the Church. The Alexandrians thought that the psyche and Logos fused in the person of Christ, while the school of Antioch headed by Nestorius rejected the hypothesis outright. Nestorius conceived of Christ as uniting in himself two persons, the Logos and a man although the two persons were so united that they might in a sense be deemed one.

As the controversy became acute a council was held at Ephesus in 431 A. D. where the Alexandrians succeeded in getting Nestorius and his followers condemned as heretics. They were persecuted and forced to migrate from Egypt. Accordingly, they founded a school in Edessa, a Syriac-speaking district. The school became the resort of the Nestorians and centre of the vernacular -speaking Syriac Church. This school was also banned and the scholars had to take refuge in Persia.

The Nestorians had to support their theories by the prevailing philosophy and so every Nestorian missionary was to some extent a propagandist of Greek philosophy. They translated into Syriac the works of Aristotle and his commentators, and also the works of the theologians.

The Nestorians had no sympathy with the government which had persecuted them. Consequently they spurned its language and celebrated the sacrament only in Syriac. They promoted a distinctly native theology and philosophy by means of translated material and Syriac commentaries.

The advocates of the fusion theory, the Monophysites or Jacobites as they were called, the rivals of the Nestorians, fared no better at the hands of the government. They were also persecuted and expelled. Consequently, they too boycotted the Greek language and began using Coptic and Syriac. In philosophy they were inclined more towards Neo-Platonism and mysticism than the Nestorians.

Ibas who led the Nestorian migration to Persia translated Porphyry's *Isagoge*, a manual of logic, into Syriac, while Probus produced commentaries on this book as well as on Aristotle's *Hermeneutica*, *De Sophisticis Elenchis*, and *Analytica Priora*. Sergius, a Jacobite, wrote about the *Isagoge*, the "Table of Porphyry," Aristotle's "Categories" and *De Mundo*. He also wrote treatises on logic in seven volumes.

Ahudemmeh composed treatises on the definition of logic, on free-will, on the soul, on man considered to be a microcosm, and on man as a

composition of soul and body. Paul the Persian produced a treatise on logic which he dedicated to a Persian king.

The Jacobites produced works no less than the Nestorians. Their productions are enormous no doubt but, all the same, they lack originality. For the most part they are only the transmission of received texts with their translations, commentaries, and explanatory treatises. But it cannot be denied that they fulfilled a genuine need and became a means of spreading Greek philosophy and culture far beyond its original home.

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Notes

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Chapter 6: Pre Islamic Arabian Thought

Pre Islamic Arabian Thought by Shaikh Inayatullah , M.A Ph.D., Formerly, Professor of Arabic, University of the Panjab, Lahore (Pakistan)

In the present chapter, we are concerned only with the people of Arabia who lived in the age immediately preceding the rise of Islam. The ancient civilized inhabitants of southern Arabia, the Sabaeans and Himyarites, have been left out of account, not only because the relevant materials at our disposal are scanty and fragmentary, but also because they are far removed from the Islamic times, with which the present volume is primarily and directly con-cerned.

We cannot hope to understand properly the religious or philosophical ideas of a people without comprehending their economic and social background. A few words about the social structure of pre-Islamic Arabs should, therefore Form a suitable and helpful prelude to a description of their religious outlook.

The land of Arabia is mainly a sandy plain, which is partly steppe-land and partly desert. Except in the oases which are few and far between, the land is bare and monotonous, unfit for cultivation and unable to support settled communities. From times immemorial, its inhabitants have been of necessity nomadic, living on the produce of their camels and sheep.

The majority of the ancient Arabs were, therefore, pastoralists who were constantly on the move in search of grass and water for their herds and flocks. Restless and rootless, with no permanent habitations, they stood at a low level of culture and were innocent of those arts and sciences which are associated in our minds with civilized life.

The art of reading and writing was confined only to a few individuals in certain commercial centres, while illiteracy was almost universal among the sons of the desert. Their mental horizon was narrow, and the struggle for existence in their inhospitable environment was so severe that their energies were exhausted in satisfying the practical and material needs of daily life, and they had little time or inclination for religious or philosophic speculation.

Their religion was a vague polytheism and their philosophy was summed up in a number of pithy sayings.

Although the ancient Arabs had no written literature, they possessed a language which was distinguished for its extraordinary rich vocabulary. In the absence of painting and sculpture, they had cultivated their language as a fine art and were justly proud of its enormous power of expression. Accordingly, the poets and orators who could make an effective and aesthetic use of its wonderful resources were held in especially high esteem among them.

Judging by the evidence furnished by the pre-Islamic poets, polemical pas-sages in the Qur'an and the later Islamic literature, idolatry based on poly-theism prevailed throughout ancient Arabia. Almost every tribe had its own god, which were the centre of its religious life and the immediate object of its devotion. The ancient Arabs, however, at the same time believed in the existence of a Supreme God, whom they called Allah.

But this belief was rather vague and their faith in Him was correspondingly weak. They might invoke Allah in time of danger, but as soon as the danger was over they forgot all about Him. They also recognized and worshipped a large number of other subordinate gods along with Him, or at least thought that they would inter-cede for them with Him.

Three deities in particular, viz., al-`Uzza, al-Manat, and al-Lat, were accorded special veneration as the daughters of Allah. It was this association of subordinate deities with Allah which is technically known as shirk (association of gods with Allah) and which was condemned by the Prophet as an unpardonable sin. Shirk was held in special abhorrence, as it obscured belief in the oneness of God.

The innumerable deities, which the pagan Arabs worshipped, form a long series and are the subject of a monograph, written by ibn al-Kalbi, who flourished in the second century of the Islamic era and is counted among the leading authorities on Arabian antiquity.¹ A few of them have been incidentally mentioned in the Qur'an also.

These Arabian deities, which were of diverse nature, fell into different categories. Some of them were personifications of abstract ideas, such as jadd (luck), sa'd (fortunate, auspicious), rida' (good-will, favour), wadd (friendship, affection), and manaf (height, high place). Though originally abstract in character, they were conceived in a thoroughly concrete fashion. Some deities derived their names from the places where they were venerated. Dhu al-Khalasah and Dhu al-Shara may be cited as examples of this kind.

The heavenly bodies and other powers of nature, venerated as deities, occupied an important place in the Arabian pantheon. The sun (shams, regarded as feminine) was worshipped by several Arab tribes, and was honoured with a sanctuary and an idol. The name `Abd Shams, "Servant of the Sun," was found in many parts of the country. The sun was referred to by descriptive titles also, such as shariq, "the brilliant one."

The constellation of the Pleiades (al-Thurayya), which was believed to bestow rain, also appears as a deity in the name `Abd al-Thurayya. The planet Venus, which shines with remarkable brilliance in the clear skies of Arabia, was revered as a great goddess under the name of al-`Uzza, which may be translated as "the Most Mighty."

It had a sanctuary at Nakhlah near Mecca. The name `Abd al-`Uzza was very common among the pre-Islamic Arabs. The Arabian cult of the planet Venus has been mentioned by several classical and Syriac authors.

There were certain Arabian deities whose titles in themselves indicate that they occupied a position of supreme importance in the eyes of their votaries. Such deities were: al-Malik, "the King" (compare the personal name, `Abd al-Malik); and Ba'l or Ba'al, "the Lord" which was very common among the northern Semites.

The deities of heathen Arabia were represented by idols, sacred stones, and other objects of worship. Sacred stones served at the same time as altars; the blood of the victims was poured over them or smeared over them.

At the period with which we are dealing, the Arabs sacrificed camels, sheep, goats, and, less often, kine.

The flesh of the sacrifice was usually eaten by the worshippers, the god contenting himself with the blood alone. Originally, every sacrifice was regarded as food to be consumed by the god concerned or at least as a means of pacifying him. The sacrifice was, thus, believed to bring the worshipper into close connection with the deity. Hence the Arabic terms, qurba and qurban (derived from the root, QRB, to be near), which are used for a sacrifice.

The Arabs, like the Hebrews, were in the habit of sacrificing the firstlings of their flocks and herds (fara'). Soon after the birth of an infant, his head was shaven and a sheep was sacrificed on his behalf. This practice has survived among the Arabs and other Muslim peoples to the present day under the name of `aqiqah. Perhaps, this was originally a ransom, offered as a substitute for the child himself.

The gods of heathen Arabia were represented not only by rude blocks of stone (nusub, pl. ansab), but also by statues, made with more or less skill. The usual word for a divine statue, whether of stone or wood, was sanam. The other word used for this purpose was wathan, which seems primarily to mean nothing more than a stone.

Examples of tree-worship are also found among the ancient Arabs. The tree known as dhat al-anwat "that on which things are hung," received divine honours; weapons and other objects were suspended from it. At Nakhlah, the goddess `Uzza is said to have been worshipped in the form of three trees.

The gods of the heathen Arabs were mostly represented by idols, which were placed in temples. These temples served as places of worship, where offerings and sacrifices were made by their votaries. The temples were by no means imposing buildings like those of the Egyptians or the Greeks.

They were simple structures, sometimes mere walls or enclosures marked by stones. Not only the temples were venerated as holy places, but sometimes the surrounding areas were also treated as sacred and inviolable (hima), and were supposed to be under the special protection of their respective gods.

In connection with several temples, we read of priests who served as their custodians (sadin, pl. sadana). They received the worshippers and gave them admission to the shrine. The office was generally hereditary, since we read of priestly families which were attached to particular temples.

Another word used for a priest was kahin, a term which was employed for a soothsayer as well. The priests were believed to be under the influence of the gods and to possess the power of foretelling future events and of performing other super-human feats.

In this way, their pronouncements resembled the ancient Greek oracles and were likewise vague and equivocal. In course of time, the priest who was in the beginning simply the custodian of the temple developed the character of a soothsayer as well, and thus the term kahin came to acquire the sense of a soothsayer and seer.

There were female soothsayers as well. Arabic literature has preserved many stories about kahin and many utter-ances are attributed to them. These utterances were usually made in rhymed prose, and are interesting not only in respect of their content but also with regard to their style. Their pronouncements consisted of a few concise sentences, which ended in words having the same rhyme. This mode of expression was known as saj`.

The same style is found in the earliest revelations received by the Prophet which now constitute the last chapters of the Qur'an. It is, therefore, not surprising that the contemporaries of the Prophet called him a kahin, a position which he firmly repudiated.

While in the beginning, the Qur'an adopted the style peculiar to saj`, it raised the conception to a level far beyond the imagination of the soothsayers. There is another point of similarity which should be noted here.

The utterances of the kahins were pref-aced by oaths, swearing by the earth and sky, the sun, moon, and stars, light and darkness, and plants and animals of all kinds. These oaths offer an interest-ing point of comparison with the oaths used in the Qur'an.

The temples of the heathen Arabs were for them not only places of worship but also places of pilgrimage. They assembled there periodically at certain times of the year, when these assemblies assumed the character of fairs and festivals.

An important sanctuary of this kind was located at Mecca, a town in western Arabia, which was situated at a distance of about fifty miles inland from the Red Sea. The town lay on the trade-route which led along the sea from the Yemen to Syria, and its situation may have been partly determined by the presence of a well, called Zamzam, which has a considerable and fairly constant supply of water. The sanctuary consisted of a simple stone structure of cube-like appearance, which was called the Ka'bah by the Arabs.

One of the walls contained a black stone (al-hajar al-aswad). Inside the Ka'bah was the statue of the god, Hubal. At its feet, there was a small pit in which offerings to the temple were deposited. Besides Hubal, al-Lat, al-`Uzza, and al-Manat were also worshipped at Mecca and are mentioned in the Qur'an. At the rise of Islam, the temple is said to have contained as many as three hundred and sixty idols.

It seems that in course of time the various Arab tribes had brought in their gods and placed them in the Ka'bah, which had consequently acquired the character of the national pantheon for the whole of Arabia.

From times immemorial, the Ka'bah at Mecca had been the centre of a great pilgrimage, in which the most diverse tribes from all over Arabia took part. But this was possible only when peace reigned in the land.

For this purpose, the month of Dhu al-Hijjah in which the rites and ceremonies con-nected with the pilgrimage were performed and the preceding and succeeding months of Dhu al-Qa'dah and Muharram altogether three consecutive months were regarded as sacred months, during which tribal warfare was prohibited.

This period was sufficiently long to enable the tribes from the remotest corners of Arabia to visit the Ka'bah and return to their homes in peace. The territory around Mecca was also treated as sacred (haram); and the pilgrims laid aside their weapons when they reached this holy territory. The pilgrimage was called hajj.

During the pilgrimage, the pilgrims had to perform a number of rites and ceremonies, which lasted for several days and which can be described here only with the utmost brevity.

As soon as the pilgrims entered the sacred territory, the haram, they had to practise self-denial by observing a number of prohibitions: they had to abstain from hunting, fighting, sexual intercourse, and certain other things.

They cir-cumambulated the Ka'bah, and also kissed the Black Stone which was fixed in one of its walls. An essential rite of the hajj was a visit to the hill of 'Arafat on the ninth of Dhu al-Hijjah, when the pilgrims assembled in the adjoining plain and stayed there till sunset for the prescribed wuquf (the stays or halts). The hill of 'Arafat is said to have borne another name, Ilal, which may have been the name of the shrine or rather of the deity worshipped there in ancient times.²

The pilgrims then went to Muzdalifah, which was consecrated to Quzah, the thunder god. Here they spent the night, when a fire was kindled on the sacred hill. At sunrise the pilgrims left for Mina, an open plain, where they sacrificed the animals, camels, goats, and sheep, which they had brought with them for the purpose.

The animals meant for sacrifice were distinguished by special coverings or other marks. During their stay at Mina, the pilgrims also used to throw stones at three prescribed sites as a part of the pilgrimage ceremonial. After staying at Mina for three days, the pilgrims left for their homes. Women took part in the pilgrimage along with men.

The hajj as described above was retained by the Prophet as a major religious institution of Islam, with certain modifications of its ceremonials which were intended to break the link with their pagan associations. While the position of the Ka'bah was emphasized as the house built by the Patriarch Abraham for the service of Allah, the halts (wuquf)at 'Arafat (along with the one at Muzdalifah) was retained as an essential feature of the Islamic hajj.

In addition to the innumerable gods, the heathen Arabs also believed in the existence of demons, shadowy beings, which they called the jinn (variant: jann). The word probably means covered or hidden. Hence the jinn meant beings invisible to the eye. They were regarded as crafty and mischievous, almost malevolent, and were consequently held in fear.

They were supposed to haunt places dreaded either for their loneliness or for their unhealthy cli-mate. The fear of the jinn, therefore, gave rise to various stories, in which they are said to have killed or carried off human beings. Like many other primitive peoples, the heathen Arabs believed in demoniacal possession.

The jinn were supposed to enter human beings and even animals, rendering them "possessed" or mad. According to the testimony of the Qur'an, the Meccans believed that there was a kinship between Allah and

the jinn, and that they were His partners. Accordingly they made offerings to them and sought aid from them.

In spite of the bewildering multiplicity of the subordinate gods whom the pre-Islamic Arabs venerated, they believed in the existence of a Supreme God whom they called Allah. The word Allah is found in the inscriptions of northern Arabia and also enters into the composition of the numerous personal names among them.

There are a large number of passages in the poetry of the heathen Arabs in which Allah is mentioned as a great deity. Allah also occurs in many idiomatic phrases which were in constant use among them.

The Qur'an itself testifies that the heathens themselves regarded Allah as the Supreme Being. Their sin, however, consisted in the fact that they worshipped other gods besides Him. It was against this shirk that the Prophet waged an unrelenting war. In any case, it is important to note that the Qur'anic monotheism did not find it necessary to introduce an altogether new name for the Supreme Being and, therefore, adopted Allah, the name already in use.

Even before the advent of Islam, old polytheism was losing its force in Arabia, since the Arabs notion of their gods had always been vague. With the decline of old paganism, a number of men had appeared in various parts of the country who had become convinced of the folly of idolatry, and were seeking another more satisfying faith.

They were fairly numerous and were called Hanifs. The Qur'an uses this term in the sense of a monotheist, and describes Abraham the Patriarch as the first Hanif. But none of these Hanifs had the vision and force of conviction and the proselytizing zeal which distinguished the mission of Muhammad.

The ancient Arabs believed that the human soul was an ethereal or air-like substance quite distinct from the human body. As such, they considered it identical with breath. This identification was so complete in their view that the word for breath, *nafs*, came to mean human personality itself.

They were confirmed in this belief by their experience that death resulted when a human being ceased to breathe. At the time of death, breath along with life itself escaped through its natural passage, the mouth or the nostrils. When a person passed away on his death-bed, his soul was said to escape through his nostrils (*mata hatfa anfihi*), and in the case of a violent death, e. g., on a battle-field, through the gaping wound.

When a person was murdered, he was supposed to long for vengeance and to thirst for the blood of the murderer. If the vengeance was not taken, the soul of the murdered man was believed to appear above his grave in the shape of an owl continually crying out, "Give me to drink" (*isquni*), until the murder was avenged.

The restless soul in the form of a screeching owl was supposed to escape from the skull, the skull being the most characteristic part of the dead body. Certain rites of burial, prevalent among the pre-Islamic Arabs, show that they believed in some sort of future existence of the soul.

In order to show honour to a dead chief, for instance, a camel which had been previously hamstrung was tethered near the grave and was left to

starve. This usage can be explained only on the hypothesis that the animal was to be at the service of the dead man. The custom of slaughtering animals at the graves of elders has been kept up in Arabia to the present day.

Ancient poets often express the wish that the graves of those whom they love may be refreshed with abundant rain. Similarly, their sometimes address greetings to the dead. It may be that expressions of this kind are not merely rhetorical figures of speech; they probably indicate their belief in the survival of those who have departed from this world.

Although there are indications that the ancient Arabs had some notion, however hazy, of the survival of the human soul after death, they had no clear notion of life after death. As stated in the Qur'an, they could not understand how a human being, after his bones had been reduced to dust, could be called to life once again. Since life after death was something beyond their comprehension, the question of retribution for human deeds did not arise in their minds.

The Qur'an uses the word ruh (spirit) as well as nafs for the human soul. Accordingly, the Muslim theologians do not make any distinction between the two terms in designating the soul. The ancient Arabs were generally fatalists. They believed that events in the lives of human beings were preordained by fate, and, therefore, inevitable. However hard they might try, they could not escape the destiny that was in store for them.

The course of events was believed to be determined by dahr or time, so that suruf al-dahr (the changes wrought by time) was a most frequent expression used by the Arabs and their poets for the vicissitudes of human life. The same feeling is expressed in several of their proverbs and maxims. This view was probably born of their practical experience of life.

In no part of the world is human life quite secure against the sudden changes of fortune, but in the peculiar milieu of Arabia man seems to be a helpless victim to the caprice of nature to an unusual degree. The sudden attack of a hostile neighbouring tribe or a murrain in his herds and flocks may reduce a rich man to dire poverty almost overnight; or in the case of a prolonged drought, he may be brought face to face with fearful famine and death.

The peculiar circumstances of desert life, thus, seem to have encouraged the growth of fatalistic tendencies among the Arabs. Bearing in mind the existence of these tendencies among the ancient Arabs, it is not surprising to find that similar views prevailed in the first centuries of Islam and that the dogma of predestination was almost universally accepted among the Muslim masses. Predetermination was, however, divorced from dahr.

The feeling of utter helplessness in the face of inexorable fate has probably given rise to another idea among the Arabs; the idea of resignation as a commendable virtue. Possibly, it has a survival value for those who adopt a sub-missive attitude towards the hardships and adversities of human life.

Instead of fretting and fuming and hurling oneself in violent revolt against the decree of fate and thus running the risk of complete disintegration, there seem comparative safety and the possibility of ultimate survival in accepting calmly and patiently the dictates of fate. The

inculcation of resignation as a virtue, thus, seems to be a natural corollary to the dogma of predestination.

Although religion had little influence on the lives of pre-Islamic Arabs, we must not suppose them to be an all together lawless people. The pagan society of ancient Arabia was built on certain moral ideas, which may be briefly described here.

They had no written code, religious or legal, except the com-pelling force of traditional custom which was enforced by public opinion; but their moral and social ideals have been faithfully preserved in their poetry, which is the only form of literature which has come down to us from those old days.

The virtues most highly prized by the ancient Arabs were bravery in battle, patience in misfortune, loyalty to one's fellow-tribesmen, generosity to the needy and the poor, hospitality to the guest and the wayfarer, and persistence in revenge. Courage in battle and fortitude in warfare were particularly required in a land where might was generally right and tribes were constantly engaged in attacking one another.

It is, therefore, not a mere chance that in the famous anthology of Arabian verse, called the *Hamasah*, poems relating to inter-tribal warfare occupy more than half of the book. These poems applaud the virtues most highly prized by the Arabs-bravery in battle, patience in hardship, defiance of the strong, and persistence in revenge.

The tribal organization of the Arabs was then, as now, based on the principle of kinship or common blood, which served as the bond of union and social solidarity. To defend the family and the tribe, individually and collectively, was, therefore, regarded as a sacred duty; and honour required that a man should stand by his people through thick and thin.

If kinsmen sought help, it was to be given promptly, without considering the merits of the case. Chivalrous devotion and disinterested self-sacrifice on behalf of their kinsmen and friends were, therefore, held up as a high ideal of life.

Generosity and hospitality were other virtues which were greatly extolled by the Arab poets. They were personified in Hatim of the tribe of Tayy, of whom many anecdotes are told to this day. Generosity was specialty called into play in the frequent famines, with which Arabia. is often afflicted through lack of rain.

The Arabian sense of honour also called blood for blood. Vengeance for the slain was an obligation which lay heavy on the conscience of the pagan Arabs. It was taken upon the murderer or upon one of his fellow-tribesmen.

Usually this ended the matter, but sometimes it led to a regular blood-feud, which lasted for a long period and in which many persons lost their lives. The fear of retribution had a salutary effect in restraining the lawless instincts of the Bedouin; but the vendetta in some cases was carried to extreme limits and involved a great loss of human life.

In the century before Muhammad, Arabia was not wholly abandoned to paganism. Both Judaism and Christianity claimed a considerable following among its inhabitants. Almost every calamity that befell the land of

Palestine sent a fresh wave of Jewish refugees into Arabia, sometimes as far as the Yemen.

They had probably taken refuge there after the conquest of Palestine by Titus in 70 A. D. Jewish colonists flourished in Medina and several other towns of northern Hijaz. In the time of the Prophet, three large Jewish tribes, viz., Nadir, Quraizah, and Qainuqa, dwelt in the outskirts of Medina, and the fact that the Prophet made an offensive and defensive alliance with them for the safety of the town shows that they were an important factor in the political life of those times.

These colonies had their own teachers and centres of religious study. Judging by the few extant specimens of their poetry, these refugees, through contact with a people nearly akin to themselves, had become fully Arabicized both in language and sentiment. They, however, remained Jews in the most vital particular, religion, and it is probable that they exerted a strong influence over the Arabs in favour of monotheism.

Another religious factor which was strongly opposed to Arabian paganism was the Christian faith. How early and from what direction Christianity first entered Arabia is a question which it is difficult to answer with certainty; but there is no doubt that Christianity was widely diffused in the southern and northern parts of Arabia at the time of the Prophet.

Christianity is said to have been introduced in the valley of Najran in northern Yemen from Syria, and it remained entrenched in spite of the terrible persecution it suffered at the hands of the Himyarite king, Dhu Nawas, who had adopted the Jewish faith.

The Prophet received at Medina a deputation of the Christians of Najran and held discussions with them on religious questions. Christianity in the south-west of Arabia received a fresh stimulus by the invasion of the Christian Abyssinians, who put an end to the rule of Dhu Nawas. There were Christians in Mecca itself; Waraqah ibn Naufal, a cousin of Khadijah, the first wife of the Prophet, was one of them. Christianity was also found among certain tribes of the Euphrates and the Ghassan who lived on the borders of Syria.

Their conversion was due to their contact with the Christian population of the Byzantine Empire. The Ghassanids, who were Monophysites, not only defended their Church against its rivals but also fought against the Muslims as the allies of the Byzantine emperors.

The Christians were also found at Hirah, a town in the north-east of Arabia, where Arab princes of the house of Lakhm ruled under the suzerainty of the Persian kings. These Christians, who were called `Ibad or the "Servants of the Lord," belonged to the Nestorian Church, and contributed to the diffusion of Christian ideas among the Arabs of the Peninsula.

By the sixth century, Judaism and Christianity had made considerable head way in Arabia, and were extending their sphere of influence, leavening the pagan masses, and thus gradually preparing the way for Islam.

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**A History of Muslim Philosophy Volume 1, Book 2:
Advent Of Islam, Fundamental Teachings Of The
Qur'an**

Chapter 7: Philosophical Teachings of the Qur'an

Philosophical Teachings of the Qur'an by M.M Sharif

The Qur'an

Although the Scriptures revealed to the earlier prophets, especially those of the Christians and the Jews, are regarded by the Muslims as holy, yet the Book (al-Qur'an) revealed to the last Prophet, Muhammad, is their chief sacred Book. The doctrine propounded by the Qur'an is not a new doctrine, for it is similar to the Scriptures of the earlier apostles.¹ It lays down the same way of faith as was enjoined on Noah and Abraham.²

It con-firms in the Arabic tongue what went before it, the Book of Moses and the Gospel of Jesus-in being a guide to mankind, admonishing the unjust and giving glad tidings to the righteous.³ God never abrogates or causes to be for-gotten any of His revelations, but according to the needs and exigencies of the times, He confirms them or substitutes for them something similar or better.⁴

The Qur'an is a book essentially religious, not philosophical, but it deals with all those problems which religion and philosophy have in common. Both have to say something about problems related to the significance of such ex-pressions as God, the world, the individual soul, and the inter-relations of these; good and evil, free-will, and life after death.

While dealing with these problems it also throws light on such conceptions as appearance and reality, existence and attributes, human origin and destiny, truth and error, space and time, permanence and change, eternity and immortality.

The Qur'an claims to give an exposition of universal truths with regard to these problems -an exposition couched in a language (and a terminology) which the people immediately addressed, the Arabs, with the intellectual background they had at the time of its revelation, could easily understand, and which the people of other lands, and other times, speaking other languages, with their own intel-lectual background could easily interpret. It makes free use of similitude to give a workable idea of what is incomprehensible in its essence.

It is a book of wisdom,⁵ parts of which relate to its basic principles, (umm al-kitab) and explain and illustrate them in detail, others relate to matters explained alle-gorically. It would be a folly to ignore the fundamentals and wrangle about the allegorical, for none knows their hidden meanings, except God.⁶ In what follows, a brief account is given of the Qur'anic teaching with regard to the religio-philosophical problems mentioned above.

Ultimate Beauty: God and His Attributes

The Ultimate Being or Reality is God.⁷ God, as described by the Qur'an for the understanding of man, is the sole self-subsisting, all-pervading, eternal, and Absolute Reality.⁸ He is the first and the last, the seen and the unseen.⁹ He is transcendent in the sense that He in His full glory cannot be known or experienced by us finite beings--beings that can know only what can be experienced through the senses or otherwise and what is inherent in

the nature of thought or is implied by it. No vision can grasp Him. He is above all comprehension.¹⁰

He is transcendent also because He is beyond the limitations of time, space, and sense-content. He was before time, space, and the world of sense came into existence. He is also immanent both in the souls (anfus) and the spatio-temporal order (afaq). Of the exact nature of God we can know nothing. But, in order that we may apprehend what we cannot comprehend, He uses similitudes from our experience.¹¹

He “is the light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His light is as if there were a niche and within it a lamp, the lamp enclosed in glass; the glass as if it were a brilliant star lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil is well-nigh luminous, though fire scarce touched it: light upon light !”¹².

Likewise for our understanding, He describes through revelation His attributes by similitude from what is loftiest in the heavens and the earth¹³ and in our own experience¹⁴ (our highest ideals).

This He does in a language and an idiom which the people addressed to may easily understand.¹⁵ These attributes are many and are connoted by His names,¹⁶ but they can all be summarized under a few essential heads: Life,¹⁷ Eternity,¹⁸ Unity,¹⁹ Power,²⁰ Truth,²¹ Beauty,²² Justice,²³ Love,²⁴ and Goodness.²⁵

As compared to the essence of God, these attributes are only finite approaches, symbols or pointers to Reality and serve as the ultimate human ideals, but though signs and symbols, they are not arbitrary symbols. God has Himself implanted them in our being. For that reason they must, in some sense, be faithful representations of the divine essence. They must at least be in tune with it, so that in pursuing them we human beings are truly in pursuit of what is at least in harmony with the essence of God, for they are grounded in that essence.

God is, thus; a living, self-subsisting,²⁶ eternal, and absolutely free creative reality which is one, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-beauty, most just, most loving, and all good.

As a living reality God desires intercourse with His creatures and makes it possible for them to enter into fellowship with Him through prayer, contemplation, and mystic gnosis, and lights with His light the houses of those who do not divert from His remembrance, nor from prayer nor from the practice of regular charity.²⁷

His life expresses itself also through His eternal activity and creativeness. God is one and there is no god but He.²⁸ He is the only one²⁹ and there is none like Him.³⁰ He is too high to have any partners.³¹ If there were other gods besides Him, some of them would have lorded over others.³²

He is the One and not one in a trinity

Those who attribute sons and daughters to Him and those who say Christ is the son of God and is himself God only blaspheme God.³³ He has begotten neither sons nor daughters³⁴ nor is He Himself be-gotten.³⁵ And how could He be said to have sons and daughters when He has no consort?³⁶ And yet the unbelievers have taken besides Him gods that create nothing,

but are themselves created, who have no power to hurt or do good to themselves and can control neither death, nor life, nor resurrection.³⁷

Therefore no god should be associated with God.³⁸ Setting up of gods is nothing but anthropomorphism. The gods that people set up are nothing but names of conjectures and what their own souls desire.³⁹ They do blaspheme who say, "God is Christ the son of Mary"; for said Christ, "O children of Israel, wor-ship God my Lord and your Lord."⁴⁰ They regard the angels as females, as if they had witnessed their creation.⁴¹

God and the World - God is omnipotent

To Him is due the primal origin of everything.⁴² It is He, the Creator,⁴³ who began the process of creation⁴⁴ and adds to creation as He pleases.⁴⁵ To begin with He created the heavens and the earth, joined them together as one unit of smoky or nebulous substance,⁴⁶ and then clove them asunder.⁴⁷

The heavens and the earth, as separate existents with ail their produce; were created by Him in six days⁴⁸ (six great epochs of evolution). Serially considered, a divine day signifies a very long period, say, one thousand years of our reckoning⁴⁹ or even fifty thousand years.⁵⁰

Non-serially considered, His decisions are executed in the twinkling of an eye⁵¹ or even quicker,⁵² for there is nothing to oppose His will. When he says, "Be," behold' it is.⁵³ His decree is absolute,⁵⁴ no one can change it.⁵⁵ He draws the night as a veil over the day, each seeking the other in rapid succession. He created the sun, the moon, and the stars, all governed by the laws ordained by Him⁵⁶ and under His command.⁵⁷ Every creature in the heavens and the earth willingly submits to His laws.⁵⁸

The sun runs its course for a determined period; so does the moon.⁵⁹ The growth of a seed into a plant bearing flowers and fruit, the constellations in the sky, the succession of day and night-these and all other things show proportion, measure, order, and law.⁶⁰ He it is who is the creator, evolver, and restorer of all forms.⁶¹ He it is who sends down water from the sky in due measure, causes it to soak in the soil, raises to life the land that is dead,⁶² and then drains it off with ease.⁶³

God is the Lord of all the worlds,⁶⁴ and of all mysteries.⁶⁵ He has power over all things,⁶⁶ and to Him belong all forces of the heavens and the earth.⁶⁷ He is the Lord of the Throne of Honour⁶⁸ and the Throne of Glory Supreme, the Lord of the dawn⁶⁹ and all the ways of ascent.⁷⁰

It is He who spreads out the earth⁷¹ like a carpet,⁷² sends down water from the sky in due measure⁷³ to revive it⁷⁴ with fruit, corn, and plants,⁷⁵ and has created pairs of plants, each separate from the others,⁷⁶ and pairs of all other things.⁷⁷

He gives the heavens' canopy its order and perfection⁷⁸ and night its darkness and splendour,⁷⁹ the expanse of the earth its moisture, pastures, and mountains;⁸⁰ springs,⁸¹ streams,⁸² and seas⁸³ ships⁸⁴ and cattle;⁸⁵ pearls and coral;⁸⁶ sun and shadow;⁸⁷ wind and rain;⁸⁸ night and day;⁸⁹ and things we humans do not know. It is He who gives life to dead land and slakes the thirst of His creatures⁹⁰ and causes the trees to grow into orchards full of beauty and delight.⁹¹

To God belong the dominions of the heavens and the earth and everything between them.⁹² To Him belong the east and the west. Withers ever you turn, there is His presence, for He is all-pervading.⁹³ Neither slumber can seize Him, nor sleep.

His Throne extends over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving His creatures, for He is the most high and supreme in glory,⁹⁴ exalted in might; and wise.⁹⁵ It is He who gives life and death and has power over all things.

God is not only the creator, but also the cherisher,⁹⁶ sustainer,⁹⁷ protector,⁹⁸ helper,⁹⁹ guide,¹⁰⁰ and reliever of distress and suffering¹⁰¹ of all His creatures, and is most merciful, most kind, and most forgiving.

God has not created the world for idle sport.¹⁰² It is created with a purpose, for an appointed term,¹⁰³ and according to a plan, however hidden these may be from us humans. "God is the best of planners."¹⁰⁴ He it is who ordains laws and grants guidance,¹⁰⁵ creates everything and ordains for it a proportion and measure,¹⁰⁶ and gives it guidance.¹⁰⁷

There is not a thing but with Him are the treasures of it, but He sends them down in a known measure.¹⁰⁸

The world is not without a purpose or a goal; it is throughout teleological and to this universal teleology human beings are no exception. To every one of them there is a goal¹⁰⁹ and that goal is God Himself.¹¹⁰

God is all knowledge. He is the Truth.¹¹¹ With Him are the keys of the un-seen, the treasures that none knows but He.¹¹² He witnesses all things,¹¹³ for every single thing is before His sight in due proportion.¹¹⁴ Verily, nothing on the earth or in the heavens is hidden from Him, not even as much as the weight of an atom. Neither the smallest nor the greatest of things are but recorded in a clear record.¹¹⁵

On the earth and in the sea not even a leaf does fall without His knowledge.¹¹⁶ Should not He that created everything know His own handiwork? He is full of wisdom.¹¹⁷ He understands the finest of mysteries.¹¹⁸ He knows what enters the earth and what comes forth out of it; what comes down from heaven and all that ascends to it.¹¹⁹ He knows every word spoken.¹²⁰

No secrets of the heart are hidden from Him,¹²¹ for He has full knowledge of all things, open or secret.¹²² He knows and would call us to account for what is in our minds, whether we reveal it or conceal it.¹²³ Two other attributes of God and our basic values are always mentioned together in the Qur'an. These are justice and love, the latter including among other attributes the attributes of munificence, mercy, and forgiveness.

God is the best to judge¹²⁴ and is never unjust,¹²⁵ He does not deal unjustly with man; it is man that wrongs his own soul.¹²⁶ On the Day of Judgment, He will set up the scales of justice and even the smallest action will be taken into account.¹²⁷ He is swift in taking account,¹²⁸ and punishes with exemplary punishment.¹²⁹ He commands people to be just¹³⁰ and loves those who are just.¹³¹

For those who refrain from wrong and do what is right there is great reward,¹³² and God suffers no reward to be lost.¹³³ People's good deeds are

in-scribed to their credit so that they may be requited with the best possible award.¹³⁴

Divine punishment is equal to the evil done. It may be less, for, besides being most just, God is most loving, most merciful, and forgiver of all sins,¹³⁵ but it is never more.¹³⁶ Such is not, however, the case with His reward. He is most munificent and bountiful and, therefore, multiplies rewards for good deeds manifold.¹³⁷ These rewards are both of this life and the life hereafter.¹³⁸

Islam, no less than Christianity, lays emphasis on the basic value of love. Whenever the Qur'an speaks of good Christians, it recalls their love and mercy.¹³⁹ God is loving,¹⁴⁰ and He exercises His love in creating, sustaining, nourishing, sheltering, helping, and guiding His creatures; in attending to their needs, in showing them grace, kindness, compassion, mercy, and forgive-ness, when having done some wrong, they turn to Him for that; and in ex-tending the benefits of His unlimited bounty to the sinners no less than to the virtuous.¹⁴¹

It is, therefore, befitting for man to be overflowing in his love for God¹⁴² and be thankful to Him for His loving care.¹⁴³

God is all good, free from all evil (quddus).¹⁴⁴ He is also the source of all good¹⁴⁵ and worthy of all praise.¹⁴⁶

The Qur'an uses synonymous words for beauty and goodness (husn wa khair). The word radiance or light (Nur) is also used to signify beauty. God is the beauty (Nur) of the heavens and the earth¹⁴⁷ and His names (attributes) are also most beautiful (asma al-husna).¹⁴⁸ He is the creator possessed of the highest excellence.¹⁴⁹ He creates all forms and evolves them stage by stage (al-bari al-musawwir).¹⁵⁰

Everything created by Him is harmonious and of great beauty.¹⁵¹ Notice the beauty of trees and fields and the starry, heaven.¹⁵² He is the best bestower of divine colour to man¹⁵³ who has been made in the best of moulds¹⁵⁴ and has been given the most beautiful shape.¹⁵⁵ How lovable is the beauty of animals whom you take out for grazing at dawn and bring home at eventime.¹⁵⁶

Throughout history God has sent messages of great excellence,¹⁵⁷ and given the best of explanations in His revealed books.¹⁵⁸ Therefore, people must follow the best revealed book (ahsan al-kitab).¹⁵⁹ How beautiful is the story of Joseph given in the Scripture.¹⁶⁰

God's judgment is of the highest excellence,¹⁶¹ and belief in the Day of Judgment of extreme beauty. Of great excellence is the speech of the righteous that call to God,¹⁶² for they invite people to Him by beautiful preaching¹⁶³ and say only those things which are of supreme excellence.¹⁶⁴

The Qur'an lays the greatest stress on the beauty of action. It exhorts mankind to do the deeds of high value,¹⁶⁵ for God loves those who do excellent deeds. It wants men to return greetings with greetings of great excellence¹⁶⁶ and repel evil with what is best,¹⁶⁷ for in so doing they enhance the excellence of their own souls.¹⁶⁸

Patience is graceful (sabr-i jamil)¹⁶⁹ and so is forgiveness.¹⁷⁰ Excellence of conduct shall not be wasted.¹⁷¹ Those whose deeds are beautiful shall be given the highest reward¹⁷² in this world and better still in the next.¹⁷³ They

shall be given in paradise the most beautiful abodes and places for repose¹⁷⁴, and excellent provisions shall be made for them.¹⁷⁵

God's Relation to Man

God created man's spirit out of nothing¹⁷⁶ and created mankind from this single spirit. He created his mate of the same kind and from the twain produced men and women in large numbers.¹⁷⁷

From the point of view of personal history and perhaps also from the point of view of the evolutionary process, man is created for an appointed term¹⁷⁸ as a being growing gradually from the earth,¹⁷⁹ from an extract of certain elements of the earth,¹⁸⁰ then by receiving nourishment from the objects of sustenance,¹⁸¹ and being endowed with life.

Like all other living beings,¹⁸² taking the form of water¹⁸³ or watery clay or adhesive mud¹⁸⁴ moulded into shape in due proportions¹⁸⁵ as a life-germ, a leech-like Clot¹⁸⁶ of congealed blood,¹⁸⁷ growing into a lump of flesh, further developing into bones clothed with flesh, and finally emerging as a new creation,¹⁸⁸ a human being in two sexes,¹⁸⁹ gifted with hearing and sight, intelligence, and affection,¹⁹⁰ destined to become God's vicegerent on earth,¹⁹¹ decreed to die one day,¹⁹² and destined to be raised again on the Day of Resurrection.¹⁹³

The form in which he will be raised again he does not know.¹⁹⁴ The whole of mankind is one family, because it is the progeny of a single pair.¹⁹⁵

In reality, man is the highest of all that is created, for God has created him in the most beautiful of moulds.¹⁹⁶ He is born with the divine spirit breathed into him,¹⁹⁷ even as for the Hindu, Greek, and Christian sages he is made in the image of God.

Human perfection, therefore, consists in being dyed in divine colour¹⁹⁸ - in the fullest achievement and assimilation of divine attributes, for God desires nothing but the perfection of His light,¹⁹⁹ the perfection of these attributes in man.

The sole aim of man, therefore, is a progressive achievement of all divine attributes-all intrinsic values. God encompasses²⁰⁰ and cherishes²⁰¹ mankind. He is always near man²⁰² nearer than his jugular vein.²⁰³ He is with him wheresoever he may be and sees all that he does.²⁰⁴ Whithersoever he turns, there is the presence of God, for He is all-pervading.²⁰⁵ He listens to the prayer of every suppliant when he calls on Him.²⁰⁶

Soul

The soul of man is of divine origin, for God has breathed a bit of His own spirit into him.²⁰⁷ It is an unfathomable mystery, a command of God, of the knowledge of which only a little has been communicated to man.²⁰⁸ The conscious self or mind is of three degrees.

In the first degree it is the impulsive mind (nafs ammarah) which man shares with animals; in the second degree it is the conscientious or morally conscious mind (nafs lawwamah) struggling between good and evil and repenting for the evil done; in the third degree it is the mind perfectly in tune with the divine will, the mind in peace (nafs mutma'innah).²⁰⁹

Theory of Knowledge

Man alone has been given the capacity to use names for things²¹⁰ and so has been given the knowledge which even the angels do not possess.²¹¹ Among men those who are granted wisdom are indeed granted great good.²¹²

Understanding raises a man's dignity.²¹³ Those who do not use the intellect are like a herd of goats, deaf, dumb, and blind²¹⁴ no better than the lowest of beasts.²¹⁵ The ideal of the intellect is to know truth from error. As an ideal or basic value for man wisdom means the knowledge of facts, ideals, and values.

There are three degrees of knowledge in the ascending scale of certitude (i) knowledge by inference (‘ilm al-yaqin),²¹⁶ (ii) knowledge by perception and reported perception or observation (‘ain al-yaqin),²¹⁷ and (iii) knowledge by personal experience or intuition (haqq al-yaqan)²¹⁸ - a distinction which may be exemplified by my certitude of (1) fire always burns, (2) it has burnt John's fingers, and (3) it has burnt my fingers. Likewise, there are three types of errors: (i) the errors of reasoning, (ii) the errors of observation, and (iii) the errors of intuition.

The first type of knowledge depends either on the truth of its presupposition as in deduction, or it is only probable as in induction. There is greater certitude about our knowledge based on actual experience (observation or experiment) of phenomena.

The second type of knowledge is either scientific knowledge based on experience (observation and experiment) or historical knowledge based on reports and descriptions of actual experiences. Not all reports are trustworthy. Therefore, special attention should be paid to the character of the reporter. If he is a man of shady character, his report should be carefully checked.²¹⁹

Scientific knowledge comes from the study of natural phenomena. These natural phenomena are the signs of God²²⁰ symbols of the Ultimate Reality or expressions of the Truth, as human behaviour is the expression of the human mind.

Natural laws are the set ways of God in which there is no change.²²¹ The study of nature, of the heavens and the earth, is enlightening for the men of understanding.²²² The alternation of day and night enables them to measure serial time.²²³

They can know the ways of God, the laws of nature, by observing all things of varying colours - mountains, rivers, fields of corn, or other forms of vegetation, gardens of olives, date-palms, grapes, and fruit of all kinds, though watered with the same water, yet varying in quality;²²⁴ by studying the birds poised under the sky and thinking how they are so held up²²⁵ and likewise by observing the clouds and wondering how they are made.²²⁶

Those who think can know God and can conquer all that is in the heavens and the earth²²⁷ night and day, and the sun the moon, and the stars.²²⁸ Knowledge of the phenomenal world which the senses yield is not an illusion, but a blessing for which we must be thankful.²²⁹

No less important for individuals and nations is the study of history. There is a measure and law in human society as much as in the whole cosmos.²³⁰ The life of every nation as a collective body moves in time and

passes through rises and falls, successes and reverses,²³¹ till its appointed period comes to an end.²³² For every living nation there are lessons in the history of the peoples that have lived in the past.

It should, therefore, study the “days of God,” the momentous periods of history, the periods of divine favour and punish-ment, the periods of nations glory and decline.²³³ People should traverse the earth to see what had been the end of those who neglected the laws of nature, the signs of God.²³⁴ Those who do not guide others with truth and so do not act rightly, even though their days are lengthened, are gradually brought down by such means as they do not know.²³⁵

God never changes the condition of a people until they change it themselves, but once He wills it, there can be no turning it back.²³⁶ Therefore, it is all the more important to take lessons from the past. In the stories about the past there are instructions for men of understanding.²³⁷ Even the bare outlines of the rise and fall of nations, of great events of history, and their consequences provide object lessons for their guidance and warning.

Let them remember momentous events of the lives of such peoples and societies as the Israelites,²³⁸ the Magians,²³⁹ the Sabians,²⁴⁰ the Romans,²⁴¹ the Christians,²⁴² the people of Saba,²⁴³ the people of Madyan,²⁴⁴ of `Ad,²⁴⁵ of Thamud,²⁴⁶ of Lot,²⁴⁷ Companions of the Cave, the Seven Sleepers,²⁴⁸ the Companions of al-Rass,²⁴⁹ the Companions of the Rocky Tract,²⁵⁰ and those of the Inscription,²⁵¹ and Gog and Magog;²⁵² prophets like Noah,²⁵³ Abraham,²⁵⁴ Isma`il,²⁵⁵ Isaac,²⁵⁶ Jacob,²⁵⁷ David,²⁵⁸ Solomon,²⁵⁹ Joseph,²⁶⁰ Moses,²⁶¹ Aaron,²⁶² Elisha,²⁶³ Jonah,²⁶⁴ Jesus,²⁶⁵ and other personages great for their piety, power or wisdom, e.g., Mary,²⁶⁶ the Queen of Saba,²⁶⁷ Dhu al-Qarnain²⁶⁸ (probably Cyrus of Iran), and the Pharaoh²⁶⁹ (Thothmes I of Egypt), and Aesop.²⁷⁰

So much importance has been given to history that fifteen chapters of the Qur'an have been given the titles bearing historical significance.²⁷¹ Nor indeed has the study of contemporary history been ignored. The Qur'an refers to contemporaneous events such as the battle of Badr,²⁷² the battle of Tabuk,²⁷³ the trade and commerce of the Quraish,²⁷⁴ the hypocrisy of those who were enemies pretending to have embraced Islam, and the animosity of persons like abu Lahab and his wife.²⁷⁵

God reveals His signs not only in the experience of the outer world (afaq) and its historical vistas, but also through the inner experience of minds (anfus). Thus, the inner or personal experience is the third source of know-ledge. Experience from this source gives the highest degree of certitude. Divine guidance²⁷⁶ comes to His creatures in the first instance from this source. The forms of knowledge that come through this source are:

- (1) divinely-determined movement-movement determined by natural causes, as in the earth,²⁷⁷ and the heavens,²⁷⁸
- (2) instinct, e.g., in the bee to build its cell,²⁷⁹
- (3) intuition or knowledge by the heart,²⁸⁰
- (4) inspiration as in the case of Moses mother when she cast her tenderly suckled child into the river,²⁸¹ and
- (5) revelation as in the case of all true prophets,²⁸² God's messengers.

Man's Power

God has subjected for the use of man, His vicegerent on the earth,²⁸³ everything in the heavens and the earth, the sun and the moon; day and night; winds and rain; the rivers and the seas and the ships that sail; pearls and corals; springs and streams, mountains, moisture, and pastures; and animals to ride and grain and fruit to eat.²⁸⁴

Free Will

God has given man the will to choose, decide, and resolve to do good or evil. He has endowed him with reason and various impulses so that by his own efforts he may strive and explore possibilities. He has also given him a just bias, a natural bias towards good.²⁸⁵ Besides this He has given him guidance through revelation and inspiration, and has advised him to return evil with good,²⁸⁶ to repel it with what is best (ahsan).²⁸⁷ Hence if a man chooses to do good, it is because in giving him these benefits God has willed him to do so.

He never changes the gracious benefits which He has bestowed on a people until they change themselves.²⁸⁸ Therefore, whatever good come from man or to man is ultimately from God.²⁸⁹ On the other hand, his nature has a bias against evil, his reason is opposed to it, and he has been given a warning against it through the revealed books; therefore, whatever evil comes from him or to him is from his own soul.²⁹⁰

If God had willed He would have destroyed evil or would not have allowed it to exist, and if it were His will, the whole of mankind would have had faith, but that is not His plan?²⁹¹ His plan envisages man's free use of the divine attribute of power or freedom to choose²⁹² and take all judicious and precautionary measures to suit different situations.²⁹³

In the providential scheme man's role is not that of a blind, deaf, dumb and driven herd of goats.²⁹⁴ So even his free choice of evil is a part of the scheme of things and no one will choose a way unto God, unless it fits into that scheme or is willed by God.²⁹⁵

There is no compulsion in faith. God's guidance is open to all who have the will to profit by it.²⁹⁶ Whosoever wills, let him take the straight path to his Lord.²⁹⁷ Truth is from God, then whosoever wills, let him believe it; and whosoever wills, let him reject it.²⁹⁸ The prophets are sent to every nation²⁹⁹ for guiding the whole of mankind. Their duty is to preach, guide, and inspire by persuasion and not to drive or force people to anything, nor to watch over their doings or dispose of their affairs.³⁰⁰ They cannot compel mankind against their will to believe.³⁰¹

Death

Death of the body has been decreed by God to be the common lot of mankind.³⁰² Wherever a man is, death will overtake him even if he is in a tower strong and high.³⁰³ No soul can die except by God's leave, the term being fixed as if by writing,³⁰⁴ but every soul shall be given a taste of death³⁰⁵ and in the end brought back to God³⁰⁶ and duly judged on the Day of Judgment, and only he who is saved from fire will be admitted to paradise; it is then that he will have attained the goal of his life. As compared to that life, the life of this world is only a life of vainglory.³⁰⁷

Life after Death

There are some who think revival after death is far from their understanding³⁰⁸ and ask how they shall be raised up after they have been reduced to bones and dust.³⁰⁹

Let them recall to mind that they were created out of nothing; first as dust, then a sperm, then a leech-like clot, then a piece of flesh, partly formed and partly unformed, kept in a womb for an appointed term, then brought out as babes and then fostered so that they reached an age of full strength; and further, let them ponder over the fact that the earth is first barren and lifeless but when God pours down rain, it is stirred to life, it swells, and puts forth every kind of beautiful growth in pairs.³¹⁰

Let them understand that He who created the heavens and the earth is able to give life to the dead, for He has power over all things.³¹¹

God created man from the earth, into it shall he return and from it shall he be brought out again.³¹² For everyone after death there shall be an interval (Barzakh)lasting till the Day of Resurrection.³¹³ On that day all the dead shall be raised up again.³¹⁴ Even as God produced the first creation, so shall He produce this new one.³¹⁵ We do not know in what form we shall be raised,³¹⁶ but as a parable³¹⁷ the Qur'an describes the Day of Resurrection as follows

On that day there shall be a dreadful commotion.³¹⁸ The heaven shall be rent asunder³¹⁹ and melted like molten brass.³²⁰ The sun folded up and the moon darkened shall be joined together,³²¹ and the stars shall fall, losing their lustre.³²² In terrible repeated convulsions,³²³ the earth shall be shaken to its depths and pounded into powder.³²⁴ The mountains shall crumble to atoms flying hither and thither³²⁵ like wool,³²⁶ the oceans shall boil over, there shall be a deafening noise, and the graves shall be turned upside down.³²⁷

A trumpet shall be blown,³²⁸ no more than a single mighty blast,³²⁹ and there shall come forth every individual soul³³⁰ and rush forth to the Lord³³¹ - the sinners as blackened,³³² blinded,³³³ terror-smitten³³⁴ with eyes cast down³³⁵ and hearts come right up to their throats to choke;³³⁶ and the virtuous, happy and rejoicing.³³⁷

Then all except such as it will please God to exempt shall fall into a swoon.³³⁸ Then a second trumpet shall be sounded, when, behold! they will all be standing and looking on. The earth will shine with the glory, of the Lord and the record of deeds shall be opened.³³⁹

All shall fully remember their past deeds.³⁴⁰ Anyone who will have done an atom of good shall see it and anyone who will have done an atom of evil shall see it.³⁴¹ They shall also recognize one another,³⁴² though each will have too much concern of his own to be able to be of help to others.³⁴³ They will have neither a protector, nor an intercessor except God³⁴⁴ or those whom permission is granted by Him and whose word is acceptable to Him.³⁴⁵

They shall all now meet their Lord.³⁴⁶ The scale of justice shall be set up, and not a soul shall be dealt with unjustly in the least; and if there be no more than the weight of a mustard seed, it will be brought to account,³⁴⁷ and all shall be repaid for their past deeds.³⁴⁸ There will be a sorting out of the

sinner and the righteous.³⁴⁹ The sinner will meet a grievous penalty but it shall not be more than the retribution of the evil they will have wrought.³⁵⁰

All in proportion to their respective deeds and for a period longer and shorter shall go through a state of pain and remorse,³⁵¹ designated in the Qur'an as hell, and the righteous saved from hell shall enter a state of perpetual peace, designated as paradise.

Paradise has been described in the Qur'an by similitude³⁵² in terms of what average human beings value most: dignity, honour, virtue, beauty, luxury, sensuous pleasures, and social discourse - and hell in terms of what they all detest. People shall be sorted out into three classes.³⁵³

(1) Those who will be fore-most and nearest to God, with whom God is well-pleased and who are well-pleased with God. They shall have no fear, no grief, no toil, no fatigue, no sense of injury,³⁵⁴ no vanity, and no untruth.³⁵⁵ They shall enjoy honour and dignity, and, dressed in fine silks and brocade and adorned with bracelets of gold and pearls,³⁵⁶ shall live forever in carpeted places. They will recline on thrones encrusted with gold and jewels facing one another for discourse.

They will be served by youths of perpetual freshness, handsome as pearls,³⁵⁷ with goblets, beakers, and cups filled out of clear fountains of crystal white and delicious drinks free from intoxication and after-aches, which they will exchange with one another free of frivolity and evil taint.³⁵⁸ They shall be given fruit and flesh of their own choice in dishes of gold to eat, and shall get more than all they desire.³⁵⁹

Their faces shall be beaming with the brightness of bliss.³⁶⁰ They shall have as companions chaste women, their wives,³⁶¹ beautiful like pearls and corals.³⁶² Those who believe and whose families follow them in faith, to them God shall join their families, their ancestors, their spouses, and their offspring.³⁶³ Rest, satisfaction, and peace will reign all round. This will be their great salvation,³⁶⁴ but their greatest reward, their supreme felicity, will consist in being in the presence of God.³⁶⁵

(2) Companions of the right hand who shall have their abode in another garden. They will sit on thrones on high in the midst of trees, having flowers, pile upon pile, in cool, long-extending shades by the side of constantly flowing water. They will recline on rich cushions and carpets of beauty,³⁶⁶ and so will their pretty and chaste companions,³⁶⁷ belonging to a special creation, pure and undefiled. They will greet one another with peace. They will also have all kinds of fruits, the supply of which will not be limited to seasons.³⁶⁸ These are parables of what the righteous shall receive.³⁶⁹

(3) Companions of the left hand who shall be in the midst of a fierce blast of fire with distorted faces and roasted skin, neither alive nor dead,³⁷⁰ under the shadows of black smoke. They shall have only boiling and fetid water to drink³⁷¹ and distasteful plants (zaqqum) to eat.³⁷² Nothing shall be there to refresh or to please.

The fire of hell shall, however, touch nobody except those most unfortunate ones who give the lie to truth.³⁷³

But for these similitudes, we cannot conceive the eternal, bliss and per-petual peace that awaits the righteous in the life hereafter,³⁷⁴ nor can we

conceive the agony which the unrighteous will go through. They will, however, remain in their respective states only so long as it is the will of God and is in accordance with His plans.³⁷⁵

Neither is the bliss of paradise the final stage for the righteous, nor is the agony of hell the final stage for the unrighteous. Just as we experience the glowing sunset, then evening, and then the full moon at night one after another, even so shall everyone progress whether in paradise or in hell stage by stage towards his Lord, and thus shall be redeemed in the end.³⁷⁶

Notes

1. Abdullah Yusuf Ali's translation of the Qur'an has been mainly used for the purposes of this chapter. For references the same work may be consulted. - Qur'an, XVI, 9-10.
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Chapter 8: Ethical Teachings of the Qur'an

Ethical Teachings of the Qur'an by B.A Dar, M.A, Fellow Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore (Pakistan)

Values

As it has been explained in the preceding chapter, the real goal of man, according to the Qur'an, is the assimilation of divine attributes. These attributes, as also shown in the same chapter, can be summarized as life, eternity, unity, power, truth, beauty, justice, love, and goodness.

Life

God is the living one Himself¹ and gives life to others.² The moral laws enunciated in the Qur'an are life-giving and life-enriching³ and, therefore, by living in this world in accordance with these laws man is able to realize one of God's attributes. If anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people.⁴ On the social plane, the importance of life on this earth is duly emphasized.

The ideal of the Qur'an is to develop a healthy social organization which traverses the middle path of rectitude avoiding all forms of extreme.⁵ People are to partake of the good things of the world⁶ and wear beautiful apparel, to eat and drink without going to excess,⁷ and for this reason monasticism which implies denial of life on this earth is condemned as being incompatible with human nature.⁸ Man is advised not to forget his portion in the life of this world.⁹ Wealth and property are good things to be enjoyed and appreciated and are blessings of God¹⁰ which make life smooth and comfortable.¹¹

The life of the present world is no doubt significant and purposive,¹² but its purposes are directed towards the good of future life, for the real abode of life is in the hereafter.¹³ God created life and death to test which of the people are best in point of deed.¹⁴ The present world is a place of sojourn and a place of departure;¹⁵ its enjoyments are short¹⁶ and comforts are few,¹⁷ while as compared with these the life in the hereafter is better and more enduring.¹⁸

It is best for the righteous¹⁹ and will last forever.²⁰ The present life and the future life, however, are to be viewed as a unity, for man's creation here and his resurrection later on are events related to an individual soul.²¹ In fact, life on this earth is a preparation for the life hereafter.²² The good works that we do here in this life will run before us to illumine our path in the here-after²³ where we shall have full opportunity to develop our spiritual light to ever greater perfection.²⁴

Eternity

This attribute in its fullness is exclusively God's and man is created within time for a stated term;²⁵ yet he has within himself a deep craving for eternity and for a kingdom that never fails or ends.²⁶ Though finite and temporal, man does not and cannot rest content with that. The way is open for the finite and temporal man to attain life everlasting.²⁷

Unity

The greatest emphasis in the Qur'an is on the unity of God which implies belief in the divine causality and the presence of moral order in the universe where people are judged according to the merit of their deeds²⁸ and not arbitrarily.²⁹ This moral order works without any favour not only in the case of individuals but also in the case of societies and peoples.³⁰ God has entered into covenant with men within the limits of this moral order with men as such and not with particular nations or races.³¹

Unity, as one of the ideals of man, implies unity in the internal life of man, a co-ordination of reason, will, and action. It requires complete control of one's passions and lust. It also stands for the unity of profession and practice. Faith in God is the necessary prerequisite of moral life, but it should not be mere verbal acceptance,³² it must be accompanied by good deeds,³³ implying an attitude of mind which is motivated by a complete submission to God's will.³⁴ Poets generally say what they do not practise,³⁵ and hypocrites say with their tongues what is not in their hearts,³⁶ but all believing men and women are truthful in their words and deeds.³⁷

Externally, the ideal of unity demands that men should develop a healthy social organization which traverses the middle path of rectitude avoiding all forms of extreme.³⁸ The righteous are advised to get together and strive, so that tumult, oppression, and mischief are removed from the face of the earth.³⁹

This ideal of unity also implies peace and harmony among members of a family. A woman is a mate for man so that both may dwell in tranquillity with an attitude of mutual love and kindness;⁴⁰ each is like a garment for the other⁴¹ for mutual support, mutual comfort, and mutual protection. It is the duty of man to live with woman on a footing of kindness and equity.⁴² Unity also implies that members of a national or ideological group should develop ties of intimate relationship among themselves so that the ideal of an organic whole may be realized in a broader context.

The Qur'an says that all Muslims are brothers⁴³ and have great love and affection among themselves.⁴⁴ No excuse should be allowed to stand in the way of doing good or making peace between different persons.⁴⁵ Every effort should be made to bring about conciliation between men,⁴⁶ yet we should co-operate in righteousness and piety, not in sin and rancour.⁴⁷ We should be kind to those in need, to neighbours, and to the wayfarers.⁴⁸

This attitude, of kindness and fairness is to be maintained and upheld even in the case of enemies and opponents.⁴⁹ We should try to forgive those who plot against us and overlook their deeds,⁵⁰ cover evil with pardon,⁵¹ and turn off evil with good.⁵²

This attitude of toleration is to be cultivated in our relation to people of other faiths. The Qur'an aims at establishing a peaceful social atmosphere where people belonging to other faiths can enjoy freedom of conscience and worship⁵³ for which purpose the believers are urged to rise and fight against the oppressors so that monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which the name of God is commemorated in abundant measure may not be pulled down.⁵⁴ It unreservedly praises some of the people of the Book for their faith.⁵⁵

It is as a consequence of this attitude of tolerance that according to the Qur'an all those who believe in God and the Last Day and practice right-eousness, whether they are Muslims, Jews, Christians, or Sabaeans, shall get their reward from their Lord.⁵⁶ The Qur'an gives an open invitation to the people of the Book to come together and work conjointly for the establishment of peace and social harmony based on the idea of the unity of God.⁵⁷

Above all, this ideal of unity leads to the conception of unity of the whole of humanity. Mankind was created from a single pair of a male and a female⁵⁸ and from a single breath of life.⁵⁹ All people are equal members of the human community;⁶⁰ the only distinction recognized by the Qur'an is based on the degree of righteousness possessed by people.⁶¹

Power

Power as a human ideal implies that man has the potentiality of assuming responsibility undertaken by him of his own accord.⁶² God breathed His Spirit into him⁶³ and, therefore, made him His vicegerent on the earth.⁶⁴ Everything in the universe was created subservient to him⁶⁵ - even the angels were ordered to bow down to him.⁶⁶ He was given a position of great honour in the universe and was elevated far above most of God's creations.⁶⁷

He has all the faculties that are necessary for his physical and spiritual development and can pass beyond the limits of the heavens and the earth with the power given to him by God.⁶⁸ He is given the power to distinguish between good and evil⁶⁹ and, therefore, he alone is responsible for what he does.⁷⁰ He is endowed with freedom of action, but his freedom is limited by the free causality of God.⁷¹ His responsibility is proportionate to his powers;⁷² he has been shown the path of righteousness and it is up to him to accept its lead or reject it.⁷³

Being created after the pattern of God's nature⁷⁴ man is capable of develop-ing from one stage to the next higher stage.⁷⁵ But this development involves struggle against the immoral forces of the external world which he is able to meet successfully with the co-operation and help of God.⁷⁶

This effort of man is, however, viewed not in any exclusive spirit of otherworldliness.⁷⁷ It is the primary duty of the believers to participate actively in the struggle for the establishment of asocial order based on peace, harmony, and justice⁷⁸ in which everybody is equal before the law, and people in authority work out their policies after ascertaining the views of the people.⁷⁹

In this endeavour to realize the moral law in his individual and social life, man has often to contend against evil forces represented in the person of Satan.⁸⁰ But it is within his power to resist and overcome them.⁸¹ Though man is always prone to weakness and susceptible to seduction by the forces of evil, yet his weakness is rectifiable under the guidance of revelation,⁸² and such men as follow the law of righteousness shall be immune from these lapses.⁸³ They shall never be afraid of anything⁸⁴ or be cowardly in their behaviour.⁸⁵

The ideal of power demands that in order to establish a State on the basis of peace, freedom of thought, worship, belief, and expression, the morally -orientated individuals will have to strive hard. Jihad or utmost striving⁸⁶

with might and main⁸⁷ with wealth and their person,⁸⁸ as they ought to strive,⁸⁹ becomes their foremost duty so that tumult, oppression, and mischief should be totally eliminated from the world⁹⁰ and there should be left no possibility for the aggressors to kindle the fire of war,⁹¹ to hinder men from the path of God,⁹² and to oppress people for professing a faith different from their own.⁹³

This struggle against the forces of evil and oppression demands that its participants must be characterized by perseverance, courage, fearlessness, and trust in God-the moral qualities which are described by the Qur'an as characteristic of the righteous in the social context.⁹⁴ Those who patiently persevere in the path of righteousness will be in possession of a determining factor in all the affairs of this life⁹⁵ and will be above trivial weaknesses.⁹⁶

Those who are firm and steadfast will never lose heart, nor weaken in will, nor give in before the enemy.⁹⁷ A small band of steadfastly persevering people often vanquish a big force.⁹⁸ Similarly, trust in God is the moral quality of all believers.⁹⁹ This quality does not involve any negation of planning in advance as is evident from the attitude of Jacob while advising his sons who were going to Egypt.¹⁰⁰ After you have taken all possibilities into consideration and taken a decision, put your trust in God.¹⁰¹

Truth or Wisdom

Wisdom as a human ideal stands for man's search for knowledge or truth. It is something which is distinguished from conjecture or imperfect knowledge¹⁰² and mere fancy.¹⁰³ Different stories are related in the Qur'an,¹⁰⁴ several similitudes¹⁰⁵ and signs pointing to reality are detailed¹⁰⁶ and explained,¹⁰⁷ so that people may reflect and ponder over things.

It is the characteristic of the righteous that they not only celebrate the praises of God, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, but also contemplate and ponder over the different phenomena of nature.¹⁰⁸ The people are, therefore, advised repeatedly to look at and observe the phenomena of nature, pondering over everything in creation to arrive at the truth.¹⁰⁹

None can grasp the message of revelation except men of understanding and those firmly grounded in knowledge.¹¹⁰ Lack of true knowledge leads people to revile the true God,¹¹¹ invent lies against Him, and worship other gods besides Him.¹¹² The only safety lies in following the revelation which is replete with the knowledge of God.¹¹³ Whosoever has been given knowledge has indeed been given abundant good.¹¹⁴

Those who dispute wrongly about God are the ones who are without knowledge, without guidance, and without a book of enlightenment.¹¹⁵ Only those people will be promoted to suitable ranks and degrees who have faith and are possessed of knowledge,¹¹⁶ and only those who have knowledge really fear God and tread the path of righteousness.¹¹⁷

When Solomon asked the people of his Court who would be able to bring the throne of the Queen of Sheba, it was only the one possessed of knowledge who offered himself to bring it and later actually did bring it.¹¹⁸

The Qur'an advises the Holy Prophet to pray for advance in knowledge.¹¹⁹ The mysterious teacher of Moses who tried to help him have

a glimpse of the working of the unseen had knowledge proceeding from God, i.e., `ilm al -ladunni.¹²⁰ Saul (Jalut) was appointed king of the Israelities because he was gifted by God abundantly with knowledge and bodily prowess.¹²¹ Noah, David, and Solomon possessed knowledge¹²² and judgment.¹²³ Jacob had a lot of knowledge and experience;¹²⁴ Joseph possessed abundant power and know-ledge,¹²⁵ and so also was Moses given wisdom and knowledge.¹²⁶

It was through knowledge and reflection on the phenomena of nature, the heaven and the earth, that Abraham was able to arrive at the ultimate truth.¹²⁷ It was through his personal experience and knowledge that Joseph refused to follow the path of the unbelievers and adopted the path of Abraham.¹²⁸

Justice

Justice is a divine attribute and the Qur'an emphasizes that we should adopt it as a moral ideal. God commands people to be just towards one another¹²⁹ and, in judging between man and man, to judge justly,¹³⁰ for He loves those who judge equitably.¹³¹ All believers stand firmly for justice even if it goes against themselves, their parents, their kith and kin, without any distinction of rich and poor.¹³²

God's Revelation itself is an embodiment of truth and justice;¹³³ it is revealed with the Balance (of right and wrong) so that people may stand forth for justice.¹³⁴ The value of justice is absolute and morally binding and the believers are, therefore, warned that they should not let the hatred of some people lead them to transgress the limits of justice¹³⁵ or make them depart from the ideal of justice, for justice is very near to piety and righteousness.¹³⁶

Justice demands that people should be true in word and deed,¹³⁷ faithfully observe the contracts which they have made¹³⁸ and fulfil all obligations.¹³⁹ When Muslims enter into treaties with people of other faiths, they must fulfil their engagements to the end and be true to them, for that is the demand of righteousness.¹⁴⁰ They are also advised to establish the system of weights with justice and not to skimp in the balance¹⁴¹ and cause thereby a loss to others by fraud, and unjustly withhold from others what is due to them,¹⁴² for that would lead to the spread of evil and mischief on the earth.¹⁴³

Love

Love as a human ideal demands that man should love God as the complete embodiment of all moral values above everything else.¹⁴⁴ It demands that man should be kind and loving to parents,¹⁴⁵ especially to the mother who bore him in pain and gave birth to him in travail.¹⁴⁶ This obligation of loving kindness is further broadened to include kindred, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near and neighbours who are strangers, and the wayfarers.¹⁴⁷

Righteousness is to spend a part of our substance out of love for God, for kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer,¹⁴⁸ and for the indigent.¹⁴⁹ The Holy Prophet who is a mercy to believers¹⁵⁰ and mercy to all

creatures¹⁵¹ always dealt gently with people.¹⁵² Moses was advised by God to speak to Pharaoh mildly and gently.¹⁵³

It is one of the characteristics of the believers that they are compassionate and loving to one another;¹⁵⁴ they walk on the earth in humility, and hold to forgiveness;¹⁵⁵ they are friendly to others,¹⁵⁶ and forgive and overlook their faults,¹⁵⁷ even though they are in anger.¹⁵⁸

Goodness

Goodness is an attribute of God¹⁵⁹ and, therefore, it becomes the duty of every person to obey his own impulse to good.¹⁶⁰ He should do good as God has been good to all¹⁶¹ and love those who do good.¹⁶² Believers hasten in every good work.¹⁶³

As all prophets were quick in emulating good works,¹⁶⁴ so all people are advised to strive together (as in a race) towards all that is good¹⁶⁵ and virtuous.¹⁶⁶ Truly did Solomon love the love of good with a view to glorifying the Lord.¹⁶⁷

All good things are for the believers,¹⁶⁸ goodly reward in the hereafter¹⁶⁹ and highest grace of God awaits those who are foremost in good deeds.¹⁷⁰ Believers are advised to repel evil with what is better, for thereby enmity will change into warm friendship.¹⁷¹

Beauty

God possesses most beautiful names¹⁷² and highest excellence,¹⁷³ and creates everything of great beauty.¹⁷⁴ Man is created in the best of moulds¹⁷⁵ and is given a most beautiful shape.¹⁷⁶

God has revealed the most beautiful message in the form of a book¹⁷⁷ and given the best of explanations in the revealed books.¹⁷⁸ We are, therefore, advised to follow the best of revelations from God.¹⁷⁹ The Qur'an relates most beautiful stories.¹⁸⁰ The association of believers, prophets, sincere lovers of truth, witnesses (to the truths of religion in word and deed), and the righteous is a beautiful fellowship.¹⁸¹

Who is better in speech than those who invite people to the ways of the good with wisdom and beautiful preaching and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious¹⁸² and say only those things that are of supreme excellence ?¹⁸³ The Qur'an exhorts people to adopt ways of the highest value, for God loves those who perform deeds of excellence,¹⁸⁴ good-will, and con-ciliation.¹⁸⁵

It advises people to return greetings with greetings of greater excellence¹⁸⁶ and repel evil with that which is best,¹⁸⁷ for thereby they will be adding to the beauty of their own souls.¹⁸⁸ Patience is graceful¹⁸⁹ and so are forgiveness and overlooking others faults.¹⁹⁰ Those who perform beautiful deeds shall have the highest rewards in this world¹⁹¹ and their reward in the hereafter shall be still better¹⁹² when they shall enjoy the fairest of places for- repose¹⁹³ and be provided with excellent provisions.¹⁹⁴

Disvalues

Corresponding to these values there are some disvalues which are symbolized in the Qur'an as Satan or Iblis. He is described as a persistent rebe¹⁹⁵ who is constantly engaged in deceiving¹⁹⁶ people and misleading them from the path of righteousness.¹⁹⁷ He sows the seeds of enmity and

hatred,¹⁹⁸ creates false desires,¹⁹⁹ commands what is shameful and wrong,²⁰⁰ and defaces the fair nature created by God.²⁰¹ He is in short an enemy of mankind,²⁰² and believers are, therefore, advised that they should beware of his machinations.

Destruction of Life

Opposed to the value of life is weakness of man to make mischief in the earth and shed blood²⁰³ - symbolized by the first unlawful and unjustified murder in the history of mankind by the first issue of Adam.²⁰⁴ All life being sacred,²⁰⁵ it is forbidden to commit suicide or to kill anybody without a just cause.²⁰⁶

It is equally sinful to murder one's children for fear of want or poverty.²⁰⁷ Killing a person without reason, in the view of the Qur'an, is tantamount to slaying the human race.²⁰⁸ Fight for the cause of righteousness is permitted only because tumult and oppression, which necessitate resort to armed resistance, are worse than killing.

All those tendencies which weaken a man's hold on life are condemned in the Qur'an. People are warned of falling into fear, grief, and despair²⁰⁹ or of being unmindful of the ultimate mercy of God.²¹⁰ But any unjust clinging to life which involves sacrifice of other values is to be avoided at all cost. It does not become a man to be cowardly in the face of difficulties²¹¹ or to turn back and run away for life from the battle-field.²¹²

Similarly, covetous-ness,²¹³ niggardiiness,²¹⁴ and the hoarding of wealth²¹⁵ are condemned, for they betray man's unjustified clinging to values as means, as if they were ends in themselves.

There are certain disvalues which imply disrespect of life in oneself as well as in others. Begging importunately from all and sundry, which leads to killing one's self-respect, is²¹⁶ looked upon by the Qur'an as unbecoming a true believer.²¹⁷ It forbids slandering, throwing fault or sin on somebody who is innocent of it,²¹⁸ and swelling one's cheek out of pride at men.²¹⁹

Scandal-mongering and backbiting

Scandal-mongering and backbiting are hateful deeds.²²⁰ The Qur'an advises men and women not to laugh at, defame, be sarcastic to one another or call one another by offensive nicknames, and not to be suspicious, not to spy on others or speak ill of them behind their backs.²²¹ It deprecates the man who is ready with oaths, is a slanderer going about with calumnies, is a transgressor beyond bounds, or is deep in sin, violence, and cruelty.²²²

Things Momentary

Opposed to his natural urge for eternity, man sometimes through ignorance seems to be enamoured of the life of the moment,²²³ which tends to vanish²²⁴ and is mere play and amusement.²²⁵ It is no good to be pleased and remain satisfied²²⁶ with the transitory things of this world²²⁷ and the fleeting and temporal life²²⁸ that has a span of but an hour of a day.²²⁹

The true goal of man is eternity which is the home of peace,²³⁰ satisfaction,²³¹ security,²³² and supreme achievement²³³ for which man must, according to his nature,²³⁴ ever toil and struggle.²³⁵

Lack of Unity

Against the value of unity there is the disvalue of the denial of the unity of the Ultimate Reality (kufr) and the association of partners with God (shirk) and likewise the disvalues of disunity, discord, and disharmony in the life of the individual and society.

Those who turn back and disobey God and His Apostle²³⁶ deny God's creative power, His purpose, and design,²³⁷ follow a part of the revealed book and disregard the rest,²³⁸ accept some prophets and deny others,²³⁹ are all deniers of the true unity of God. Hair-splitting in religious matters,²⁴⁰ failure to judge by the light of divine revelation,²⁴¹ indulgence in magic in order to sow seeds of disunity among people,²⁴² are all acts which tantamount to disbelief in God.

God's unity implies that He alone deserves worship,²⁴³ a worship which demands exclusive submission to His will,²⁴⁴ tinged and informed with the highest emotional attachment.²⁴⁵

Association of partners with God does not mean that, people deny God's power of creation and control of world's affairs;²⁴⁶ where they err is the belief that these partners may bring them nearer to God,²⁴⁷ wrongly and foolishly ascribe to them a share in bestowing gifts, as for example, the gifts of a goodly child,²⁴⁸ thus leading to lack of consistency in their moral conduct and lack of exclusive loyalty towards the highest ideal, which indeed is a form of most heinous sin²⁴⁹ and the highest wrong-doing²⁵⁰

A form of associating partners with God is ancestor-worship. If people are invited to the path of righteousness, they refuse by saying: "Nay! we shall follow the way of our fathers," even if their fathers were devoid of knowledge and guidance.²⁵¹ Sometimes people succumb to their personal ambitions and self-importance which signifies their lack of faith in the ultimate causality of God; implied in the belief in the unity of God.

When some trouble or affliction comes to man he turns to God, but when it is removed he forgets that he ever turned to him,²⁵² and ascribes its removal to others besides, sets up rivals unto Him a great blasphemy^{253 254}, and sometimes thinks that it was his own skill and knowledge which helped him in removing his difficulties.²⁵⁵

The disvalues of discord and disunity are the result of the denial of the unity of God.²⁵⁶ The unbelievers and those who associate partners with God are always subject to fear and lack a sense of unity and harmony.²⁵⁷ It is the devil that incites people to discord²⁵⁸ and, therefore, the Qur'an very force-fully forbids people to be divided among themselves,²⁵⁹ and looks upon dis-unity as the result of lack of wisdom.²⁶⁰

It denounces divisions and splits in religion²⁶¹ and disagreements among different sects and schisms through insolent envy.²⁶² Similarly, all those acts which tend to spread mischief and tumult after there have been peace and order are condemned because they tend to create disorder, disunity, and disharmony in life.²⁶³

Inertia

Opposed to power, weakness is a disvalue. It is wrong to show weakness in face of difficulties, to lose heart,²⁶⁴ to be weak in will,²⁶⁵ to be weary and

faint-hearted,²⁶⁶ to despair or boast,²⁶⁷ to be impatient and fretful.²⁶⁸ It is forbidden to be afraid of men²⁶⁹ or of Satan and his votaries.²⁷⁰

There are certain disvalues which arise out of misuse of power. Warning is given to those people who oppress men with wrong-doing and insolently transgress beyond bounds through the land, defying right and justice.²⁷¹ It is forbidden to indulge in vain talk,²⁷² to exhibit fierceness,²⁷³ to be arrogant against God,²⁷⁴ for arrogance blinds people to the truth,²⁷⁵ to swell one's cheek with pride, or walk in insolence through the earth,²⁷⁶ for one cannot rend the earth asunder or reach the mountains in height.²⁷⁷

Arrogant and obstinate trans-gressors,²⁷⁸ vainglorious people,²⁷⁹ those fond of self-glory,²⁸⁰ people rebellious and wicked,²⁸¹ and vying with one another in pomp and gross rivalry,²⁸² are held out as examples of those who misuse their power.

Satan is condemned to everlasting punishment for abusing power and becoming haughty.²⁸³ Moses was sent to Pharaoh because the latter had become proud and arrogant.²⁸⁴ The people of 'Ad were punished because they behaved arrogantly and thought themselves very powerful.²⁸⁵ The Israelites slew their apostles because of pride.²⁸⁶ The hypocrites turn away from truth out of arrogance.²⁸⁷ The Christians are described as nearest in love to the Muslims because they are not arrogant.²⁸⁸

Some people try to cover their misuse of power under the cloak of determinism,²⁸⁹ but the Qur'an repudiates this stand as totally unrealistic.²⁹⁰ Man has the power to shape his destiny in the light of the truth of revelation.²⁹¹

Error

Opposed to truth or wisdom, error, conjecture, and fancy are all disvalues which the Qur'an at several places denounces as equivalent to un-truth or lies²⁹² and which do not lend support to an individual in his moral life.²⁹³ Fancy and conjecture can avail nobody against truth.²⁹⁴ It is forbidden to accept a report without ascertaining its truth,²⁹⁵ to utter slander, intentionally forging falsehood²⁹⁶ and to throw fault or sin on some-body who is innocent of it,²⁹⁷ for these are all against the value of truth.

Indulgence in disputation,²⁹⁸ vain discourses,²⁹⁹ and susceptibility to superstitions³⁰⁰ are disvalues opposed to wisdom. Those who do not try to save themselves from these are liable to be always afraid of others,³⁰¹ to be unable to distinguish truth from falsehood, and right from wrong;³⁰² their hearts always turn away from the light of truth and wisdom³⁰³ towards depths of darkness.³⁰⁴ Such are the people who have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes wherewith they see not, and ears wherewith they hear not; in short, like cattle they lack truth and wisdom.³⁰⁵

Hypocrisy

Hypocrisy is another disvalue. A hypocrite is one who says with his tongue what is not in his heart,³⁰⁶ who is distracted in mind, being sincerely neither for one group nor for another.³⁰⁷ Hypocrites are liars.³⁰⁸ They expect people to praise them for what they never do,³⁰⁹ compete with one another in sin and rancour,³¹⁰ and hold secret counsels among themselves for iniquity, hostility, and disobedience.³¹¹

Hypocrites - men and women - enjoin evil and forbid what is just,³¹² and if by chance they come into possession of a position of authority, they make mischief in the land, break ties of kinship,³¹³ and yet claim to be peace-makers.³¹⁴

Showing off (riya') is also a disvalue. God does not love those who give away even money in order to be seen doing so by others, for such men have no faith in God and the Last Day.³¹⁵ Such showing off cancels the spirit of their charity.³¹⁶ It is like sowing seeds on a hard, barren rock on which there is little soil, and where heavy rain has left nothing but a bare stone.³¹⁷

Injustice

Opposed to the value of justice is the disvalue of injustice and violation of the principle of the mean. It is forbidden by the Qur'an to be influenced by people's vain desires and to deviate from the truth while judging between them.³¹⁸ It is also forbidden to distort justice or decline to do justice³¹⁹ or to withhold justice from people merely because they are your enemies.³²⁰

It would be perfectly unjust to oneself and to others to pile up wealth,³²¹ to bury gold and silver, and not to spend them in the cause of God and righteous-ness.³²² The Qur'an equally forbids as violation of the principle of justice the squandering of wealth like a spendthrift³²³ and recommends the middle way of prudence which is neither extravagance nor niggardness.³²⁴

It advises one neither to make one's hand tied to one's neck nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach so that one becomes blameworthy and destitute.³²⁵ One should eat and drink but not waste by excess³²⁶ for that would be violating the principle of justice. Excess in any form is forbidden whether in food³²⁷ or in religion.³²⁸

Usury is forbidden, for it means devouring other people's substance wrong-fully³²⁹ and involves injustice on both sides.³³⁰

Hatred and Unkindness

Against the value of love is the disvalue of hatred, harshness, or unkindness to others. People are advised not to speak any word of contempt to their parents,³³¹ to orphans,³³² and to beggars.³³³ Believers are not to revile even those whom the unbelievers call upon besides God.³³⁴ The Holy Prophet is described as safe from severity and hard-heartedness towards others.³³⁵

Vice - Against goodness the Qur'an denounces the disvalue of vice, i. e., doing wrong and shameful deeds.³³⁶ It is Satan who commands people to do what is evil and shameful.³³⁷ People are forbidden to come near adultery, for it is a shameful deed and an evil, opening the road to other evils.³³⁸ Similarly, wine and gambling involve great sin,³³⁹ for they are the work of Satan.³⁴⁰

The Qur'an forbids - all shameful and evil deeds and uses a very comprehensive term *zulm* to cover them all.³⁴¹ Hypocrites and unbelievers enjoin³⁴² and plot evil³⁴³ and hold secret counsels for iniquity, evil, and rebellion³⁴⁴ and wrong-fully eat up other people's property.³⁴⁵ The believers are advised, therefore, not to help one another in sin and rancour.³⁴⁶

The Qur'an refers to several Satanic tendencies in man,³⁴⁷ such as ungrate-fulness,³⁴⁸ hastiness,³⁴⁹ impatience,³⁵⁰ despair, and unbelief in times

of adver-sity, and pride and conceit in times of prosperity;³⁵¹ quarrelsomeness,³⁵² arrogance,³⁵³ greed of ever more and yet more,³⁵⁴ niggardliness,³⁵⁵ transgres-sion of the bounds of propriety,³⁵⁶ and false sense of self-sufficiency.³⁵⁷ These tendencies often lead to different forms of wrong-doing and, therefore, must be counteracted by all right-thinking people.

Moral Discipline

To produce the attitude of moral righteousness (taqwa), the discipline of prayer, fasting, zakat,³⁵⁸ and pilgrimage is enforced. People are commanded to guard strictly their habit of prayers and stand before God in a devout frame of mind,³⁵⁹ pay the zakat,³⁶⁰ spend in charity secretly and openly³⁶¹ - a beautiful loan to God³⁶² - a bargain that will never fail,³⁶³ in-volving a glad tidings for the believers³⁶⁴ and a cause of prosperity³⁶⁵ and spiritual joy.³⁶⁶

Those people who follow these principles are on the right path under the true guidance of the Lord.³⁶⁷ They remove the stain of evil from the people³⁶⁸ and help them refrain from shameful and unjust deeds.³⁶⁹ It is the duty of all Muslims, as witnesses for mankind in general, to hold fast to God.³⁷⁰ It is the practice of all believing people that when God grants them power in the land; they enjoin the right and forbid the wrong.³⁷¹ All Muslims ought to follow these disciplinary principles.³⁷² Those who neglect them are bound to fall into the snares of their passions.³⁷³

Similarly, fasting is recommended as a discipline during the month of Rama-dan in which the Qur'an was revealed as a guide to mankind and as an em-bodiment of guidance and judgment between right and wrong.³⁷⁴ It involves observance of certain limits and rules by all those who may wish to become righteous (acquire taqwa).³⁷⁵ Performance of hajj is symptomatic of a righteous life in which there should be no obscenity, nor wickedness, nor wrangling, and the best provision for which is right conduct, i. e., taqwa.³⁷⁶

Repentance

Though man is by nature after the pattern of God's nature³⁷⁷ and, therefore, capable of approximating to the ideal embodied in the most beautiful names,³⁷⁸ yet being prone to different weaknesses³⁷⁹ he is often led to wrong his soul in spite of his best efforts to follow moral discipline.³⁸⁰ Adam disobeyed God and thus was about to run into harm and aggression,³⁸¹ but as soon as he realized his mistake, he repented and God accepted his repent-ance³⁸² and promised that whoever follows His guidance shall be free from grief and sorrow.³⁸³

The Lord accepts repentance from His servants and for-gives the sins³⁸⁴ of those who do evil in ignorance but repent soon afterwards³⁸⁵ and are never obstinate in persisting in the wrong intentionally.³⁸⁶ Even the thieves³⁸⁷ and those who had waged wars against God³⁸⁸ are covered by the universal mercy and loving kindness of God³⁸⁹ provided they repent and amend their conduct,³⁹⁰ earnestly bring God to mind,³⁹¹ hold fast to God, purify their religion solely for God,³⁹² and openly declare the Truth.³⁹³

There is no scope, for pessimism and despair arising from the natural weak-nesses of men in doing wrong to their souls,³⁹⁴ for God turns to them that they might repent.³⁹⁵

Turning to God in repentance and seeking of forgiveness from Him lead to the grant by God to man of good and true enjoyment and abounding grace in this life.³⁹⁶ He will rain bounties from the sky and add to people's strength.³⁹⁷ To turn continually to God in repentance is the sign of the true believer;³⁹⁸ and this attitude of mind is strengthened by remembrance of God (dhikr), for it enables a man in most difficult and odd situations to keep firm and steadfast³⁹⁹ and find in it a source of deep satisfaction and mental equipoise.⁴⁰⁰

Taqwa

it is the whole pursuit of value and avoidance of disvalue in general that is designated by the Qur'an as righteousness (taqwa). It is de-pendent on and is the result of faith in God and adoration of Him.⁴⁰¹ The Qur'an is revealed solely to produce this attitude of taqwa among people.⁴⁰² It is the presence of this moral attitude which saves people from destruction⁴⁰³ and it is this which helps them maintain God's commands in their conjugal life,⁴⁰⁴ in sacrifice,⁴⁰⁵ in different aspects of social life,⁴⁰⁶ and in fulfilling faithfully their social obligations.⁴⁰⁷

The motive which prompts people to adopt this moral attitude of taqwa is the desire to win the pleasure of God,⁴⁰⁸ to gain nearness to Him,⁴⁰⁹ and to seek His face⁴¹⁰ or countenance⁴¹¹ implying that their motive is not self-interest but the seeking of good for the sake of good,⁴¹² which benefits their own souls⁴¹³ and which they seek even at the sacrifice of life.⁴¹⁴ The aim of such people is mainly a desire for increase in self-purification without any idea of winning favour from anyone or expecting any reward whatsoever.⁴¹⁵

They will get a reward of the highest value⁴¹⁶ and attain complete satis-faction⁴¹⁷ and prosperity⁴¹⁸ - the final attainment of the Eternal Home,⁴¹⁹ well-pleasing unto God.⁴²⁰ These people resemble a garden high and fertile, heavy rain falls on it and makes it yield a double increase of harvest, and if it receives not heavy rain, light moisture suffices it.⁴²¹ For such people are the gardens in nearness to their Lord, a result of the pleasure of God.⁴²²

To be righteous (muttaqi) is to believe in God, and the Last Day, and the angels, and the Books, and the messengers; to spend out of one's substance, out of love for God, for kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayers, and to pay the zakat; to fulfil the contracts which have been made; and to be firm and patient in pain (or suffering), adversity, and periods of danger. Such people as follow these are possessed of true taqwa, i.e., righteousness.⁴²³

And of the servants of God the most gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace"; those who spend the night in adoration of their Lord prostrating and standing; those who, when they spend, are not extravagant nor niggardly, but hold a just balance between these two extremes; those who invoke not, with God, any other god, nor slay such life as God has made sacred, except

for just cause, nor commit fornication; those who witness no falsehood, and, if they pass by futility, they pass by it with honorable avoidance; those who, when they are admonished with the signs of their Lord, do not show indifference to them like the deaf or the blind; and those who pray, “Our Lord! give us the grace to lead the righteous.”⁴²⁴

The better and more lasting reward of the Lord is for those who believe and put their trust in Him; those who avoid the greater crimes and shameful deeds, and, even when they are angry, they for-give; those who hearken to their Lord, and establish regular prayer; who conduct their affairs by mutual consultation; who spend out of what God bestows on them for sustenance; who, when an oppressive wrong is inflicted on them, (are not cowed but) help and defend themselves; and those who recompense injury with injury in degree equal thereto and, better still, forgive and make reconciliation.

But indeed if any do help and defend themselves after a wrong is done to them, against such there is no cause of blame. The blame is only against those who oppress men with wrong-doing and insolently transgress beyond bounds through the land, defying right and justice; for such there will be a grievous penalty. But indeed showing patience and forgiveness is an exercise of courageous will and resolution in the conduct of affairs.⁴²⁵

There is yet a higher stage of moral achievement described as *ihsan* which signifies performance of moral action in conformity with the moral ideal with the added sense of deep loyalty to the cause of God, done in the most graceful way that is motivated by a unique love for God.⁴²⁶ Performance of righteous actions accompanied by a true faith is only a stage in the moral life of man which, after several stages, gradually matures into *ihsan*.⁴²⁷

God is with those who perform good deeds and perform them with added grace and beauty.⁴²⁸

Those who sacrifice animals with a spirit of dedication have piety (*taqwa*) no doubt, but those who thereby glorify God for His guidance, acknowledging fully the extent of His bounties provided in abundance, are the people who are characterized by *ihsan*.⁴²⁹

In the life hereafter the morally upright will be in the midst of gardens and springs⁴³⁰ wherein they will take spiritual enjoyment in the things which their Lord gives as a reward for leading a life of graceful righteousness.⁴³¹

The sincerely devoted people (*muhsinin*) are those who willingly suffer thirst, fatigue, or hunger in the cause of God,⁴³² or tread paths which may raise the ire of the unbelievers, or receive injury from an enemy;⁴³³ who despite all that do not conduct themselves in life as to cause mischief on the earth but call on Him with fear and longing;⁴³⁴ who spend of their substance in the cause of God, refrain from evil, and are engaged in doing truly good deeds;⁴³⁵ who spend freely whether in prosperity or in adversity; who restrain anger and pardon all men;⁴³⁶ who are steadfast in patience⁴³⁷ and exercise restraint;⁴³⁸ who establish regular prayer and pay the *zakat* and have in their hearts the assurance of the hereafter;⁴³⁹ and who are always ready to forgive people and overlook their misdeeds.⁴⁴⁰

Almost all the prophets are included in this category⁴⁴¹ which signifies that the muhsinin are those who are not only on the right path themselves,⁴⁴² but in addition by their good ex-ample and magnetic personality lead others to the way of righteousness and help in establishing a social order based on peace, harmony, and security.⁴⁴³ Com-plete power,⁴⁴⁴ wisdom and knowledge,⁴⁴⁵ true guidance from the Lord, prosperity,⁴⁴⁶ rise in worldly position,⁴⁴⁷ power, and knowledge⁴⁴⁸ are the by-products of their life of graceful righteousness (ihsan).

Their reward shall never be lost,⁴⁴⁹ for God is always with them⁴⁵⁰ and loves them⁴⁵¹ and will bestow on them the rank of friendship as He did on Abraham.⁴⁵² He who submits his whole self to the will of God and moreover does it gracefully and with a spirit of dedication (muhsin) has grasped indeed the most trustworthy handhold,⁴⁵³ and enjoys the most beautiful position in religion for he is follow-ing Abraham who was true in faith.⁴⁵⁴

He will get his reward from his Lord and shall experience neither fear nor grief.⁴⁵⁵ God is well pleased with those who followed in the footsteps of the vanguard of Islam-the first of those who forsook their houses and of those who gave them aid-in a spirit of devo-tion and graceful loyalty as well as those who followed them, as they are all with Him. For them God has prepared the garden of paradise, as their eternal home of supreme felicity.⁴⁵⁶

Notes

1. Qur'an, II, 255; XL, 65.
2. Ibid., II, 260; III, 156; VII, 1158; IX, 116; X, 56; XL, 68.
3. Ibid., VIII, 24; XVI, 97.
4. Ibid., V, 35.
5. Ibid., II, 143.
6. Ibid., VII, 32.
7. Ibid., VII, 31.
8. Ibid., LVII, 27.
9. Ibid., XXVIII, 77.
10. Ibid., XVII, 6.
11. Ibid., LXXIV, 14.
12. Ibid., III, 191; X, 5; XV, 85; XXI, 16.
13. Ibid., XXIS, 64.
14. Ibid., LXVII, 2.
15. Ibid., VI, 98.
16. Ibid., IV, 77.
17. Ibid., IX, 38.
18. Ibid., LXXXVII, 17.
19. Ibid., IV, 77.
20. Ibid., V, 122; XVIII, 31; XIX, 61-63; XXXV, 33-35; XXXVIII, 49-52; XLIII, 68-73.
21. Ibid., XXXI, 28.
22. Ibid., LXVII.
23. Ibid., VII, 12.
24. Ibid., IXVI, 8.
25. Ibid., VI, 2.
26. Ibid., XX, 120.
27. Ibid., XXII, 23; XXXIX, 73-75; LVII, 12; XCVIII, 8.

28. Ibid., XCIX, 7-8.
29. Ibid., VIII, 53.
30. Ibid., V, 20.
31. Ibid., III, 81, 187; V, 8, 13, 15; VII, 172.
32. Ibid., V, 44
33. Ibid., VII, 42; X, 4; XIII, 29.
34. Ibid., II, 131; IX, 112.
35. Ibid., XXVI, 224-26.
36. Ibid., III, 167; IV, 81; XLVII, 11.
37. Ibid., IX, 119.
38. Ibid., II, 143.
39. Ibid., VIII, 73.
40. Ibid., XXX, 21.
41. Ibid., II, 187.
42. Ibid., IV, 19.
43. Ibid., XLIX, 10.
44. Ibid., XLVIII, 29.
45. Ibid., II, 224.
46. Ibid., IV, 114.
47. Ibid., V, 3.
48. Ibid., II, 83, 177, 215; IV, 36; XVII, 26.
49. Ibid., V, 3, 9, 45.
50. Ibid., V, 14.
51. Ibid., IV, 149.
52. Ibid., XIII, 22; XXVIII, 54.
53. Ibid., II, 256.
54. Ibid., XXII, 40.
55. Ibid., III, 110.
56. Ibid., II, 62; V, 72.
57. Ibid., III, 64.
58. Ibid., II; 213; IV, 1; VI, 98; X, 19; XXXIX, 6; XLIX, 13.
59. Ibid., IV, 1; XXXIX, 6.
60. Ibid., III, 195.
61. Ibid., XVI, 132; XLIX, 13. In this respect the Oration delivered by the Holy-Prophet during his Farewell Pilgrimage is illuminating. He said: O People! your Lord is One and your father (i. e., Adam) is one; you are all as sons of Adam brothers. There are no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab and for a non-Arab over an Arab, nor for a red-coloured over a black-coloured and for a black-skinned over a red-skinned except in piety. The noblest is he who is the most pious.
62. Ibid., XXXIII, 72.
63. Ibid., XV, 29; XXXVIII, 72.
64. Ibid., II, 30.
65. Ibid., XIV, 32-33; XXXI, 20.
66. Ibid., II, 34.
67. Ibid., XVII, 70.
68. Ibid., XVI, 78; XXXII, 9; IV, 33; LXVII, 23; LXXVI, 2-3; XC, 8-9.
69. Ibid., XV, 10; LXXVI, 3.
70. Ibid., VI, 164.
71. Ibid., LXXIV, 55-56; LXXXI, 28-29.
72. Ibid., II, 286.
73. Ibid., LXXVI, 3.
74. Ibid., XXX, 30.
75. Ibid., LXXXIV, 19.
76. Ibid., XL, 51; XIVII, 7.
77. Ibid., LVII, 24.
78. Ibid., II, 193; III, 104, 110; XIII, 21; XXII, 41.
79. Ibid., XLII, 38.

80. Ibid., XV, 36-40.
81. Ibid., XVI, 99.
82. Ibid., II, 36.
83. Ibid., XVI, 99.
84. Ibid., III, 1.75.
85. Ibid., III, 122.
86. Ibid., VIII, 74-75.
87. Ibid., V, 38.
88. Ibid., IX, 20, 31, 88.
89. Ibid., XXII, 78.
90. Ibid., VIII, 73.
91. Ibid., V, 67.
92. Ibid., XVI, 88.
93. Ibid., II, 190-93.
94. Ibid., XI, 115; XVI, 127; X1.,55; X1VI. 35; 1, 39; LXXIII, 10.
95. Ibid., III, 186.
96. Ibid., XI, 10-11.
97. Ibid., III, 146.
98. Ibid., II, 249.
99. Ibid., VIII, 2; IX, 51; XIV, 11.
100. Ibid., XXII; 67-68.
101. Ibid., III, 159.
102. Ibid., IV, 157; VI, 116, 148; X, 36; LIII, 28.
103. Ibid., X, 36, 66.
104. Ibid., VII, 176
105. Ibid., LIX, 21.
106. Ibid., VI, 98.
107. Ibid., X, 24.
108. Ibid., III, 191.
109. Ibid., XII, 185.
110. Ibid., III, 7, 18; VI, 105; XXII, 54, XXXIV, 6.
111. Ibid., VI, 108.
112. Ibid., XXII, 71.
113. Ibid., XI, 14.
114. Ibid., II; 269
115. Ibid., XXII, 8; XXXI, 20
116. Ibid., LVIII, 11.
117. Ibid., XXXV, 28.
118. Ibid., XXVII, 40.
119. Ibid., XX, 114.
120. Ibid., XVIII, 6.5.
121. Ibid., II, 247.
122. Ibid., XXVIII, 14.
123. Ibid., XXI, 711.
124. Ibid., XII, 68.
125. Ibid., XII, 22.
126. Ibid., XXVIII, 14.
127. Ibid., VI, 75-79.
128. Ibid., XII, 37-39.
129. Ibid., VII, 29; XVI, 90; XLII, 1:1.
130. Ibid., IV, 58.
131. Ibid., V, 45.
132. Ibid., IV, 13 .5.
133. Ibid., VI, 115.
134. Ibid., IVII, 25.
135. Ibid., V; 3.
136. Ibid., V, 9.

137. Ibid., III, 17.
138. Ibid., II, 177; XXIII, 8; LXV, 32.
139. Ibid., V, 1.
140. Ibid., IX, 4, 7.
141. Ibid., VI, 152; IV, 9.
142. Ibid., XXVI, 181-83.
143. Ibid., XI, 85.
144. Ibid., II, 165.
145. Ibid., VI, 151; XXIX, 8.
146. Ibid., XXI, 14; XLVI, 15.
147. Ibid., II, 83, 215; IV, 36; XVII, 26.
148. Ibid., II, 177.
149. Ibid., XC, 16.
150. Ibid., IX, 61.
151. Ibid., XXI, 107.
152. Ibid., III, 159.
153. Ibid., XX, 44.
154. Ibid., XLVIII, 29.
155. Ibid., VII, 199.
156. Ibid., II, 28; IV, 144; V, 60.
157. Ibid., II, 109.
158. Ibid., XLII, 37.
159. Ibid., XVI, 53; LIX, 23.
160. Ibid., II, 158.
161. Ibid., XXVIII, 77.
162. Ibid., II, 195.
163. Ibid., III, 114; XXIII, 61.
164. Ibid., XXI, 90.
165. Ibid., II, 148.
166. Ibid., V, 51.
167. Ibid., XXXVIII, 32.
168. Ibid., IX, 88.
169. Ibid., XV111, 2.
170. Ibid., XXXV, 32.
171. Ibid., XLI, 34.
172. Ibid., VII, 180; XVII, 110; XX,
173. Ibid., XXXVII, 125.
174. Ibid., XXXII, 7.
175. Ibid., XCV, 4.
176. Ibid., LXIV, 3.
177. Ibid., XXXIX, 23.
178. Ibid., XXV, 33.
179. Ibid., XXXLX, 55.
180. Ibid., XII, 3.
181. Ibid., IV, 69.
182. Ibid., XVI, 125.
183. Ibid., XII, 33; XVII, 53.
184. Ibid., II, 195; V, 96.
185. Ibid., IV, 62.
186. Ibid., IV, 86.
187. Ibid., XXIII, 96; XLI, 34.
188. Ibid., XVII, 7.
189. Ibid., XII, 18, 83.
190. Ibid., XV, 85.
191. Ibid., III, 172.; IX, 121; X, 26; XVI, 96, 97; XXIV, 38; XXIX, 7; XXXIX, 35, 70; XLVI, 16; LIII, 31
192. Ibid., XVI, 30.
193. Ibid., XXV, 24.

194. Ibid., LXV, 3.
195. Ibid., IV, 117.
196. Ibid., VIII, 48.
197. Ibid., IV, 119:
198. Ibid., V, 94.
199. Ibid., IV, 120.
200. Ibid., XXIV, 21.
201. Ibid., IV, 119.
202. Ibid., XXXV, 6; XXXVI, 6.
203. Ibid., II; 30.
204. Ibid., V, 33.
205. Ibid., VI, 151; XVII, 33.
206. Ibid., VI, 131, 140; XVU, 33.
207. Ibid., VI, 15; XVII, 31.
208. Ibid., V, 35.
209. Ibid., II, 191. Ibid., III, 139; IX, 40; XLI, 30.
210. Ibid., XXXIX, 53.
211. Ibid., II, 122.
212. Ibid., IV, 89-91.
213. Ibid., III, 180; IV, 32; LVII, 24.
214. Ibid., XVII, 29; XLVII, 38.
215. Ibid., IV, 2-3.
216. Ibid., IX, 79; XXIV, 23; LX, 12; LXVIII, 11-12.
217. Ibid., AL, 273
218. Ibid., IV, 112.
219. Ibid., XXXI, 18.
220. Ibid., XXIV, 18; CIV, 1.
221. Ibid., XLIX, 11-12,
222. Ibid., LXVIII, 10-13.
223. Ibid., X, 45
224. Ibid., XVI, 96.
225. Ibid., VI, 32
226. Ibid., X, 7.
227. Ibid., XVII, 18
228. Ibid., LXXV, 20; LXXVI, 27.
229. Ibid., X, 45.
230. Ibid., X, 25.
231. Ibid., XLIII, 70.
232. Ibid., XLIV, 51.
233. Ibid., XLIV, 57.
234. Ibid., XE, 4.
235. Ibid., LXXXIV, 6.
236. Ibid., III, 32.
237. Ibid., II, 28-29.
238. Ibid., II, 85.
239. Ibid., IV, 150.
240. Ibid., V, 105.
241. Ibid., V, 47.
242. Ibid., 11, 102.
243. Ibid., XVI, 51.
244. Ibid., VII, 29.
245. Ibid., II, 165.
246. Ibid., X, 31; XXIII, 82-89.
247. Ibid., XXXIX, 3.
248. Ibid., VII, 19.
249. Ibid., IV, 48.
250. Ibid., XXXI, 13.

251. Ibid., II, 170; V. 107.
252. Ibid., X, 13.
253. Ibid., XXX, 33.
254. Ibid., XXXIX, 8.
255. Ibid., XXXIX, 49.
256. Ibid., LIX, 14.
257. Ibid., II, 151; VIII, 65.
258. Ibid., VII, 200; XLI, 36.
259. Ibid., III, 103.
260. Ibid., LIX, 14.
261. Ibid., VI, 159; XXX, 32; XLII, 13.
262. Ibid., XLII, 65; XLV, 17.
263. Ibid., II, 191, 192, 205; VII, 85; XI, 85.
264. Ibid., VIII, 46.
265. Ibid., III; 146.
266. Ibid., XLVII, 35.
267. Ibid., LVII, 23.
268. Ibid., LXX, 19, 21.
269. Ibid., IV, 77.
270. Ibid., III, 175.
271. Ibid., XLII, 42.
272. Ibid., XIX, 62; XXIII, 3; XXVII, 55.
273. Ibid., XIVIII, 26.
274. Ibid., XLIV, 19.
275. Ibid., XXVII, 14; XXXV, 4.
276. Ibid., XXXI, 18.
277. Ibid., XXIII, 46.
278. Ibid., XL, 35.
279. Ibid., IV, 36; XVI, 23.
280. Ibid., XXXVIII, 2.
281. Ibid., XLIX, 7.
282. Ibid., LVII, 20.
283. Ibid., VII, 12; XXXVII, 74-76.
284. Ibid., XX, 24, 43.
285. Ibid., XLI, 15.
286. Ibid., II, 87.
287. Ibid., LXIII, 5.
288. Ibid., V, 85.
289. Ibid., VI, 148; XVI, 33.
290. Ibid., VI, 149.
291. Ibid., II, 38.
292. Ibid., VI, 148; X, 66.
293. Ibid., IV, 157; VI, 116; LIII, 23.
294. Ibid., X, 36; LIII, 28.
295. Ibid., XLIX, 6.
296. Ibid., LX, 12.
297. Ibid., IV, 112.
298. Ibid., XXIX, 46.
299. Ibid., VI, 68.
300. Ibid., V, 106; VI, 138-41, 143-44.
301. Ibid., LIX, 13.
302. Ibid., IX, 81.
303. Ibid., IX, 127.
304. Ibid., XXIIV, 40.
305. Ibid., VII, 179.
306. Ibid., II, 167; IV, 81; XIVII, 11.
307. Ibid., IV, 143.
308. Ibid., LIX, 11; IXIII, 1.

309. Ibid., III, 1 88.
310. Ibid., V, 65.
311. Ibid., LVII, 8.
312. Ibid., IX, 67.
313. Ibid., XLVII, 22.
314. Ibid., II, 11.
315. Ibid., IV, 38.
316. Ibid., II, 264.
317. Ibid., II, 263-64
318. Ibid., V, 51-53.
319. Ibid., IV, 135
320. Ibid., V, 3, 9.
321. Ibid., CIV, 2-3.
322. Ibid., IX, 34.
323. Ibid., XVII, 26-29; XXV, 67.
324. Ibid., XXX, 67.
325. Ibid., XVII, 29.
326. Ibid., VII, 31.
327. Ibid., V, 10.
328. Ibid., IV, 171, V, 84.
329. Ibid., IV, 161.
330. Ibid., II, 279.
331. Ibid., XVII, 23.
332. Ibid., XCIII, 9.
333. Ibid., XCIII, 10.
334. Ibid., VI, 108.
335. Ibid., III, 159.
336. Ibid., III, 14, 110; XLI, 37; LIII, 32.
337. Ibid., II, 189, 268; XXIV, 21.
338. Ibid., XVII, 32.
339. Ibid., II, 219.
340. Ibid., V, 93.
341. Ibid., VII, 28; XVI, 90.
342. Ibid., IX, 67.
343. Ibid., XXXV, 43.
344. Ibid., IVIII, 8.
345. Ibid., N, 188.
346. Ibid., V, 3.

347. Once the Holy Prophet said that every man has his Satan with him. Some-one asked him if there was one with him as well. He replied: yes, but I have made him a Muslim, i.e., made him submit to my control.

348. Qur'an, VII, 10; XXXVI, 45-47; LXXIV, 15-25; C, 1-8.
349. ICE, XVI, 37; XVII, 11.
350. Ibid., LXX, 19-21.
351. Ibid., XI, 9-10; XVII, 83.
352. Ibid., XVI, 4.
353. Ibid., IXXV, 31-40; XC, 5-7.
354. Ibid., LXXIV, 15.
355. Ibid., XVII, 100.
356. Ibid., XCV3, 6.
357. Ibid., XCVI, 7.

358. The term zakat is used for the state tax earmarked for the poor, the needy, the wayfarer, the administrative staff employed for its collection, those whose hearts are to be won over, for freeing slaves and the heavily indebted, and for use in the path of god (Qur'an, IX, 60). Even if a state does not levy this tax or there is no state to levy it, its payment direct to the classes mentioned above still remains obligatory for every Muslim. Sadaqat is a term wider than zakat. It covers both zakat and whatever is voluntarily given

for charitable purposes over and above zakat. Some people translate the word zakat as compulsory charity, and other forms of sadaqat as voluntary charity.

359. Ibid., II, 238.
360. Ibid., XCVIII, 5.
361. Ibid., XXV, 29.
362. Ibid., LXXN, 20.
363. Ibid., XXV, 29.
364. Ibid., XXII, 34; XXVII, 2.
365. Ibid., XXXI, 5.
366. Ibid., XX, 139.
367. Ibid., XXXI, 5; XCVII, 5.
368. Ibid., XI, 114.
369. Ibid., XXIX, 45.'
370. Ibid., XXII, 78.
371. Ibid., XXII, 41.
372. Ibid., XXIV, 55.-56.
373. Ibid., XIX, 59.
374. Ibid., II, 185.
375. Ibid., II, 183, 187.
376. Ibid., II, 197
377. Ibid., XXX, 30.
378. Ibid., VII, 180; XVII, 110; LIX, 24.
379. Ibid., XIV, 34; XVII, 11, 83.
380. ICE, VU 23; XI, 21, 101; XVI, 33
381. Ibid., II, 35; VII, 19.
382. Ibid., II, 37.
383. Ibid., II, 38.
384. Ibid., XLI, 25.
385. Ibid., IV, 17; VI, 54; VII, 153; IX, 104; XVI, 119.
386. Ibid., III, 135.
387. Ibid., V, 42.
388. Ibid., V, 36-37.
389. Ibid., XI, 90.
390. Ibid., V, 42.
391. Ibid., 131, 135.
392. Ibid., IV, 136.
393. Ibid., II, 160.
394. Ibid., XXXLX, 53.
395. Ibid., IX, 118.
396. Ibid., XI, 3.
397. Ibid., XI, 52.
398. Ibid., IX, 112.
399. Ibid., VIII, 45.
400. Ibid., XIII, 28.
401. Ibid., II, 21.
402. Ibid., XX,,113;, XXXIX, 28.
403. Ibid., XXVII, 53; XLI, 18.
404. Ibid., II, 24; IV, 129.
405. Ibid., V 30; XXII, 37.
406. Ibid., II, 177.
407. Ibid., XXV, 63-74.
408. Ibid., II, 207; IV, 114.
409. Ibid., III, 13.
410. Ibid., II, 272.
411. Ibid., XIII, 22; XXX, 38; XCII, 18-21.
412. Ibid., LV, 60.
413. Ibid., II, 272.

414. Ibid., II, 207.
415. Ibid., XCII, 18-21.
416. Ibid., IV, 114.
417. Ibid., XCII, 21.
418. Ibid., XXX, 38.
419. Ibid., XIII, 22.
420. Ibid., XXXIX, 28.
421. Ibid., II, 265.
422. Ibid., III, 15.
423. Ibid., II, 177.
424. Ibid., XXV, 63-64; 67-68, 72-74.
425. Ibid., XLII, 36-43.
426. In the Mishkat, there is a tradition which relates that a stranger one day came to the Holy Prophet and asked him, among other things, what ihsan is. The Holy Prophet replied, "Serve the cause of God as if you are in His presence. If it is not possible to achieve this stage, then think as if He is watching you do your duty." This tradition clearly emphasizes the attitude of deep loyalty tinged with an emotional response of love towards God.
427. Qur'an, V, 96.
428. Ibid., XVI; 128.
429. Ibid., XXII, 37.
430. Ibid., LI, 15.
431. Ibid., LI, 16.
432. Ibid., XXIX, 69.
433. Ibid., IX, 120.
434. Ibid., VII, 56.
435. Ibid., II; 195.
436. Ibid., III, 134.
437. Ibid., XI, 115; XII, 90.
438. Ibid., XVI, 128
439. Ibid., XXXI, 4.
440. Ibid., V, 14.
441. Ibid., VI, 84; XXXVII, 75, 80, 83, 105, 110, 120-21, 130-31.
442. Ibid., VI, 84.
443. Ibid., II, 193; III, 104, 110.
444. Ibid., XII, 56.
445. Ibid., XXVII, 14.
446. Ibid., XXIX, 69; XXXI, 5.
447. Ibid., II, 58; VII, 161.
448. Ibid., XII, 22.
449. Ibid., XI, 115; XII, 56.
450. Ibid., XXIX, 69.
451. Ibid., II, 195; III, 134, 145.
452. Ibid., IV, 125.
453. Ibid., XXXI, 22.
454. Ibid., IV, 125.
455. Ibid., II, 112.
456. Ibid., IX, 100.

Chapter 9: Economic and Political Teachings of the Qur'an

Economic and Political Teachings of the Qur'an by Abul Al'a Maududi, Editor, Tarjamanul Qur'an, Lahore (Pakistan)

Economic Teachings

1. The first economic principle emphasized by the Qur'an with repeated stress is that all natural means of production, and resources which subscribe to man's living, have been created by God. It is He who made them as they are and set them to follow the laws of nature that make them useful for man. It is He who allowed man to exploit them and placed them at his disposal.¹

2. On the basis of the aforesaid truth the Qur'an lays down the principle that an individual has neither the right to be free in acquiring and exploiting these resources according to his own sweet will, nor is he entitled to draw a line independently to decide between the lawful and the unlawful. It is for God to draw this line; for none else. The Qur'an condemns the Midians, an Arabian tribe of old, because its people claimed to possess a right to acquire and expend wealth in any way they liked without restriction of any kind.²

It calls it a "lie" if a man describes a certain thing as lawful and another unlawful on his own account.³ The right to pronounce this rests with God and (as God's deputy) His Prophet.⁴

3. Under the, sovereign command of God and within the limits imposed by Him, the Qur'an recognizes the right of holding private property as implied in several verses.⁵

The economic scheme presented in the Qur'an is based entirely on the idea of individual ownership in every field. There is nothing in it to suggest that a distinction is to be made between consumption goods and production goods (or means of production) and that only the former may be held in private ownership, while the latter must be nationalized.

Nor is there anything in the Qur'an suggesting or implying that the above-mentioned scheme is of a temporary nature to be replaced later by a permanent arrangement in which collectivization of all means of production may be desired to be made the rule. Had that been the ultimate object of the Qur'an, it would have certainly stated it unequivocally and given us instructions with regard to that future permanent order.

The mere fact that it mentions in one place that "the earth belongs to God"⁶ is not enough to conclude that it either denies or forbids private ownership of land and sanctions nationalization. Elsewhere it says, "Whatever is in the heavens and the earth belongs to God,"⁷ but nobody has ever concluded from this verse that none of the things in the heavens or the earth can be held in individual possession or that all these things should be State property. If, a thing which belongs to God ceases to belong to human beings, certainly it ceases to belong to individuals and States alike.

It is equally erroneous to draw from verse xli,¹⁰ the inference that the Qur'an desires to distribute all the means of livelihood in the earth equally among all men, and conclude that since this can be achieved only under nationalization, the Qur'an advocates or favours the introduction of that system. For the purpose of this interpretation the verse is wrongly rendered

to mean that “God has put in the earth its means of sustenance proportionately in four days, alike for those who seek.”⁸

But even this wrong translation does not serve the purpose. It would be incorrect to apply the words “alike for those who seek” to human beings alone. All kinds of animals, too, are among “those who seek,” and there is little doubt that their means of sustenance have also been placed by God in the earth. If this verse, then, denotes an equal share to all who seek, there is no justification for restricting this equality of share to members of the human species alone.

Similarly, it would be wrong to stretch those verses of the Qur'an which emphasize providing for the weak or the have-nots to extract from them the theory of nationalization. It should be seen that wherever it stresses this need of providing for the poor, it also prescribes the only way of meeting it, namely, that the rich and the well-to-do of a society should spend their wealth generously for the welfare of their poor kin, the orphans, and the needy for the pleasure of God; in addition to this, the State should collect a fixed portion of it and spend it for the same purpose.

There is no hint in the Qur'an of any other scheme proposed to be put in practice to meet this end.

No doubt, there is nothing in the Qur'an to prevent a certain thing from being taken over from individual control and placed under collective control, if necessary; but to deny individual ownership altogether and adopt nationalization as an economic system does not go with the Qur'anic approach to man's economic problems.

4. The fact that, as in other things, all men do not enjoy equality in sustenance and means of earning, is described in the Qur'an as a feature of God's providence. Extravagant disparities devised by various social systems aside, natural inequality, as it goes, is described as the outcome of His wise apportionment, issuing from His own dispensation. The idea that this inequality is to be levelled up and substituted by dead equality is alien to the Book of God.⁹

The Qur'an advises people not to covet that by which Allah has made some of you excel others; men shall have the benefit of what they earn and women shall have the benefit of what they earn, and ask Allah of His grace.¹⁰

It is sometimes tried to conclude from verses xvi, 71 and xxx, 28 that the Qur'an desires equality of provision for everybody. But both the words and the context of these verses tell that they do not attempt to disparage inequality and urge equality to take its place, but press this fact (of inequality among men) as an argument against taking some of God's creatures as His partners.

They argue that when men are not prepared to share their wealth (given by God) with their slaves as equal partners, what on earth leads them to think that God will share His powers with His servants and have partners with Him from amongst His creation?¹¹

5. The Qur'an also asserts with full and repeated emphasis that God has created His bounties for men so that they use them for their benefit. It is not His intent that men should have nothing to do with them and live a life of

renunciation. However, He desires that they should distinguish between things pure and impure, lawful and unlawful. They should use and exploit only what is pure and lawful, and there too should observe moderation.¹²

6. To achieve this end the Qur'an ordains that wealth should be acquired by lawful means only and that unlawful ways and means should be discarded altogether: "O you who believe, take not your wealth among yourselves in wrongful ways, but let there be trade among you by mutual agreement"¹³

These "wrongful ways" have been detailed at length by the Holy Prophet and the great jurists of Islam have elucidated them in books of law. Some of them, however, have been described in the Qur'an as under:

(a) "And do not eat one another's property among yourselves in wrongful ways, nor seek by it to gain the nearness of the judges that you may sinfully consume a portion of other men's goods and that knowingly."¹⁴

(b) "If one of you deposits a thing on trust with another, let him who is trusted (faithfully) deliver his trust, and let him fear God, his Lord."¹⁵

(c) "He who misappropriates (the public money) will come on the Day of Judgment with what he has misappropriated; then shall everyone be given in full what he earned."¹⁶

(d) "The thief, male or female, cut off his or her hands."¹⁷

(e) "Those who devour the property of orphans unjustly, devour fire in their bellies, and will soon endure a blazing fire."¹⁸

(f) "Woe to the defrauders who, when they take the measure from men, exact full measure, but when they measure or weigh for them, give less than is due."¹⁹

(g) "Those who love those indecent things should spread among the believers, for them is a painful chastisement, in the life of this world and the hereafter."²⁰

(h) "Force not your slave-girls to prostitution that you may enjoy (some) gain of the present life, if they desire to live in chastity."²¹ "And approach not fornication, surely it is a shameful deed and an evil Way."²² "The adulterer and the adulteress, flog each of them with a hundred stripes."²³

(i) "O ye believers, wine and gambling and idols and divining arrows are an abomination of Satan's handiwork; so avoid them that you may prosper."²⁴

(j) "God has permitted trade and forbidden usury."²⁵ "O ye believers, fear God and give up what remains (due to you) of usury if you are believers (indeed). If you do not do so, take notice of war from God and His Messenger. But if you repent you shall have your principal. Neither you wrong, nor shall you be wronged. If the debtor is in straitened circumstances, give him time till it is easy (for him to pay), and that you remit (the debt), by way of charity, that is the best thing for you, if you only knew."²⁶

Thus we see that the Qur'an has prohibited the following ways of acquiring wealth:

(i) Taking another's property without, his consent or remuneration or with consent and with or without remuneration in such a way that the consent is forced or obtained by guile.

- (ii) Bribes.
- (iii) Forcible acquisitions.
- (iv) Fraud, whether with private or public wealth.
- (v) Theft.
- (vi) Mis-appropriation of orphans' property.
- (vii) Taking or giving wrong measure
- (viii) Businesses which help to spread indecency.
- (ix) Prostitution and its earnings.
- (x) Manufacture, buying and selling, and carriage of wines.
- (xi) Gambling, including all such ways in which the transfer of wealth from one person to another depends on mere chance.
- (xii) Manufacture, buying, and selling of idols, and service of temples where idols are kept or worshipped.
- (xiii) Earnings from businesses like astrology, foretelling of fate, divination, etc.
- (xiv) Usury.

7. After prohibiting these wrong ways of acquiring wealth the Qur'an also strongly condemns the amassing of wealth in a covetous and niggardly way.²⁷ Along with this we are warned that love of wealth or a hankering after riches and pride of fortune have always been among the causes that have led men astray and ultimately sent them to ruin.²⁸

8. On the other hand, the Qur'an condemns it in equally strong terms that one should squander one's properly acquired wealth in wasteful pursuits, spend it for one's own lust or luxury, and put it to no use save raising one's own standard of living.²⁹

9. The proper course for man, according to the Qur'an, is to spend moderately on his own needs and those of his family. He and his dependants have rights to his wealth which must be granted without stint, but he cannot be allowed to squander everything on himself and his family, for there are other obligations, too, which must be recognized.³⁰

10. After he has satisfied his own needs with moderation, a man should spend what is left over of his well-earned wealth in the following ways:

“They ask you what they should spend (in charity). Say: `Whatever exceeds your needs.’”³¹

“It is not piety that you turn your faces towards east or west. Piety is that a man should believe in God and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and the Prophets, and give his wealth for the love of God to his kinsfolk and the orphans and the needy and the traveller and to those who ask, and for setting the slaves free.”³²

“You will never attain piety until you spend what you love (of your wealth). And whatever you spend, God knows it well.”³³

“Serve God, and associate no partner with Him, and be kind to parents and kinsmen and orphans and the needy, and the neighbour who is of kin, and the neighbour who is a stranger, and the companion by your side, and the traveller, and the slaves that your right hands own. Surely God does not love the proud and the boastful.”³⁴

“(Charity is) for those poor people who are so restrained in the way of God that they cannot travel in the land to earn their living. The ignorant man

regards them as wealthy because of their self-possession. You shall know them by their mark, they do not beg of men importunately. What- ever (wealth) you spend (on them) God surely knows it.”³⁵

“They (the righteous) feed the needy, the orphan, and the captive, for the love of God, saying: `We feed you for the sake of God alone. We desire no reward from you nor any thanks.”³⁶

“(Excepted from the fire of hell are) those in whose wealth there is a fixed portion for the beggar and the destitute.”³⁷

The Qur'an not only tells that this kind of spending is the essence of piety but also warns that its absence in a society must mean its decay and ruination: “Expend in the way of God, and cast not yourself with your own hands into ruin.”³⁸

11. Besides this general and voluntary spending in the way of God the Qur'an enjoins expending of wealth as expiation of omissions and sins. For instance, if a man takes an oath and then forswears it, “the expiation for it is to feed ten poor persons with the average of food which you serve to your own folk, or to clothe them, or to give a slave his freedom; or if anyone does not find (the wherewithal to do so) let him fast three days.”³⁹

Similarly, if anyone makes his wife unlawful for him by declaring her to be his mother or sister by zihar⁴⁰ and later seeks to retract and take her again, it is ordained that “he should free a slave before the two touch each other, and he who has not (the wherewithal for that) should fast for two months consecutively . . . and he who is unable to do so let him feed sixty poor per-sons.”⁴¹

Like expiations have also been ordained to make up for omissions in the performance of piilgrimage⁴² and proper observance of the month of fasting.⁴³

12. But all such expense will count as expense in God's way only if it is really free from selfishness, guile, and display, and there is no attempt to hurt or lay anyone under obligation. One must also make no attempt to sort out the worse of one's goods to disburse in charity. One must give the choice of them, and bear nothing in mind except the love and pleasure of God.⁴⁴

13. This expending of wealth which the Qur'an variously terms as “spending in God's way” or charity or zakat, is not a mere act of piety, an almsgiving; rather it is the third among the five pillars of Islam, viz., (1) the witness of faith (iman), (2) prayer (salat), (3) charity (zakat), (4) fasting (saum) and (5) pilgrimage (hajj). It has been mentioned constantly with prayer (salat) some thirty-seven times in the Qur'an and both of them have been described with full emphasis as essentials of Islam, without which there can be no sal-vation.⁴⁵ Zakat, it says, has been a pillar of true religion preached by all the prophets of God.⁴⁶

And so this zakat is a pillar of Islam now in the religion of the last Prophet of God. It is as essential for one who joins the fold of Islam as bearing witness to the truth of faith (iman) or prayer (salat).⁴⁷

Zakat is not only for the good of society; it is also necessary for the moral development and edification of the giver himself. It is for his own purification and salvation. It is not only a tax, but also an act of worship just

like prayer. It is an essential part of that programme which the Qur'an prescribes for the amelioration of man's soul.⁴⁸

14. But the Qur'an was not content to infuse a general spirit of voluntary benevolence and philanthropy among people. It instructed the Prophet as the Head of the Islamic State to fix an obligatory minimum for it, and arrange for its regular receipt and disbursement.

“Take a charity from their wealth.”⁴⁹

The words “a charity” pointed out that a certain fixed measure determined by the Prophet was to be enjoined on people, besides the usual charity they practised of their own accord. Accordingly, the Prophet fixed a maximum allowable limit in respect of different kinds of wealth, and the following rates were fixed for the holdings that stood above that limit⁵⁰

(1) On gold, silver, and cash hoardings⁵¹ - 2 1/2 % annually

(2) On agricultural produce from unirrigated land - 10 % annually

(3) On agricultural produce from artificially irrigated land - 5 % annually

(4) On livestock kept for breeding and trade-the rates are different for sheep, goats, cows, camels, etc.

(5) On mines in private ownership and treasure-troves - 20 % annually

The Prophet of God imposed these rates of zakat as a duty on Muslims like the five daily prayers. As duties, and in being incumbent, there is no difference between the two. According to the Qur'an, it is one of the basic objects of an Islamic State that it should institute prayer (salat) and manage regular re-ceipt and distribution of zakat.⁵²

It should be noted that although, as seen above, the collection and disbursement of zakat is a duty of an Islamic State, the believers will not be absolved from paying it (privately), just as they are not absolved from prayer, in case the Islamic State ceases to exist or is neglectful of its duty.

15. To the funds collected under zakat the Qur'an adds another item-a part of the spoils of war. The rule prescribed by the Book is that the soldiers fighting in a battle should not loot the spoils which fall into their hands after a victory, but bring everything before the commander who should distribute four-fifth of the whole booty amongst soldiers who participated in the engagement and hand over the remaining fifth to the State for the following purposes:

“Know that whatever booty you take, the fifth of it is for God and the Prophet and the kinsmen and the orphans and the needy and the traveller.”⁵³

16. The income from these two sources, according to the Qur'an, is not a part of the general exchequer maintained to furnish comforts and provide for essential services for all including those who contribute to the zakat fund. On the contrary, it is reserved for use on the following items:

Alms are meant for the poor⁵⁴ and the needy⁵⁵ and those who work on them (i. e., collect, disburse, and manage them) and those whose hearts are to be reconciled,⁵⁶ for the ransoming of slaves⁵⁷ and those in debt, and the cause of God⁵⁸ and the traveller⁵⁹ - a duty from God.”⁶⁰

17. The Qur'anic rule with regard to the property which a person leaves behind him after his or her death is that it should be distributed among his parents, children, and wife (or husband, as the case may be) according to a specified ratio. If he leaves neither parents nor children, his brothers and

sisters (real, step, or uterine) should divide it. Detailed instructions relating to this may be seen in chapter iv of the Qur'an.⁶¹ We omit to reproduce them here to avoid prolixity.

The guiding principle here is that property accumulated by a person during his life-time should not remain accumulated there after his death but scatter among his kinsfolk. This is opposed to the principle underlying primogeniture, the joint family, and other like systems which aim at keeping accumulated wealth accumulated even after the death of its holder.

The Qur'an also rejects the system of adopting children to make them heirs, and lays down that inheritance should go to those who are actually related, not to those fictitiously adopted as sons and daughters to pass on property.⁶²

However, after ensuring blood relations their rights, the Qur'an advises them to be generous to the other relations who are not going to inherit but are present on the occasion of the division of property. They also may be given something out of kindness.⁶³

18. In prescribing the law of inheritance the Qur'an allows a person's right to make a will before he dies in respect of the property he is leaving behind him.⁶⁴

This ordinance instructs a man who is passing away to urge his offspring to be kind to his parents-the young being often inclined to neglect the proper care of their aged grand-parents; and to bequeath some of his property to those of his kinsfolk who deserve help but are not entitled to inherit anything under the law. Besides this if a person is leaving much wealth he may bequeath a part of it for charitable purposes or works of social welfare, for the above- quoted verse does not ask him to restrict his will to his parents and relatives alone.⁶⁵

It is evident from these laws of inheritance that the rule in respect of the heritage of private property is that two-thirds of it must be divided among legal heirs and the remaining one-third left to the discretion of the dying person to dispose it of as he wills, provided, however, the purpose for which he means to bequeath it is just and lawful, and no one is robbed of his right.⁶⁶

19. As for those people who cannot husband their property well on account of idiocy or want of intelligence and are wasting it away or, it is genuinely feared, are likely to do so, the instruction is that they may not be allowed to hold it in their care. Such property should lie in the care of their guardians or responsible judicial officers and may be restored to them only when there is satisfaction that they are able to manage their affairs properly.⁶⁷

An important point described in this verse about private possessions is that although they are the property of their owners according to law, yet they do not wholly be-long to them, because the interest of society is also involved in them. That is why the Qur'an calls them "your property" instead of "their property."

That is also why, where unintelligent use of private property is causing, or is likely to cause, harm to the collective interest of society, it allows

guardians or magis-trates to take it over in their own hands, without, however, disturbing the owner's right of owning it or benefiting by it.⁶⁸

20. The Qur'anic direction in respect of properties, wealth, and incomes that belong to the State is that they should not be used for the welfare of rich classes only but of all alike and particularly the poor whose interest deserves more looking after than that of any other class.

“Whatever God has bestowed on His Messenger, (taking it) from the people of these towns, is for God and the Messenger⁶⁹ and the kinsfolk⁷⁰ and the orphans and the needy and the traveller, in order that it may not circulate among the rich of you (only) (It is also) for the poor emigrants who have been expelled from their homes and possessions.”⁷¹

21. In the matter of levying taxes the Qur'an teaches the principle that their incidence should lie on those who possess more than they need, and on that part of their wealth which is surplus after all legitimate needs have been met.

“They ask you what they should spend. Say: `What is spare after meeting your needs.”⁷²

The characteristic features and basic principles of the economic scheme drawn by the Qur'an for man and described in the above twenty-one para-graphs may be summed up as follows

i. It works a happy co-ordination between economic and moral values. Instead of being treated as distinctly separate things, the two are drawn to-gether into a harmonious blend. The economic problem has been tackled not from the purely “economic” point of view; it has been solved after being appropriately placed in the overall scheme of life based on ethical concepts of Islam. (paras 1, 2, 4, 5.)

ii. All resources and means of living are regarded as God's magnanimous gift to mankind; this implies that all kinds of monopolization, individual, collective, or national, should be discouraged and all men should be provided with free opportunities of earning on God's earth to the maximum limit possible. (para 5.)

iii. It allows individual right of ownership but not to an unlimited extent. Besides putting restrictions on it in the interest of other individuals and society as a whole, it admits on a person's property the rights of his relatives, neighbours, friends, the needy, the unfortunate, and, so to speak; of all members of society. Some of these are made enforceable by law; as for others, arrangement has been made to educate people morally and intellectually enabling them to understand these rights and prepare themselves to honour them of their own free-will. (paras 3, 5, 7-14, 16, 18, 19.)

iv. The natural way for the economic system to operate according to this scheme is that individuals should work it and try to improve it with free endeavour. However, they are not left to do as they may without checks and restraints of any kind. For their own cultural and economic welfare and for that of their society this freedom has been curtailed within limits. (paras 6, 14, 21.)

v. Man and woman are alike declared owners of the wealth they earn, in-herit, or acquire by other lawful means, and allowed to derive benefit from their possessions. (paras 3, 4, 17.)

vi. To preserve economic balance people have been urged to give up miserlyness and renunciation, and take to putting the gifts of God to good use. But at the same time they have been strongly warned not to indulge in extravaganza of any kind. (paras 5, 7, 8.)

vii. To secure economic justice it has been assured that unjust means are not employed to force the flow of wealth in particular channels. Nor should wealth acquired by just means remain stored at a place and fall out of circulation. Arrangement is also made to ensure that wealth remains in constant use and circulation, particularly for the benefit of those classes which are deprived of their due and reasonable share for one reason or another. (paras 6-8, 10, 11, 14, 16-18, 20.)

viii. The scheme does not depend much upon the interference of law or the State to ensure economic justice. After declaring a few unavoidable things to be the responsibility of the State for this purpose, it seeks to enforce the other items in its plan through the intellectual and moral uplift of the individuals comprising a society and its general amelioration. Economic justice is thus secured in perfect concord with the principle of allowing the exercise of individual freedom in the economic field. (paras 5-21.)

ix. Instead of producing class conflict it puts an end to the causes of such conflicts and produces a spirit of co-operation and comradeship among the different classes of society. (paras 4, 6-10, 12, 14-16, 20, 21.)

When these principles were worked out and put into practice in governmental and social spheres during the time of the Holy Prophet and his "Guided Successors," many more injunctions and precedents came into existence. But our present study precludes that discussion. Books of history, biography, traditions, and jurisprudence abound in such matters and may be consulted for details.

Political Teachings

1. The political philosophy of the Qur'an is essentially based on its fundamental concept of the universe which should be clearly kept in mind for its proper appreciation and right appraisal. If we study this concept of the universe from the political point of view, the following four points vividly come into prominence

(a) That God is the creator of the whole of this universe including man and all those things which he exploits and harnesses into his service.⁷³

(b) That God Himself is the sole master, ruler, director, and administrator of His creation.⁷⁴

(c) That sovereignty in this universe does not and cannot vest in anyone except God. Nor has anyone else any right to share this sovereignty with Him.⁷⁵

(d) That all attributes and powers of sovereignty are solely His prerogatives. He is living, self-existent, self-sufficient, eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, and exalted above all flaw, defect, or weakness. His is the supreme authority; everything submits to Him willingly or unwillingly; to

Him belong all powers. He can dictate whatever He likes and none has the power to interfere in or review His commandments. No one can intercede with Him save by His leave. Nobody has the power to harm those whom He intends to benefit and none can protect whom He intends to harm.

He is accountable to none; everyone else is accountable to Him. He is the guardian of one and all. He can protect against all, but none can give quarters against Him. His are the powers of inflicting punishment or granting forgiveness. He is the supreme Lord over all other rulers. He grants an opportunity to rule on His earth to whomsoever He desires and withdraws this privilege whenever He so wills.

These essential powers and attributes of a sovereign being vest solely in God.⁷⁶

2. On the basis of this concept of the universe the Qur'an asserts that the real sovereign of mankind too is the same as the sovereign of the whole uni-verse. His is the only rightful authority in human affairs just as in all other affairs of creation. No one else, be he human or non-human, has any right to give orders or decide matters independently.

There is, however, one vital difference.

In the physical sphere of the universe the sovereignty of God is established by itself regardless of whether one willingly submits to it or not. In that sector of his life even man has no option to do otherwise. He too finds himself totally regulated by the inexorable laws of nature like any other object from the tiniest speck of an atom to the magnificent galaxies in space.

But in the volitional sphere of his life man has been allowed a certain amount of free-will and God has not coerced him to an unwilling submission. Herein He has chosen only to invite and persuade mankind through His revealed Books (the last of which is the Holy Qur'an) to surrender themselves before His Lordship and acknowledge His sovereignty with deliberate willingness. The Qur'an has discussed the different aspects of this subject at great length. For instance:

(a) The Lord of the universe is indeed the Lord of man, and this position must be fully recognized by him.⁷⁷

(b) God alone has the right to decide and order. Mankind should submit to none save Him. This is the only right course.⁷⁸

(c) The right to rule belongs to God alone because He is the creator.⁷⁹

(d) The right to order and decide belongs to God because He is the ruler of the universe.⁸⁰

(e) His rule is right and just, because He alone comprehends reality and none else is in a position to give unerring guidance.⁸¹

3. On these grounds the Qur'an lays down that an unadulterated obedience is the due of God alone; that it is His Law that should rule supreme; and that to obey others or to follow one's own wishes against the Law of God, is not the right way.⁸²

The Qur'an also asserts that no one has the right to transgress the limits that have been laid down by God for the regulation of human affairs.⁸³

It also points out that all orders and decisions in contravention of the Law of God are not only wrong and unlawful but also unjust and blasphemous. It

condemns all such orders as anti-Islamic and the attempt to abide by them as negation of faith.⁸⁴

4. Then the Qur'an says that prophets are the only source of our knowing the Law of God. They alone are the bearers of revelation and are in a position to convey to mankind the commandments and directions of their Lord.

They again are the persons divinely authorized to explain those commandments by their word and deed. Thus, the prophets are embodiments of the legal sovereignty of God. That is why obedience to them has been considered to be obedience to God Himself and faith in them has been made a necessary condition for demarcating belief from disbelief.⁸⁵

5. According to the Qur'an, the commandments of God and the Prophet of Islam constitute the Supreme Law and the Muslims as such cannot adopt any attitude other than that of complete submission to it. A Muslim is not allowed to follow his own independent decisions in matters which have been finally and unequivocally decided by God and His Apostle. To do that is a negation of faith.⁸⁶

6. The right form of government for mankind according to the Qur'an is one in which the State relinquishes its claim to sovereignty in favour of God and, after recognizing the legal supremacy of God and His Apostle, accepts the position of Caliphate (vicegerency) under the suzerainty of the Rightful Ruler. In this capacity all the legislative, executive, and judicial powers of the State will necessarily be circumscribed by the limits which have been described in paras 3, 4, and 5 above.⁸⁷

7. The conception of Caliphate as it has been put forth by the Qur'an, can be summed up in the following terms

(a) All the powers that man possesses in this world are in fact not his own, but have been endowed to him by God Almighty. The Lord Himself has assign-ed to man the position in which he may exercise these delegated powers within the limits prescribed by Him. Man is thus not an independent master but a vicegerent of the real Sovereign.⁸⁸

(b) Every nation that acquires the power and authority to rule over any part of the world is in reality a vicegerent of God in its domain.⁸⁹

(c) This vicegerency, however, cannot be right and lawful unless it is subservient to the commandments of the real Sovereign. Any State independent of Him and not subservient to His commands is not a vicegerency. It is really a revolt against the Lord.⁹⁰

8. The powers of a true Caliphate do not vest in any individual nor in any clan, class or community, but in those who believe and do good. The text of xxiv, 55 that "God has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them His vicegerents on the earth..." is quite clear on this point. According to this verse, every good Muslim is fit to hold the position of a Caliph.

It is this aspect of Islamic Caliphate that distin-guishes it from a kingship, an oligarchy, and a theocracy. It is different even from modern democracy. There is a basic difference between the two. The edifice of democracy is raised on the principle of popular sovereignty; while in Islamic Caliphate the people themselves surrender their independence to the

sovereignty of God and of their own accord limit their powers within the four corners of the divine Law and the promise of vicegerency has been held out to them only if they are morally good.

9. The government of a State established with a view to running an Islamic Caliphate cannot claim an absolute or unlimited obedience from the people. They are bound to obey it only so far as it exercises its powers in accordance with the divine Law revealed in nature and the Sacred Book. There can be neither obedience nor co-operation in sin and aggression.⁹¹

10. In all affairs of the State, right from its constitution to the election of its Head and members of its parliament, and the matters of legislation and administration, the Muslims should make it a rule to take counsel among them-selves.⁹²

11. The following qualifications must be kept in view in choosing the people responsible to run the State:

(a) They must have faith in the principles according to which they have to manage the affairs of the Caliphate. Evidently, an ideological system can-not work in the hands of those who do not subscribe to its principles.⁹³

(b) They should not be unjust, licentious, forgetful of God, or transgressors of divine limits. They should be, on the other hand, honest, trustworthy, God-fearing, and virtuous.⁹⁴

(c) They should not be unwise and ignorant. They must be rather educated, wise, intelligent, and both bodily and intellectually fit to pilot the State.⁹⁵

(d) They should be men of integrity so that they may be safely entrusted with public responsibilities.⁹⁶

12. The constitution of such a State shall be based on the following principles:

(a) "O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle and those of you who are in authority; and if you have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the Apostle if ye are (in truth) believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more seemly in the end."⁹⁷

This verse elucidates five constitutional points:

(i) That obedience to God and His Apostle must be given priority to every other obedience.

(ii) That obedience to those who are in authority is subject to the obedience to God and His Apostle.

(iii) That the Head of the State must be from amongst the believers.

(iv) That it is possible for the people to differ with the government and its rulers.

(v) That in case of dispute the final authority to decide between them is the Law of God and His Apostle.

(b) The Qur'an does not give us any hard and fast rules about the method of election and consultation. It lays down only broad-based principles and leaves the problem of their practical implementation to be decided in accordance with the exigencies of time and the requirements of society.

(c) In those matters about which clear injunctions have been given or definite principles laid down or limits prescribed by God and His Apostle,

the legislature has only the right to interpret them, or to frame bye-laws and rules of procedure to bring them into practice.

As for those matters about which the Supreme Law is silent, the legislature is allowed to legislate for all pur-poses and needs of the society keeping in view the spirit and the general principles of Islam. The very fact that no clear injunction exists about them in the Qur'an and Sunnah is sufficient to show that the Lawgiver has Him-self left it to the good sense of the believers.

(d) The judiciary must be free from every pressure and influence to adjudicate impartially without being carried away by the public or the people in authority. Its foremost duty is to give verdict strictly in accordance with the law and requirements of justice without being swayed either by the passions or preju-dices of its own members or those of others.⁹⁸

13. This State comes into being for two main purposes. First, that justice and equity should be established in human affairs,⁹⁹ and, secondly, that, the powers and resources of the State should be harnessed for the welfare of the people, i. e., for promotion, for them, of all that is good and eradication of all that is evil.¹⁰⁰

14. All citizens of the State, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, must be guaranteed the following fundamental rights, and it is the bounden duty of the State to safeguard them against all types of encroachment:

- (a) Security of person.¹⁰¹
- (b) Security of property.¹⁰²
- (c) Protection of honour.¹⁰³
- (d) Right of privacy.¹⁰⁴
- (e) The right to protest against injustice.¹⁰⁵
- (f) The right to enjoy what is good and forbid what is evil. This includes the right of criticism.¹⁰⁶
- (g) Freedom of association, provided it is used for good ends and does not become an instrument for spreading dissensions and creating fundamental differences in the society.¹⁰⁷
- (h) Freedom of faith and conscience.¹⁰⁸
- (i) Protection against wrongfully hurting one's religious susceptibilities.¹⁰⁹ The Qur'an has clearly laid down in this connection that in matters of religious differences an academic discussion can be held, but it must be conducted in a fair and decent manner.¹¹⁰
- (j) Limiting the responsibility of every person only to his or her own deeds.¹¹¹
- (k) Security from action being taken against anyone on false reports about his or her crime.¹¹²
- (l) The right of the destitute and the needy to be provided with basic necessities of life by the State.¹¹³
- (m) Equal treatment of all its subjects by the State without discrimination¹¹⁴ ..

An Islamic State has the following rights against its citizens:

- (a) That they must submit to its authority.¹¹⁵
- (b) That they must be law-abiding and should not disturb the public order and tranquillity.¹¹⁶

(c) They must give unstinted support to the State in its rightful activities.¹¹⁷

(d) They must be prepared to sacrifice their life and property for the defence of the State.¹¹⁸

16. The Qur'an gives the following important directions about the foreign policy of the Islamic State:

(a) Sanctity of treaties and pledges.¹¹⁹ (b) Honesty and integrity in all transactions.¹²⁰ (c) International justice.¹²¹ (d) Respect for the rights of neutrals in war.¹²² (e) Love of peace.¹²³ (f) Non-participation in the efforts directed to self-aggrandizement and oppression in the world.¹²⁴ (g) Friendly treatment to all non-hostile powers.¹²⁵ (h) Fair deal with all those who are good and honest in their dealings.¹²⁶ (i) Retaliation in proportion to the high-handedness of others and no more.¹²⁷

The salient features of the State envisaged in these sixteen points laid down by the Holy Qur'an are as follows:

(i) This State is brought into existence by a conscious resolve on the part of a politically free nation to renounce all claims to sovereignty in favour of God Almighty, to surrender its autonomy accepting the position of vicegerency under Him, and to work according to precepts and directions given by the Book of God and the Sunnah of His Apostle.

(ii) It is theocratic in so far as it is based on the doctrine of sovereignty of God but, in actual and practical realization of this doctrine, it is vitally different from theocracy. Instead of delegating the vicegerency of God to a particular order of priests and vesting them with the full powers to rule, it vests the believers whose deeds are good with the right of Caliphate.

(iii) It is democratic in the sense that the formation of government, change in its administrative set-up, and its working wholly depend upon the general will. But the rights of the people in this system are not so unlimited that they may change the law of the State, its ideology, its internal and external policy, and its resources according to their own sweet will.

On the other hand, the Supreme Law of God and His Apostle with its legal and moral code provides a permanent and inviolable check which always keeps the life of the community on the right keel and on a broad pattern which can be changed neither by the executive, nor by the legislature, nor by the judiciary, nor even by the whole nation unless it decides to renounce the religion of God and break its pledge with Him.

(iv) It is an ideological State which must be run only by those who accept its basic ideology and principles wholeheartedly. As for those who do not subscribe to its ideology but live within its territorial bounds, the State guarantees them the same civil rights as are enjoyed by the other inhabitants provided they pledge to behave as law-abiding citizens.

(v) It is a State which makes no discrimination whatsoever on grounds of race or colour and is not bound by any linguistic or geographical barriers. It is a purely ideological State. All peoples, no matter to whatever race, nation, or country they belong, can accept this ideology and become equal partners in all the affairs of the State. Such an ideological State bids fair to become a world State.

But even if more than one such States are established in different parts of the world, all of them will be equally Islamic. And instead of there being any nationalistic conflicts among them, they will extend fraternal support and co-operation to one another. Not only that, there is every possibility of their joining together in a world confederation of their own.

(vi) The real spirit of this State lies in subordinating politics to morality and conducting affairs conscientiously and God-fearingly. Honour and eminence must come through moral excellence alone. Paramount importance should be given to character besides ability in selecting men of authority. Honesty, fairness, and justice are to prevail in every sphere of domestic administration. And the whole foreign policy is to devolve upon truth, faithfulness, love of peace, fair dealing, and international justice.

(vii) Policing is not the only function of this State. It does not come into existence merely to maintain law and order and to defend its territory against external attacks. It is a State with a purpose and a mission. It must positively strive for the achievement of social justice, promotion of good, and eradication of evil.

(viii) Equality of rights, status and opportunities, supremacy of Law, co-operation in virtue and non-co-operation in vice, sense of accountability to God Almighty, sense of duties more than that of rights, unity of purpose between the individuals, society, and the State, guarantee of the basic necessities of life to everyone in need, are the fundamental values of this State.

(ix) The relations between State and individual are so balanced in this system that neither the State has been vested with absolute authority reducing individuals to virtual slavery, nor has individual freedom been allowed to turn itself into licence threatening the interest of society.

On the one hand, by guaranteeing fundamental rights to its citizens and by making the State authority subject to the Supreme Law of God and the democratic process of shura, it provides ample opportunities for the development of individual personality and protection from undue interference by others.

And, on the other hand, it binds the individual to a definite code of morality, makes it obligatory for him faithfully to obey the orders of the State working in accordance with the Law of God, to co-operate wholeheartedly with it in the cause of virtue, to avoid disturbing its tranquillity, and to sacrifice even his life and property in its defence.

Notes

1. Qur'an, II, 29; VII, 10; XIII, 3; XIV, 32-34; LVI, 63-64; LXVII, 15.
2. Ibid., XI, 87.
3. Ibid., XVI, 116. "This verse strictly prohibits that people should decide according to their own views or wishes what is lawful and what is unlawful" (Baidawi, Anwar al-Tanzil, vol. III, p. 193). "The purport of this verse is, as Askari explains, that you should not call a thing lawful or unlawful unless you have learnt of its being so from God or His Prophet, otherwise you would be telling a lie on God; for nothing makes a thing lawful or unlawful save a commandment of God" (Alusi, Ruh al-Ma'ani, vol. XIV, p. 226, Idarat al-Taba'at al-Muniriyyah, Egypt, 1345/1926)
4. Qur'an, VII, 15,7.
5. Ibid., II, 275, 279, 282, 283, 261; IV, 2, 4, 7, 20, 24, 29; V, 38; VI, 141; IX, 103; XXIV, 27; XXXVI, 71; LI, 19; LXI, 11.
6. Ibid., VII, 128.
7. Ibid., II, 284.
8. The words of the text are: fi arba'ati ayyamin sawa' al-lissa'ilin. Zamakhshari, Baidawi, Razi, Alusi and other commentators have taken sawa' to go with ayyamin and interpreted it to mean "in full four days." No commentator of distinction has taken sawa' to go with sa'ilin. However, even if it is allowed to go with it; it would mean "provided for the sake of all who seek," and not "for all who seek in equal measure." This latter interpretation is just untenable.
9. Qur'an, VI, 165; XVII, 21, 30; XXXIV, 39; XLII, 12; XLIII, 32.
10. Ibid., IV, 32.
11. This will be absolutely clear on reading Surah xvi, verses 71-76, and Surah xxx, verses 20-25. The subject of discussion in both cases is the assertion of the unity of God and refutation of polytheism.
12. Qur'an, II, 29, 168; V, 88; VII, 31, 32; LVII, 27.
13. Ibid., iv, 29. By trade is meant exchange of commodities and services. (Al- Jassas, Ahkam al-Qur'an, vol. II, p. 21, Matba'at al-Bahiyyah, Egypt, 1347/1928; ibn al-'Arabi, Ahkam al-Qur'an, vol. I, p.17, Matba'at al-Sa'adah, Egypt, 1331/1912.)
- The condition of "by mutual agreement" explains that there should be no coercion, fraud, or trick about it to which the other party would not agree if it came to its notice.
14. Qur'an, ii, 188. Seeking to gain the nearness of the judges includes resorting to law-courts to lay a false claim to other people's property, or offering bribes to the judges to obtain a favourable decree. (Alusi, op. cit. vol. II, p. 60.)
15. Qur'an, II, 283.
16. Ibid., III, 161.
17. Ibid., V, 41.
18. Ibid., IV, 10.
19. Ibid., LXXXIII, 1-3.
20. Ibid., XXIV, 19.
21. Ibid., XXIV, 33. The purpose of this verse is to prohibit prostitution. Slave-girls are mentioned because in old Arabia prostitution was conducted with slave-girls. People would install their young and beautiful slaves in the brothels and eat of their earnings. (Ibn Jarir, Jami` al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, vol. XVIII, pp. 55-58, 103-04, Matba'at al-Amiriyyah, Egypt, 1328/1910; ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, vol. III, pp. 89, 288, Matba'ah Mustafa Muhammad, Egypt, 1947; ibn `Abd al-Barr, al-Isti`ab, vol. II, p. 762, Dairatul Maarif, Hyderabad, 1337/1918.)
22. Qur'an, XVII, 32.
23. Ibid., XXIV, 2. Along with making adultery a criminal offence, the earnings of adultery are also declared forbidden. The Prophet of God (may peace be upon him) called it the most abominable of earnings. (Bukhari, Book 34, Ch. 113; Book 37, Ch. 20; Book 68, Ch. 50; Book 76, Ch. 46; Book 77, Ch. 96; Muslim, Book 22, Tr. No. 39, 41; abu Dawud,

Book 22, Ch. 39, 63; Tirmidhi, Book 9, Ch. 37; Book 12, Ch. 46; Book 26, Ch. 23; Nasa'i, Book 42, Ch. 5; Book 44, Ch. 90; ibn Majah, Book 12, Ch. 9.)

24. Qur'an, V, 93. The manufacture of and trading in all things prohibited in the Qur'an are also prohibited. Full prohibition calls for complete ban on profiting by anything connected with what is prohibited. (A1-Jassas, op. cit., vol. II, p. 212.)

25. Qur'an, ii, 275. This makes it clear that in the case of trade the profit which a person makes over his invested capital, or in the event of a partnership in trade the profit which the partners of an enterprise divide according to their shares in it, is lawful and allowed, but whatever a creditor charges from his debtor over his principal is unlawful and God does not allow it as truly earned income like the profit earned in trade.

26. Ibid., II, 278-80. It is evident from the words used here that this injunction is related to transactions of debt and in such transactions if a creditor charges anything more than what he has advanced it would be *riba* (excess, usury, interest). The rate of interest to be charged, high or low, makes no difference in it. It is also immaterial for what purpose the sum is borrowed.

27. Ibid., III 180; IX, 34; XLVII, 38; LVII, 24; LXIV, 16; LXIX, 34; IXX, 21; IXXIV, 45; LXXXIX 15-20; XC II, 11; CIV, 3; CVII, 1, 2, 3, 7.

28. Ibid., XXVIII, 58; XXXIV, 34, 35; CII, 1-3.

29. Ibid., VI, 141; VII, 31; XVII, 23.

30. Ibid., XVII, 29 ; XXV, 6 7 ; XXVIII, 77.

31. Ibid., II, 219.

32. Ibid., II, 177.

33. Ibid., III, 92.

34. Ibid., IV, 36. as in the days of the Holy Prophet these were the four hundred volunteers who had come from the four corners of Arabia and settled at Madinah. They had dedicated their lives to the pursuit of the knowledge of Islam and were prepared to go with any expedition of propagation or war when and wherever the Holy Prophet sent them. Having devoted their whole time to these services they could do little to earn their livelihood. (Zamakhshari, al-Kashshaf, vol. 1, p. 126, al- Matba'at al-Bahiyah, Egypt, 1343/1924.) Similarly, this verse will now apply to those persons who devote their whole time to study, or propagation of faith or other works of social welfare and do not find opportunity to attend to their own business.

35. Qur'an, II, 273.

36. Ibid., LXXVI, 8-9.

37. Ibid., LXX, 25.

38. Ibid., II, 195.

39. Ibid., V, 89.

40. It was an old Arab custom to divorce a woman by uttering the formula "Thou art to me as the back of my mother." This formula was called "the zihar." Divorce by zihar freed the husband from any responsibility for conjugal duties but did not leave the wife free to leave the husband's home or to contract a second marriage. This pagan system of divorce unfair to women was abolished (LVIII. 2).

41. Qur'an, LVIII, 4.

42. Ibid., II, 196; V, 95.

43. Ibid., II, 184.

44. Ibid., II, 262-63, 268, 271; IV, 38; XXIV, 33.

45. Ibid., II, 3, 43, 83 110, 177, 277; IV, 77, 162; V, 12, 55; VIII, 3; IX, 5, 11, 18, 71; XIII, 22; XIV, 31; XIX, 31, 55; XXI, 73; III, 35, 41, 78; XXIII, 2; XXIV, 37, 56; XXVII, 3; XXXI, 4; XXXIII, 33; XXXV, 29; XLIII, 38; LVIII, 13; LXX, 23; LXXXIII, 20; LXXXIV, 43; XCVIII, 5; CVII.

46. Ibid., II, 83; XIX, 30, 31, 55; XXI, 73; XCVIII, 5.

47. Ibid., II, 2, 3; V, 55; VIII, 2, 3, 4; IX, 11; XXII, 78.

48. Ibid., III, 92; IX, 103; LXIV, 16.

49. Ibid., IX, 103.

50. Al-Shaukani, Nail al Autar, vol. IV, pp. 98, 126, Mustafa al-Babi, Egypt, 1347/1928.

51. Later it was decided by ijma` (consensus of opinion) that zakaton merchandise goods would also be charged at the rate of 2 1/2 % per annum. (Al- Shaukani, op. cit., vol. IV, p. 117.) This principle of zakaton commerce will likewise apply to factories which manufacture different kinds of goods for sale.

52. Qur'an, IX, 103; XXII, 41; XXIV, 55, 56.

53. Ibid., viii, 41. During his life, the Prophet took a part of this fifth of spoils for his own and his kins' needs as neither he nor they had any right in zakat. After his death it was a disputed point as to who should take the Prophet's and kinsmen's share. Some people opined that the Prophet was entitled to it for being the Head of the State and thus after his death it should go to the Caliph and his kinsfolk. Others thought that it should still belong to the kinsfolk of the Prophet. At last it was agreed that it should be set aside for the military requirements of the Islamic State. (Al-Jassas, op. cit., vol. III, pp. 75, 77.)

54. Arabic fuqara', singular faqir. Literally, faqr is want, and fuqara' are those who earn less than they need and thus deserve help. (Lisan al-'Arab, vol. V, pp. 60, 61, Beirut, 1956.)

55. Arabic masakin, singular miskin. The Caliph `Umar says that miskin is he who cannot earn his living or does not find opportunity to do so. (Al-Jassas, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 151.) According to this definition, all those helpless children who are not yet able to earn, and the cripple, and the old who are no longer able to make a living, and the unemployed, and the invalids who are temporarily rendered unfit to earn livelihood, are masakin.

56. Three kinds of men were given money for "reconciling of hearts," during the Prophet's life: 1. Staunch opponents of Islam who persecuted weak Muslims or set themselves hard against the faith were given something. and persuaded to adopt a lenient attitude. 2. Those who forcibly prevented the people of their tribes or clans from embracing Islam were persuaded to give up this obstruction. 3. The new entrants in faith were given monetary help to get over their financial difficulties, so that they should live in their new environments among Muslims with equanimity. (Al-Jassas, op. cit., vol. III; p. 152.)

57. Refers to the Muslims who were captured in war by the enemies as well as the non-Muslims who came as war captives to the Muslims and wanted to be set free on payment of ransom; reference is also to the slaves who lived in bondage from old.

58. The cause of God includes jihad (war) and hajj (pilgrimage). One who proceeds on war can avail oneself of zakateven if one is well-to-do so far as personal effects go, because one's personal effects are often inadequate to enable one to prepare for war and provide for the expenses of the way. Similarly, one who runs short of money on pilgrimage deserves to be helped with zakat. (al-Jassas, op. cit., vol. III, pp. 156-57; al- Shaukani op. cit., vol. IV, pp. 144-46.)

59. A traveller, even though he is rich at home, deserves to be helped with zakatif he runs short of money on the way (Al-Jassas, op. cit., vol. III, p. 157).

60. Qur'an, IX, 60.

61. Verses 7-12 and 176. According to the Holy Prophet's elucidation, in the absence of the nearest relations the inheritance will go to the nearer, and in their absence, as a last resort, to those who have at least some relation with the deceased in comparison with mere strangers. But if the deceased leave no relation of any kind, the property will be added to the general exchequer of the Islamic State. (Al-Shaukani, op. cit., vol. VI, pp. 47, 56.)

62. Qur'an, XXXIII, 4, 6.

63. Ibid., IV, 8, 9.

64. Ibid., II, 180.

65. Al Shaukani, op. cit., vol. VI, pp. 32, 33. Seen in the light of the Holy Prophet's elucidation, the Qur'an does not seem to favour the idea that one should leave one's kinsfolk deprived and spend on works of social welfare. The words of the Prophet quoted in Nail al-Autar from Bukhari, Muslim, and other books of Tradition are: "Your leaving your heirs rich is better than your leaving them poor, spreading their hands before people (for help)."

66. Elucidating the law in this matter, the Prophet of God (may peace be upon him) has imposed three restrictions on the right of demise. First, that a person can exercise this right to the extent of one-third of his property only. Secondly, that no will should be made in favour of any of the legal heirs without taking the consent of other heirs. Thirdly, a will

cannot be made to deprive an heir of his entitlement or to give him less than his due share. (Al-Shaukani, op. cit., vol. VI, pp. 31, 35.)

67. Qur'an, IV, 5, 3.

68. Ibn al-'Arabi, op. cit., vol. I, p. 123; ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an, vol. I, p. 482; al-Jassas, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 72, 73.

69. By this is meant the expenditure on the administration and defence of the Islamic State. The Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) and his successors, the Caliphs drew their own subsistence and paid their officials (except those of the zakat department) from this source.

70. For explanation, see note 54.

71. Qur'an, LIX, 7-8.

72. Ibid., II, 219.

73. Ibid., II, 29; IV, 1; VI, 73; XIII, 16; XXXV, 3; LVI, 58-72.

74. Ibid., VII, 54; XX, 8; XXX, 26; XXXII, 5.

75. Ibid., II, 107; III, 154; VI, 57; XIII, 16; XVI, 17; XVIII, 26; XXV, 2; XXVIII, 70; XXX, 4; XXXV, 40-41; LVII, 5.

76. Ibid., II, 255, 284; III, 26, 83; V, 1; VI, 18; VII, 128; X, 65, 107; XIII, 9, 41; XVIII, 26, 27; XXI, 23; XXIII, 88; XXXVI, 83; LIX, 23; IXVII, 1; LXXII, 22; LXXXV, 13-16; XCV, 8.

77. Ibid., VI, 164; VII, 54; X, 31; CXIV, 1-3.

78. Ibid., III, 154; XII, 40; XLA, 10.

79. Ibid., VII, 54.

80. Ibid., V, 38-40.

81. Ibid., II, 216, 220, 255, 232; IV, 11, 176; VIII, 75; IX, 60; XXIV, 58-59; LX, 10.

82. Ibid., VII, 3; XIII, 37; XVI, 36; XXXIX, 2, 11-12; XL, 18; XCVIII.

83. Ibid., II, 229; LVIII, 4; LXV, 1.

84. Ibid., IV, 60; V, 44, 45, 46, 50.

85. Ibid., IV, 64, 65, 80, 115; LIX, 7.

86. Ibid., IV, 51; XXIV, 47-48; XXXIII, 36

87. Ibid., V, 48; XXXVIII, 26.

88. Ibid., II, 31; VII, 10; XXII, 65.

89. Ibid., VII, 69, 74, 129; X, 14.

90. Ibid., XXIV, 55; XXXV, 39; LXXXI, 17-24; LXXXIX, 6-11.

91. Ibid., C, 2; LX, 12; LXXXVI,

92. Ibid., XLII, 38.

93. Ibid., III, 118; IV, 59; IX, 16.

94. Ibid., II, 124; XVIII, 28; XXVI, 151-132; XXXVIII, 28; XLI, 13.

95. Ibid., II, 247; IV, 5, 83; XII, 55; XXXVIII, 20; XXXIX, 9.

96. Ibid., IV, 58

97. Ibid., IV, 59.

98. Ibid., IV, 58; VI, 48; XXXVIII, 26.

99. Ibid., LVII, 25.

100. Ibid., XXII, 41.

101. Ibid., XVII, 23.

102. Ibid., II, 188; IV, 29.

103. Ibid., XLIX, 11-12.

104. Ibid., XXIV, 27; XLIX, 12.

105. Ibid., IV, 148.

106. Ibid., III, 110; V, 78-79; VII, 165.

107. Ibid., III, 11.

108. Ibid., II, 191, 236; X, 99.

109. Ibid., VI, 108.

110. Ibid., XXIX, 46.

111. Ibid., VI, 164; XVII, 15; XXXV, 18; XXXIX, 7; LIII, 38.

112. Ibid., IV, 58; XVII, 36; XLI, 6.

113. Ibid., LI, 19.

114. Ibid., XXVIII, 4.
115. Ibid., IV, 59.
116. Ibid., V, 33; VII, 85.
117. Ibid., V, 2.
118. Ibid., IX, 38-41.
119. Ibid., VIII, 42, 58 ; IX, A ; XV I, 91-92 ; XV II, 34.
120. Ibid., XVI, 94.
121. Ibid., V, 8.
122. Ibid., IV, 90
123. Ibid., VIII, 61:
124. Ibid., XXVIII, 83.
125. Ibid., LX, 8.
126. Ibid., LV, 60.
127. Ibid.. II, 1,94; XVI, 126; XLII, 40-42.

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**A History of Muslim Philosophy Volume 1, Book 3:
Early Centuries (From The First/Seventh Century To
The Fall Of Baghdad)**

Part 1: Theologico-Philosophical Movements

Chapter 10: Mu'tazalism

Chapter 11: Ash'arism

Chapter 12: Tahawism

Chapter 13: Maturidism

Chapter 14: Zahirism

Chapter 15: Ikhwan al-Safa

Chapter 10: Mu'tazalism

Mu'tazilism by Mir Valiuddin, M.A Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy, Osmania University, Hyderabad Deccan (India)

The General Mu'tazilite Position

Subsequent to the times of the Companions of the Prophet of Islam, the Mu'tazilah creed made its appearance. It had its inception nearly two centuries after the migration (Hijrah) of the Holy Prophet to Madinah. The Mu'tazilites were thoroughgoing rationalists. They believed that the arbiter of whatever is revealed has to be theoretical reason.

Let us for a moment consider why the Mu'tazilites were so named. The story goes that one day Imam al-Hasan al-Basri was imparting instruction to his pupils in a mosque. Before the lessons were finished someone turned up and addressed him thus:

“Now, in our own times a sect¹ of people has made its appearance, the members of which regard the perpetrator of a grave sin as an unbeliever and consider him outside the fold of Islam. Yet another group of people have appeared² who give hope of salvation to the perpetrator of a grave sin. They lay down that such a sin can do no harm to a true believer. They do not in the least regard action as a part of faith and hold that as worship is of no use to one who is an unbeliever, so also sin can do no harm to one who is a believer in God. What, in your opinion, is the truth and what creed should we adopt?”

Imam al-Hasan al-Basri was on the point of giving a reply to this query when a long-necked pupil of his got up and said: “The perpetrator of grave sins is neither a complete unbeliever nor a perfect believer; he is placed mid-way between unbelief and faith—an intermediate state (manzilah bain al-manzilatain).”

Having spoken he strode to another corner of the mosque and began to explain this belief of his to others.³ This man was Wasil ibn `Ata. The Imam shot a swift glance at him and said, “I'tazala `anna,” i. e., “He has withdrawn from us.” From that very day Wasil and his followers were called al-Mu'tazilah, the Withdrawers or Secessionists.

Ibn Munabbih says that the title of al-Mu'tazilah came into vogue after the death of al-Hasan al-Basri. According to his statement, when al-Hasan passed away, Qatadah succeeded him and continued his work. `Amr ibn `Ubaid and his followers avoided the company of Qatadah; therefore, they were given the name of al-Mu'tazilah.

In brief, the word i'tizal means to withdraw or secede, and the Mu'tazilites are the people who in some of their beliefs were diametrically opposed to the unanimous consent of the early theologians or the People of the Approved Way (ahl al-sunnah). The leader of all of them was Wasil b. `Ata who was born in 80/699 at Madinah and died in 131/748.

Muslims generally speak of Wasil's party as the Mu'tazilites, but the latter call themselves People of Unity and Justice (ahl al-tawhid wal `adl). By justice they imply that it is incumbent on God to requite the obedient for

their good deeds and punish the sinners for their misdeeds. By unity they imply the denial of the divine attributes.

Undoubtedly, they admit that God is knowing, powerful, and seeing, but their intellect does not allow them to admit that these divine attributes are separate and different from the divine essence. The reason for this view of theirs is that if the attributes of God are not considered to be identical with the essence of God, "plurality of eternals" would necessarily result and the belief in unity would have to be given up. This, in their opinion, is clear unbelief (kufr). Unity and justice are the basic principles of the beliefs of the Mu'tazilites and this is the reason why they call themselves "People of Unity and Justice."

Now, from the basic beliefs of unity and justice a few more beliefs necessarily follow as corollaries:

1. God Almighty's justice necessitates that man should be the author of his own acts; then alone can he be said to be free and responsible for his deeds. The same was claimed by the Qadarites. The Mu'tazilites accepted totally the theory of indeterminism and became true successors of the Qadarites.

If man is not the author of his own acts and if these acts are the creation of God, how can he be held responsible for his acts and deserve punishment for his sins? Would it not be injustice on the part of God that, after creating a man helpless, He should call him to account for his sins and send him to hell?

Thus, all the Mu'tazilites agree in the matter of man's being the creator of his volitional acts. He creates some acts by way of mubasharah and some by way of tawlid. By the term tawlid is implied the necessary occurrence of an-other act from an act of the doer, e.g., the movement of Zaid's finger necessitates the movement of his ring. Although he does not intend to move the ring, yet he alone will be regarded as the mover.

Of course, to perform this act the medium of another act is necessary. Man creates guidance or misguidance for himself by way of mubasharah and his success or failure resulting from this is created by way of tawlid. God is not in the least concerned in creating it, nor has God's will anything to do with it.

In other words, if a man is regarded as the author of his own acts, it would mean that it is in his power either to accept Islam and be obedient to God, or become an unbeliever and commit sins, and that God's will has nothing to do with these acts of his. God, on the other hand, wills that all created beings of His should embrace Islam and be obedient to Him. He orders the same to take place and prohibits people from committing sins.

Since man is the author of his own acts, it is necessary for God to reward him for his good deeds and this can be justly claimed by him. As al-Shahras-tani puts it: "The Mu'tazilites unanimously maintain that man decides upon and creates his acts, both good and evil; that he deserves reward or punishment in the next world for what he does. In this way the Lord is safe-guarded from association with any evil or wrong or any act of unbelief or transgression. For if He created the wrong, He would be wrong, and if He created justice, He would be just."⁴

It is the creed of most of the Mu'tazilites that one possesses "ability" before the accomplishment of the act, but some Mu'tazilites (e. g., Muhammad b. `Isa and Abu `Isa Warraq) like the Sunnites are of the view that one has ability to act besides the act.

2. The justice of God makes it incumbent upon Him not to do anything contrary to justice and equity. It is the unanimous verdict of the Mu'tazilites that the wise can only do what is salutary (al-salah) and good, and that God's wisdom always keeps in view what is salutary for His servants; therefore, He cannot be cruel to them. He cannot bring into effect evil deeds. He cannot renounce that which is salutary. He cannot ask His servants to do that which is impossible. Further, reason also suggests that God does not place a burden on any creature greater than it can bear.

According to the Mu'tazilites, things are not good or evil because God de-clares them to be so. No, God makes the distinction between good and evil on account of their being good and evil. Goodness or evil are innate in the essence of things themselves. This very goodness or evil of things is the cause of the commands and prohibitions of the Law.

The human intellect is capable of perceiving the goodness and evil of a few things and no laws are required to express their goodness and evil, e. g., it is commendable to speak the truth and despicable to commit oneself to untruth. This shows that the evil and goodness of things are obvious and require no proof from the Shari`ah. Shameful and unjust deeds are evil in themselves; therefore, God has banned indul-gence in them. It does not imply that His putting a ban on them made them shameful and unjust deeds.

The thoroughgoing rationalism of the Mu'tazilites is thus expressed by al-Shahrastani in these words: "The adherents of justice say: All objects of knowledge fall under the supervision of reason and receive their obligatory power from rational insight. Consequently, obligatory gratitude for divine bounty precedes the orders given by (divine) Law; and beauty and ugliness are qualities belonging intrinsically to what is beautiful and ugly."⁵

From the second principle of the Mu'tazilites, the unity of God, the following beliefs necessarily result as corollaries:

1. Denial of the beatific vision. The Mu'tazilites hold that vision is not possible without place and direction. As God is exempt from place and direction, therefore, a vision of Him is possible neither in this world nor in the hereafter.

2. Belief that the Qur'an is a created speech of Allah. It was held by them that the Qur'an is an originated work of God and it came into existence to-gether with the prophethood of the Prophet of Islam.

3. God's pleasure and anger, not attributes, but states. According to the Mu'tazilites, God's pleasure and anger should not be regarded as His attributes, because anger and pleasure are states and states are mutable, the essence of God is immutable. They should be taken as heaven and hell.

The following is the summary of some more beliefs of the Mu'tazilites:

1. Denial of punishment and reward meted out to the dead in the grave and the questioning by the angels Munkar and Nakir.

2. Denial of the indications of the Day of Judgment, of Gog and Magog (Yajuj and Majuj), and of the appearance of the Antichrist (al-Dajjal).

3. Some Mu'tazilites believe in the concrete reality of the Balance (al-Mizan) for weighing actions on the Day of Judgment. Some say that it is impossible for it to be a reality and think that the mention made in the Qur'an of weight and balance means only this much that full justice will be done on the Day of Judgment.

It is clearly impossible to elicit the meanings of the words weight and balance literally, for deeds, which have been said to be weighed, are accidents and it is not possible to weigh accidents. Theoretical reason is in-capable of comprehending this. Substances alone can possess weight. Further, when nothing is hidden from God, what is the use of weighing the deeds? It has been mentioned in the Qur'an that the books of bad or good deeds will be handed over to us. This too is merely a metaphor. It means only our being gifted with knowledge.

4. The Mu'tazilites also deny the existence of the Recording Angels (Kiraman Katibin). The reason they give for this is that God is well aware of all the deeds done by His servants. The presence of the Recording Angels would have been indispensable if God were not acquainted directly with the doings of His servants.

5. The Mu'tazilites also deny the physical existence of the "Tank" (al-Hawd), and the "Bridge" (al-sirat). Further, they do not admit that heaven and hell exist now, but believe that they will come into existence on the Day of Judgment.

6. They deny the Covenant (al-Mithaq). It is their firm belief that God neither spoke to any prophet, angel, or supporter of the Divine Throne, nor will He cast a glance towards them.

7. For the Mu'tazilites, deeds together with verification (tasdiq) are included in faith. They hold that a great sinner will always stay in hell.

8. They deny the miracles (al-karamat) of saints (awliya'), for, if admitted, they would be mixed up with the evidentiary miracles of the prophets and cause confusion. The same was the belief of the Jahmites too.

9. The Mu'tazilites also deny the Ascension (al-Mi'raj) of the Prophet of Islam, because its proof is based on the testimony of individual traditions, which necessitates neither act nor belief; but they do not deny the Holy Prophet's journey as far as Jerusalem.

10. According to them, the one who prays is alone entitled to reap the reward of a prayer; whatever its form, its benefit goes to no one else.

11. As the divine decree cannot be altered, prayers serve no purpose at all. One gains nothing by them, because if the object, for which prayers are offered, is in conformity with destiny, it is needless to ask for it, and if the object conflicts with destiny, it is impossible to secure it.

12. They generally lay down that the angels who are message-bearers of God to prophets are superior in rank to the human messengers of God to mankind, i. e., the prophets themselves.

13. According to them, reason demands that an Imam should necessarily be appointed over the ummah (Muslim community).

14. For them, the mujtahid (the authorized interpreter of the religious Law) can never be wrong in his view, as against the opinion of the Ash'arite

scholas-tics that “the mujtahid sometimes errs and sometimes hits the mark.”

The Mu'tazilites and the Sunnites differ mostly from one another in five important matters:

- (1) The problem of attributes.
- (2) The problem of the beatific vision.
- (3) The problem of promise and threat.
- (4) The problem of creation of the actions of man.
- (5) The problem of the will of God.

Ibn Hazm says in his *Milal wa'l-Nihal* that whosoever believes (1) that the Qur'an is uncreated, (2) that all the actions of man are due to divine decree, and (3) that man will be blessed with the vision of God on the Day of Judgment, and (4) admits the divine attributes mentioned in the Qur'an and the Tradition, and (5) does not regard the perpetrator of a grave sin as an unbeliever, will not be styled as one of the Mu'tazilites, though in all other matters he may agree with them.

This statement of Ibn Hazm shows that the Mu'tazilites were a group of rationalists who judged all Islamic beliefs by theoretical reason and renounced those that relate to all that lies beyond the reach of reason. They hardly realized the fact that reason, like any other faculty with which man is gifted, has its limitations and cannot be expected to comprehend reality in all its details. The point does not need elaboration. As Shakespeare puts it, “There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philo-sophy.”

Some modern thinkers have recognized that there is a place for intuition in the field of comprehension and, as a corollary to this, have admitted the claim of revelation or wahi as a source of knowledge. That is why Iqbal exclaimed

“At the dawn of Life the Angel said to me
`Do not make thy heart a mere slave to reason.”

And probably on a similar ground Iqbal's guide, Rumi, offered the following meaningful advice

“Surrender thy intellect to the Prophet!
God sufficeth. Say, He sufficeth.
Beware of wilful reasoning,
And boldly welcome madness!
He alone is mad who madness scoffs,
And heeds not the agent of Law!”

Some leading Mu'tazilites

In presenting a bird's-eye view of the beliefs of the Mu'tazilites in the above paragraphs, it has not been suggested that these views were in their totality shared by all the leading Mu'tazilites. There were differences of opinion within themselves. For instance, Abu al-Hudhail al-`Allaf differed from his companions in respect of ten problems; Ibrahim ibn Sayyar al-Nazzam in thirteen; Bishr ibn al-Mu'tamir in six; Mu'ammarr ibn Khayyat `Abbad al-Sulami in four; and `Amr ibn Bahr al-Jahiz, in five. Abu al-Husain and his followers are called the “Mu'tazilites of Baghdad” and Abu

al-Jubba'i, his son Abu Hashim, and their followers were known as the "Mu'tazilites of Basrah." Below is given a brief account of the lives and ideas of some of the leading Mu'tazilites.

1. Wasil ibn `Ata

Wasil was born at Madinah in 80/699 and was brought up in Basrah. "Suq-i Ghazzal," a bazaar in Basrah, used to be his familiar haunt and on that account people associated its name with him. He died in 131/748. Wasil had a very long neck. Amr ibn `Ubaid, who was a celebrated Mu'tazilite, on looking at him once remarked: "There will be no good in a man who has such a neck."⁶ Wasil was althagh,⁷ i.e., he could not pronounce the letter r correctly, but he was a very fluent and accomplished speaker and in his talk totally avoided this letter.

He never allowed it to escape his lips, despite the great difficulty in avoiding it in conversation. He compiled a voluminous treatise in which not a single r is to be found. He would often maintain silence which led people to believe that he was mute.

Wasil was a pupil of Abu Hashim `Abd Allah ibn Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiy-yah, but in the matter of Imamate, as in some other matters, he opposed his master. Before becoming a Mu'tazilite he used to live in the company of Imam Hasan al-Basri.

His works are: Kitab al-Manzilah bain al-Manzilatain, Kitab al-Futya, and Kitab al-Tawhid. The first books on the science of al-Kalam were written by him. Ibn Khallikan has recounted a number of his works.

In his illustrious work al-Milal wa'l-Nihal⁸, al-Shahrastani says that the essential teachings of Wasil consisted of the following: (1) Denial of the attributes of God. (2) Man's possession of free-will to choose good deeds. (3) The belief that one who commits a grave sin is neither a believer nor an unbeliever but occupies an intermediate position, and that one who commits a grave sin goes to hell. (4) The belief that out of the opposing parties that fought in the battle of the Camel and from among the assassins of `Uthman and his allies one party was in error, though it cannot be established which.

(1) Denial of Attributes - Wasil denies that knowledge, power, will, and life belong to the essence of God. According to him, if any attribute is admitted as eternal, it would necessitate "plurality of eternals" and the belief in the unity of God will thus become false. But this idea of Wasil was not readily accepted. Generally, the Mu'tazilites first reduced all the divine attributes to two - knowledge and power - and called them the "essential attributes." Afterwards they reduced both of these to one attribute - unity.

(2) Belief in Free-will - In this problem Wasil adopted the creed of Ma'bad al-Juhani and Ghailan al-Dimashqi and said that since God is wise and just, evil and injustice cannot be attributed to him. How is it justifiable for Him that He should will contrary to what He commands His servants to do?

Consequently, good and evil, belief and unbelief, obedience and sin are the acts of His servant himself, i.e., the servant alone is their author or

creator and is to be rewarded or punished for his deeds. It is impossible that the servant may be ordered to “do” a thing which he is not able to do. Man is ordered to do an act because he has the power to do that act. Whosoever denies this power and authority rejects a self-evident datum of consciousness.

As ibn Hazm frankly said, the excellent work of the Mu'tazilites can be seen in the doctrine of free-will and that of promise and threat. If man were to be regarded as absolutely determined in his actions, the whole edifice of Shari'ah and ethics would tumble down.

(3) Intermediary Position of the Grave Sinners - On account of his belief that one who commits a grave sin is neither a believer nor an unbeliever but occupies an intermediate position, Wasil withdrew himself from the company of Imam Hasan al-Basri and earned the title Mu'tazilite. Wasil thought that the expression “true believer” is one which means praise.

The person who commits grave sins can never deserve praise; therefore, he cannot be called a true believer. Such a person has, nevertheless, belief in the Islamic faith and admits that God alone is worthy of being worshipped; therefore, he cannot be regarded as an unbeliever either. If such a person dies without penitence, he will ever stay in hell, but as he is right in his belief, the punishment meted out to him will be moderate.

As Imam al-Ghazali has pointed out in his Ihya' `Ulum al-Din misinter-pretation of the following verses of the Qur'an was the cause of the Mu'tazilites' misunderstanding:

“By (the token of) Time (through the ages), verily mankind is in loss, except such as have faith and do righteous deeds and (join together) in the mutual teaching of truth, patience, and constancy.”⁹

“For any that disobey God and His Apostle - for them is hell; they shall dwell therein forever.”¹⁰

In the light of these and similar other verses, the Mu'tazilites argue that all the perpetrators of grave sins will always stay in hell, but they do not think over the fact that God also says:

“But, without doubt, I am (also) He that forgiveth again and again those who repent, believe, and do right, who, in fine, are ready to receive true guidance.”¹¹

“God forgiveth not that equals should be set up with Him; but He forgiveth anything else, to whom He pleaseth.”¹²

The last quoted verse shows that in the case of all sins, except polytheism, God will act according to His pleasure. In support of this, the clear saying of the Holy Prophet of Islam can be cited, viz., “that person too will finally come out of hell who has even an iota of faith in his heart.”

Further, some words of God, e.g., “Verily We shall not suffer to perish the reward of anyone who does a (single) righteous deed,”¹³ and “Verily God will not suffer the reward of the righteous to perish,”¹⁴ clearly show that for the commission of one sin, He will not ignore a man's basic faith and deprive him of all the reward for his good deeds. Therefore, the general belief is that as the perpetrator of grave sins is by all means a true believer,

even if he dies without repentance, after being punished for his sins in hell and thereby purified of them, he will eventually enter heaven.

(4) Unestablished Errors - Wasil had firm conviction that out of those who fought in “the battle of the Camel” and “the battle of Siffin” and the killers of `Uthman, the third Caliph, and his allies, one party was definitely in error, though it cannot be established which.¹⁵

2. Abu al-Hudhail `Allaf

`Allaf was born in 131/748 and died in c. 226/840. He received instruction from `Uthman bin Khalid Tawil, a pupil of Wasil. He was a fluent speaker and vigorous in his arguments. He often made use of dialectical arguments in his discussions. He had a keen insight in philosophy. He wrote about sixty books on the science of Kalam but all of them have long been extinct.

`Allaf was an accomplished dialectician. The story goes that by his dialectics three thousand persons embraced Islam at his hand. We shall here speak of two of his debates. In those days there lived a Magian Salih by name who believed that the ultimate principles of the universe are two realities, Light and Darkness, that both of these are opposed to each other, and that the universe is created by the mixture of these two.

This belief led to a discussion between Salih, the Magian, and Allaf. Allaf inquired of him whether the mixture was distinct and different from Light and Darkness or identical with them. Salih replied that it was one and the same thing. `Allaf then said, “How could two things mix together which are opposed to each other? There ought to be someone who got them mixed, and the mixer alone is the Necessary Existent or God.”

On another occasion, while Salih was engaged in a discussion with `Allaf, the latter said, “What do you now desire?” Salih replied, “I asked a blessing of God and still stick to the belief that there are two Gods.” `Allaf then asked, “Of which God did you ask a blessing? The God of whom you asked for it would not have suggested the name of the other God (who is His rival).”

Wasil was not able to clarify the problem of divine attributes. In this respect his ideas were still crude. `Allaf is opposed to the view that the essence of God has no quality and is absolutely one and by no means plural. The divine qualities are none other than the divine essence and cannot be separated from it. `Allaf accepts such attribute as are one with the essence of God, or one may say, accepts such an essence as is identical with the attributes. He does not differentiate between the two, but regards both as one.

When one says that God is the knower, one cannot mean that knowledge is found in the essence of God, but that knowledge is His essence. In brief, God is knowing, powerful, and living with such knowledge, power, and life as are His very essence (essential nature).

Al-Shahrastani has interpreted the identity of divine essence and attributes thus: God knows with His knowledge and knowledge is His very essence. In the same way, He is powerful with His power and power is His very essence; and lives with His life and life is His very essence. Another

interpretation of divine knowledge is that God knows with His essence and not with His know-ledge, i.e., He knows through His essence only and not through knowledge.

The difference in these two positions is that, in the latter, the attributes are denied altogether, while in the former, which `Allaf accepts, they are admitted but are identified with God's essence. This conforms to the state-ments of the philosophers who hold that the essence of God, without quality and quantity, is absolutely one, and by no means admits of plurality, and that the divine attributes are none other than the essence of God.

Whatever qualities of Him may be established, they are either “negation” or “essentials.” Those things are termed “negation” which, without the relation of negation, cannot be attributed to God, as, for instance, body, substance, and accidents. When the relation of negation is turned towards them and its sign, i.e., the word of negation, is applied, these can become the attributes of God, e. g., it would be said that God is neither a body, nor a substance, nor an accident. What is meant by “essential” is that the existence of the Necessary Existent is Its very essence and thus Its unity is real.

`Allaf did not admit the attributes of God as separate from His essence in any sense. For he sensed the danger that, by doing so, attributes, too, like essence, would have to be taken as eternal, and by their plurality the “plurality of eternal” or “the plurality of the necessary existents” would become inevi-table, and thus the doctrine of unity would be completely nullified. It was for this reason that the Christians who developed the theory of the Trinity of Godhead had to forsake the doctrine of unity.

Among the “heresies” of `Allaf was his view that after the discontinuation of the movement of the inmates of heaven and hell, a state of lethargy would supervene. During this period calm pleasure for the inmates of heaven and pain and misery for the inmates of hell will begin, and this is what is really meant by eternal pleasure and perpetual pain. Since the same was the religious belief of Jahm, according to whom heaven and hell would be annihilated, the Mu'tazilites used to call `Allaf a Jahmite in his belief in the hereafter.

Allaf has termed justice, unity, promise, threat, and the middle position as the “Five Principles” of the Mu'tazilites.

3. Al-Nazzam

Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Sayyar, called al-Nazzam, was younger than `Allaf and it is generally known that he was `Allaf's pupil. He lived during the reign of Caliphs al-Mamun and al-Mu'tasim and died in 231/845. He was a peerless litterateur and poet. He studied Greek philosophy well and made full use of it in his works. His main ideas are as follows.

(1) Denial of God's Power over Evil - God has no power at all over sin and evil. Other Mu'tazilites do not deny the power of God over evil, but deny the act of His creating evil. In their opinion, God has power over evil, but He does not use it for the creation of evil. Al-Nazzam, in opposition to them, says that when evil or sin is the attribute or essence of a thing, then the possibility of the occurrence of evil or the power to create it will itself be evil.

Therefore, it cannot be attributed to God who is the doer of justice and good. Similarly, al-Nazzam holds that in the life hereafter too, God can neither mitigate nor add to the punishment and reward of the inmates of heaven and hell; nor indeed can He expel them from heaven or hell. As to the accusation that the denial of God's power over evil necessitates the affirmation that He is impotent against evil, al-Nazzam replies that this equally follows from the denial of divine action to create evil. He says: "You, too, deny Him the wrong act, so there is no fundamental difference between the two positions."¹⁶

God, who is Absolute Good and Absolute Justice, cannot be the author of evil. Besides, if God has power over evil, it will necessarily follow that He is ignorant and indigent. But this is impossible; therefore, its necessary consequence is also impossible. The sequence of the argument may be explained thus:

If God has power over evil, then the occurrence of evil is possible, and as the supposition of the occurrence of a possible thing entails no impossibility, let us suppose that evil did occur. Now, God might or might not have had knowledge of the evil which occurred. If we say that He did not have the knowledge of it, it would necessarily follow that He was ignorant; and if we say that He did have it, it would necessarily follow that He was in need of this evil; for had He not been in need of it, He would not have created it.

When a person is not in need of a thing and knows its inherent evils, he will have nothing to do with it, if he is wise. It is definitely true that God is all-wise; so when any evil is caused by Him, it necessarily follows that He needed it, otherwise He would have never produced it.

But since it is impossible to think that God needs evil, it is impossible to think that He creates it.

(2) Denial of the Will of God - Apart from the power of action and action, al-Nazzam does not admit that God has will, which has priority over both power and action. He holds that when we attribute will to God we only mean that God creates things according to His knowledge. His willing is identical with His acting, and when it is said that God wills the actions of men, what is meant is that He enjoins them to act in a certain way.

Why does al-Nazzam deny the will of God? He does so, because, according to him, will implies want. He who wills lacks or needs the thing which he wills, and since God is altogether independent of His creatures, He does not lack or need anything. Consequently, will cannot be ascribed to Him. There-fore, the will of God really connotes His acts or His commands that are con-veyed to man.¹⁷

(3) Divisibility of Every Particle ad infinitum - Al-Nazzam believes in the divisibility of every particle ad infinitum. By this he means that each body is composed of such particles as are divisible to an unlimited extent, i. e., every half of a half goes on becoming half of the other half. During the pro-cess of divisions, we never reach a limit after which we may be able to say that it cannot be further divided into halves.

Now, to traverse a distance, which is composed of infinite points, an infinite period of time would necessarily be required. Is, then, the traversing of a distance impossible? Does it not necessitate the denial of the existence of the movement itself? Among the Greek philosophers, Parmenides and Zeno had denied movement itself. They could not declare untrue the movement which is observable and is a fact, so they claimed that perception cannot reveal reality. They maintained that senses are not the instruments of real knowledge and are deceptive; and the phenomenal world is illusory; a mirage. The real world is the rational world, the knowledge of which is gained by reason alone in which there is neither plurality nor multiplicity, neither movement nor change. It is an immutable and immovable reality. But they could not explain how this illusory and deceptive world was born out of the real world. Thus their system of philosophy, in spite of their claiming it to be monism, ended in dualism.

Al-Nazzam did not accept the solution of these Greek philosophers, but to tide over this difficulty he offered the theory of tafrah. The word tafrah means to leap; it means that the moving thing traverses from one point of distance to another in such a manner that between these two points a number of points are traversed. Obviously, it happens when the moving thing does not cross all the points of a distance, but leaps over them. This indeed is an anticipation of the present-day doctrine of the “quantum jump.”

(4) Latency and Manifestation (Kumun wa Buruz) - According to al-Naz-zam, creation is to be regarded as a single act of God by which all things were brought into being simultaneously and kept in a state of latency (kumun). It was from their original state of latency that all existing things: minerals, plants, animals, and men, have evolved in the process of time. This also implies that the whole of mankind was potentially in Adam.

Whatever priority or posteriority there may be, it is not in birth but in appearance. All things came into existence at the same time, but were kept hidden till the time of their becoming operative arrived, and when it did arrive, they were brought from the state of latency to the state of manifestation. This doctrine stands in direct opposition to the Ash'arite view that God is creating things at all moments of time.¹⁸

(5) Materialism of al-Nazzam - For al-Nazzam, as for many before and after him, the real being of man is the soul, and body is merely its instrument. But the soul is, according to him, a rarefied body permeating the physical body, the same way as fragrance permeates flowers, butter milk, or oil sesame.¹⁹ Abu Mansur `Abd al-Qahir ibn Tahir, in his work al-Farq bain al-Firaq, has discussed this theory critically and has attempted to refute it.

Besides these philosophical ideas, there are what the orthodox called the “heresies” of al-Nazzam. For example, he did not believe in miracles, was not convinced of the inimitability of the Qur'an, considered a statute necessary for the determination of an Imam, and thought that the statute establishing the Imamate of `Ali was concealed by `Umar, that the salat al-tarawih was un-authorized, that the actual vision of the jinn was a physical impossibility, and that belated performance of missed prayers was unnecessary.

Among al-Nazzam's followers, the following are well known: Muhammad ibn Shabib, Abu Shumar, Yunus ibn 'Imran, Ahmad ibn Hayat, Bishr ibn Mu'tamir, and Thamamah ibn Ashras. Ahmad ibn Hayat who lived in the company of al-Nazzam held that there are two deities: one, the creator and eternal deity, and the other, the created one which is Jesus Christ son of Mary. He regarded Christ as the Son of God. On account of this belief he was considered to have renounced Islam. According to his faith, Christ in the hereafter will ask the created beings to account for their deeds in this world, and in support of his claim Ahmad ibn Hayat quoted the verse: "Will they wait until God comes to them in canopies of clouds?"²⁰ There is a tradition that, looking towards the moon on the fourteenth day of the lunar month, the Holy Prophet of Islam said, "Ye will behold your Lord just as ye behold this moon."²¹ Ahmad ibn Hayat twisted the meaning of this tradition and said that the word Lord referred to Jesus Christ. He also believed in incarnation for, according to him, the spirit of God is incarnated into the bodies of the Imams.

Fadl al-Hadathi, who was another pupil of al-Nazzam, had faith similar to that of Ibn Hayat. He and his followers believed in transmigration. According to them, in another world God created animals mature and wise, bestowed on them innumerable blessings, and conferred on them many sciences too. God then desired to put them to a test and so commanded them to offer thanks to Him for His gifts. Some obeyed His command and some did not.

He rewarded His thankful creatures by giving them heaven and condemned the ungrateful ones to hell. There were some among them who had partly obeyed the divine command and partly not obeyed it. They were sent to the world, were given filthy bodies, and, according to the magnitude of their sins, sorrow and pain, joy and pleasure.

Those who had not sinned much and had obeyed most of God's commands were given lovely faces and mild punishment. But those who did only a few good deeds and committed a large number of sins were given ugly faces, and were subjected to severe tribulations. So long as an animal is not purified of all its sins, it will be always changing its forms.

4. Bishr ibn al-Mu'tamir

One of the celebrated personalities of al-Nazzam's circle is Bishr ibn al-Mu'tamir. The exact date of his birth is not known, but his date of death is 210/825.

Bishr made the "Theory of Generated Acts" (tawlid) current among the Mu'tazilites. The Mu'tazilites believe in free-will. They admit that man is the author of his voluntary actions. Some actions arise by way of mubasharah, i. e., they are created directly by man, but some actions arise by way of tawlid, i.e., they necessarily result from the acts done by way of mubasharah.

Throwing of a stone in water, for example, necessitates the appearance of ripples. Even if the movement of the ripples is not intended by the stone--thrower, yet he is rightly regarded as its agent. Similarly, man is the creator of his deeds and misdeeds by way of mubasharah, and all the consequential

actions necessarily result by way of tawlid. Neither type of actions is due to divine activity.

Bishr regards the will of God as His grace and divides it into two attributes: the attribute of essence and the attribute of action. Through the attribute of essence He wills all His actions as well as men's good deeds. He is absolutely wise, and in consequence His will is necessarily concerned with that which is suitable and salutary. The attribute of action also is of two kinds. If actions are concerned with God, they would imply creation, and if concerned with men, they would mean command.

According to Bishr, God could have made a different world, better than the present one, in which all might have attained salvation. But in opposition to the common Mu'tazilite belief, Bishr held that God was not bound to create such a world. All that was necessary for God to do was that He should have bestowed upon man free-will and choice, and after that it was sufficient to bestow reason for his guidance to discover divine revelation and the laws of nature, and combining reason with choice, attain salvation.

Mu'tamir's pupil Abu Musa Isa bin Sabih, nicknamed Mizdar, was a very pious man and was given the title of the hermit of the Mu'tazilites. He held some very peculiar views. God, he thought, could act tyrannically and lie, and this would not make His lordship imperfect. The style of the Qur'an is not inimitable; a work like it or even better than it can be produced. A person who admits that God can be seen by the eye, though without form, is an unbeliever, and he who is doubtful about the unbelief of such a person is also an unbeliever.

5. Mu'ammār

Mu'ammār's full name was Mu'ammār ibn `Abbad al-Sulami. Neither the date of his birth nor that of his death can be determined precisely. According to some, he died in 228/842.

To a great extent Mu'ammār's ideas tally with those of the other Mu'tazilites, but he resorts to great exaggeration in the denial of the divine attributes and in the Theory of Predestination.

The following is the gist of his ideas.

(1) Denial of Divine Knowledge - Mu'ammār maintains that the essence of God is free from every aspect of plurality. He is of the view that if we believe in the attributes of God, then God's essence becomes plural; therefore, he denies all the attributes, and in this denial he is so vehement that he says that God knows neither Himself nor anyone else, for knowing (or knowledge) is something either within or without God.

In the first case, it necessarily follows that the knower and the known are one and the same, which is impossible, for it is necessary that the known should be other than and distinct from the knower. If knowledge is not something within God, and the known is separate from the knower, it means that God's essence is dual. Further, it follows also that God's knowledge is dependent on and is in need of an "other." Consequently, His absoluteness is entirely denied.

By Mu'ammār's times, more and more people were taking interest in philo-sophy and Neo-Platonism was gaining ground. In denying the attributes Mu'ammār was following in the footsteps of Plotinus. According to the basic assumptigns of Plotinus, the essence of God is one and absolute. God is so transcendent that whatever we say of Him merely limits Him. Hence we cannot attribute to Him beauty, goodness, thought, or will, for all such attri-butes are limitations and imperfections. We cannot say what He is, but only what He is not. As a poet has said, He is

“The One whom the reason does not know,
The Eternal, the Absolute whom neither senses know nor fancy.
He is such a One, who cannot be counted He is such a Pure Being!”

It is universally believed in Islam that human reason, understanding, senses, or fancy cannot fathom the essence of God or the reality of His attributes or His origin. Says `Attar:

“Why exert to probe the essence of God?
Why strain thyself by stretching thy limitations?
When thou canst not catch even the essence of an atom,
How canst thou claim to know the essence of God Himself?”

To reflect on the essence of God has been regarded as “illegitimate thinking.” The Prophet of Islam is reported to have said: “We are all fools in the matter of the gnosis of the essence of God.”²² Therefore, he has warned the thinkers thus: “Don't indulge in speculating on the nature of God lest ye may be destroyed.”²³ He has said about himself: “I have not known Thee to the extent that Thy knowledge demands !”²⁴

Hafiz has expressed the same idea in his own words thus

“Take off thy net; thou canst not catch ‘anqa²⁵
For that is like attempting to catch the air!”

(2) Denial of Divine Will - Mu'ammār says that, like knowledge, will too cannot be attributed to the essence of God. Nor can His will be regarded as eternal, because eternity expresses temporal priority and sequence and God transcends time. When we say that the will of God is eternal, we mean only that the aspects of the essence of God, like His essence, transcend time.

(3) God as the Creator of Substances and not of Accidents - According to Mu'ammār, God is the creator of the world, but He did not create anything except bodies. Accidents are the innovations of bodies created either (i) by nature, e. g., burning from fire, heat from the sun, or (ii) by free choice, such as the actions of men and animals. In brief, God creates matter and then keeps Himself aloof from it. Afterwards He is not concerned at all with the changes that are produced through matter, whether they may be natural or voluntary. God is the creator of bodies, not of accidents which flow out of the bodies as their effects.²⁶

(4) Mu'ammār regards man as something other than the sensible body. Man is living, knowing, able to act, and possesses free-will. It is not man him-self who moves or keeps quiet, or is coloured, or sees, or touches, or changes from place to place; nor does one place contain him to the exclusion of another, because he has neither length nor breadth, neither weight nor depth; in short, he is something other than the body.

6. Thamamah

Thamamah ibn Ashras al-Numayri lived during the reign of Caliphs Harun al-Rashid and al-Mamun. He was in those days the leader of the Qadarites. Harun al-Rashid imprisoned him on the charge of heresy, but he was in the good books of al-Mamun and was released by him. He died in 213/828. The following is the substance of his ideas.

(1) As good and evil are necessarily known through the intellect and God is good, the gnosis of God is an intellectual necessity. Had there been no Shari'ah, that is, had we not acquired the gnosis of God through the prophets, even then it would have been necessitated by the intellect.

(2) The world being necessitated by the nature of God, it has, like God, existed from eternity and will last till eternity. Following in the footsteps of Aristotle, he thinks that the world is eternal (qadim) and not originated (hadith) and regards God as creating things by the necessity of His nature and not by will and choice.

(3) Bishr ibn al-Mu'tamir, who had put into usage the theory of generated acts among the Mu'tazilites, was wrong in thinking that men are not directly but only indirectly the authors of such acts. Neither God nor man is the author of generated acts; they just happen without any author. Man is not their author, for otherwise when a deed has been generated after a man's death, he, as a dead man, will have to be taken as its author. God cannot be regarded as the author of these acts, for some generated acts are evil and evil cannot be attributed to God.

(4) Christians, Jews, and Magians, after they are dead, will all become dust. They will neither go to heaven nor to hell. Lower animals and children also will be treated in the same manner. The unbeliever, who does not possess and is not keen to possess the gnosis of his Creator, is not under the obligation to know Him. He is quite helpless and resembles the lower animals.

7. Al-Jahiz

Amr ibn Bahr al-Jahiz, a contemporary of Mu'ammara, was a pupil of al-Nazzam and was himself one of the Imams of the Mu'tazilites. Both the master and the disciple, it was held, were almost of one mind. Al-Jahiz had drunk deep of Greek philosophy. He had a keen sense of humour and was a good anecdotist. He usually lived in the company of the Caliphs of Baghdad. His permanent residence was the palace of Ibn Zayyat, the Prime Minister of the Caliph Mutawakkil.

When Ibn Zayyat was put to death by the orders of the Caliph, Jahiz too was imprisoned. He was released after some time. He was the ugliest of men; his eyes protruded out, and children were frightened at his very sight. In his last years he had a stroke of paralysis. He died in his nine-tieth year at Basrah in 255/869. During his illness he would often recite the following couplets

“Dost thou hope in old age to look like what you were in youth?

Thy heart belieth thee: an old garment never turns into a new one.”

He was the author of a number of books out of which the following are noteworthy: Kitab al-Bayan, Kitab al-Hayawan, and Kitab al-Ghilman. He also wrote a book dealing with Muslim sects.

It was the belief of al-Jahiz that all knowledge comes by nature, and it is an activity of man in which he has no choice. He was a scientist-philosopher. In the introduction to his Kitab al-Hayawan, he writes that he is inspired by the philosophical spirit which consists in deriving knowledge from sense-experience and reason. It employs observation, comparison, and experiment as methods of investigation. He experimented on different species of animals, sometimes by cutting their organs, sometimes even by poisoning them, in order to see what effects were thus produced on animal organism.

In this respect he was the precursor of Bacon whom he anticipated seven and a half centuries earlier. Al-Jahiz did not, however, base knowledge on sense-experience alone. Since sense-experience is sometimes likely to give false reports, it needs the help of reason. In fact, in knowledge reason has to play the decisive role. He Says, "You should not accept whatever your eyes tell you; follow the lead of reason. Every fact is determined by two factors: one apparent, and that is sensory; the other hidden, and that is reason; and in reality reason is the final determinant."

According to al-Jahiz, the will is not an attribute of man, for attributes are continually subject to change, but the will is non-changing and non-temporal.

He holds that the sinners will not be condemned to hell permanently but will naturally turn into fire. God will not send anybody to hell, but the fire of hell by its very nature will draw the sinners towards itself. Al-Jahiz denies that God can commit a mistake or that an error can be imputed to Him. Al-Jahiz, also denies the vision of God.

8. Al-Jubba'i

Abu 'Ali al-Jubba'i was born in 235/849 at Jubba, a town in Khuzistan. His patronymic name is Abu `Ali and his descent is traced to Hamran, a slave of `Uthman. Al-Jubba'i belonged to the later Mu'tazilites. He was the teacher of Abu al-Hasan al-Ash`ari and a pupil of Abu Ya'qub bin `Abd Allah al-Shahham who was the leader of the Mu'tazilites in Basrah.

Once there was a discussion between him and Imam al-Ash`ari in respect of the Theory of the Salutary to which reference has already been made in the foregoing pages. The story goes that one day he asked Imam al-Ash'ari: "What do you mean by obedience?" The Imam replied, "Assent to a command," and then asked for al-Jubba'i's own opinion in this matter.

Al-Jubba'i said, "The essence of obedience, according to me, is agreement to the will, and whoever fulfils the will of another obeys him." The Imam answered, "According to this, one must conclude that God is obedient to His servant if He fulfils his will." Al-Jubba'i granted this. The Imam said, "You differ from the community of Muslims and you

blaspheme the Lord of the worlds. For if God is obedient to His servant, then He must be subject to him, but God is above this.”

Al-Jubba'i further claimed that the names of God are subject to the regular rules of grammar. He, therefore, considered it possible to derive a name for Him from every deed which He performs. On this Imam al-Ash`ari said that, according to this view, God should be named “the producer of pregnancy among women,” because he creates pregnancy in them. Al-Jubba'i could not escape this conclusion. The Imam added: “This heresy of yours is worse than that of the Christians in calling God the father of Jesus, although even they do not hold that He produced pregnancy in Mary.”²⁷ The following are other notable views of al-Jubba'i.

(1) Like other Mu'tazilites, he denies the divine attributes. He holds that the very essence of God is knowing; no attribute of knowledge can be attributed to Him so as to subsist besides His essence. Nor is there any “state” which enables Him to acquire the “state of knowing.” Unlike al-Jubba'i, his son abu Hashim did believe in “states.” To say that God is all-hearing and all-seeing really means that God is alive and there is no defect of any kind in Him. The attributes of hearing and seeing in God originate at the time of the origination of what is seen and what is heard.

(2) Al-Jubba'i and the other Mu'tazilites regard the world as originated and the will of God as the cause of its being originated; they also think that the will of God too is something originated, for if the temporal will is regarded as subsisting in God, He will have to be regarded as the “locus of temporal events.” This view he held against the Karramites who claimed that the will subsists in God Himself, is eternal and instrumental in creating the world which is originated, and, therefore, not eternal.

Against al-Jubba'i it has been held that independent subsistence of the will is entirely incomprehensible, for it tantamounts to saying that an attribute exists without its subject or an accident exists without some substance. Besides, it means that God who has the will is devoid of it, i.e., does not have it - a clear contradiction.

(3) For al-Jubba'i the speech of God is compounded of letters and sound: and God creates it in somebody. The speaker is He Himself and not the body in which it subsists. Such speech will necessarily be a thing originated. Therefore, the speech of God is a thing originated and not eternal.

(4) Like other Mu'tazilites, al-Jubba'i denies the physical vision of God in the hereafter, for that, according to him, is impossible. It is impossible because whatever is not physical cannot fulfil the conditions of vision.

(5) He equally agrees with other Mu'tazilites regarding the gnosis of God, the knowledge of good and evil, and the destiny of those who commit grave sins. With them he holds that man is the author of his own actions and that it lies in his power to produce good or evil or commit sins and wrongs, and that it is compulsory for God to punish the sinner and reward the obedient.

(6) In the matter of Imamate, al-Jubba'i supports the belief of the Sunnites, viz., the appointment of an Imam is to be founded on catholic consent.

9. Abu Hashim

Al-Jubba'is son, Abu Hashim `Abd al-Salam, was born in Basrah in 247/861 and died in 321/933. In literature he eclipsed al-Jubba'i. Both of them under-took new researches in the problems of Kalam. In general, Abu Hashim agreed with his father, but in the matter of divine attributes he widely differed from him.

Many Muslim thinkers of the time believed that the attributes of God are eternal and inherent in His essence. Contrary to this belief, the Shi'ites and the followers of the Greek philosophers held that it is by virtue of His essence that God has knowledge. He does not know by virtue of His knowledge. The divine essence, which is without quality and quantity, is one and in no way does it admit of plurality.

According to the Mu'tazilites, attributes con-stitute the essence of God, i.e., God possesses knowledge due to the attribute of knowledge, but this attribute is identical with His essence. God knows by virtue of His knowledge and knowledge is His essence; similarly, He is omni-potent by virtue of His power, etc. Al-Jubba'is theory is that though God knows according to His essence, yet knowing is neither an attribute nor a state, owing to which God may be called a knower.

As a solution to this problem, Abu Hashim presents the conception of "state." He says that we know essence and know it in different states. The states go on changing, but the essence remains the same. These states are in themselves inconceivable; they are known through their relation to essence. They are different from the essence, but are not found apart from the essence. To quote his own words, "A state-in-itself is neither existent nor non-existent, neither unknown nor known, neither eternal nor contingent; it cannot be known separately, but only together with the essence."

Abu Hashim supports his conception of states by this argument: Reason evidently distinguishes between knowing a thing absolutely and knowing it together with some attribute. When we know an essence, we do not know, that it is knowing also. Similarly, when we know a substance, we do not know whether it is bounded or whether the accidents subsist in it. Certainly, man perceives the common qualities of things in one thing and the differentiating qualities in another, and necessarily gains knowledge of the fact that the quality which is common is different from the quality which is not common.

These are rational propositions that no sane man would deny. Their locus is essence and not an accident, for otherwise it would necessarily follow that an accident subsists in another accident. In this way, states are necessarily determined. Therefore, to be a knower of the world refers to a state, which is an attribute besides the essence and has not the same sense as the essence. In like manner Abu Hashim proves the states for God; these states are not found apart but with the essence.

Al-Jubba'i and the other deniers of states refute this theory of Abu Hashim. Al-Jubba'i says that these states are really mental aspects that are not con-tained in the divine essence but are found in the percipient, i. e., in the perceiver of the essence. In other words, they are such generalizations or

relations as do not-exist externally but are found only in the percipient's mind. Ibn Taimiyyah also denies states. In this respect one of his couplets has gained much fame

“Abu Hashim believes in State, al-Ash'ari in Acquisition and al-Nazzam in Leap. These three things have verbal and no real existence.”²⁸

After a little hesitation, Imam Baqilani supported Abu Hashim's views. Imam al-Ash'ari and the majority of his followers disputed them and Imam al-Haramain first supported but later opposed them.

The End

Besides the Mu'tazilites an account of whose views has been given above in some detail, there were some others the details of whose beliefs are given in the Milal wal-Nahal of Shahrastani and al-Farq bain al-Firaq of al-Baghdadi.

They were `Amr ibn `Ubaid; abu 'Ali `Amr bin Qa'id Aswari who had almost the same position as al-Nazzam, but differed from him in the view that God has no power over what He knows He does not do, or what He says He would not do, and man has the power to do that; Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn `Abd Allah who shared al-Nazzam's views but believed that to God can be attributed the power to oppress children and madmen, but not those who are in their full senses; Jafar ibn Bishr and Jafar ibn Harb who held that among the corrupt of the Muslim community there were some who were worse than the Jews, Christians, and Magians, and that those who committed trivial sins would also be condemned to eternal hell; Hisham ibn `Amr al -Fuwati who had very exaggerated views on the problem of predestination and did not ascribe any act to God; and Abu Qasim `Abd Allah ibn Ahmad ibn Mahmud al-Balkhi, a Mu'tazilite of Baghdad known as al-Ka'bi, who used to say that the deed of God is accomplished without His will.

When it is said that God wills deeds, it is implied that He is their creator and there is wisdom in His doing so; and when it is said that He of Himself wills the deeds of others, all that is meant is that He commands these deeds. Al-Ka'bi believed that God neither sees Himself nor others. His seeing and hearing mean nothing other than His knowledge. Al-Ka'bi wrote a commentary on the Qur'an which consisted of twelve volumes. No one till then had written such a voluminous commentary. He died in 309/921.

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Notes

1. The name of this sect is ahl al-wa'id.
2. This group is called the Murji'ites. The same was the belief of Jahm bin Safwa also.
3. His companion, `Amr ibn `Ubaid, from the beginning, shared this view of his. The Khawarij too come under the same category.
4. Al-Shahrastani, Kitab al-Milal wa'l-Nihal, quoted by A. J. Wensinck in The Muslim Creed, Cambridge, 1932, p. 62.
5. Ibid., pp. 62, 63.
6. Siddiq Hasan, Kashf al-Ghummah `an Iftiraq al-Ummah, Matb'ah Lahjahani, Bhopal, India, 1304/1886, p. 19.
7. Ibid.
8. Cf. Urdu translation: Madhaq al-`Arifin, Newal Kishore Press, Luclmow, p. 135.
9. Qur'an, ciii, 1-3.
10. Ibid., lxxii, 23.
11. Ibid., xx, 82.
12. Ibid., iv, 48.
13. Ibid.; xviii, 30.
14. Ibid., xi, 115.
15. Al-Shahrastani. op. cit., p. 21
16. Ibid., p. 24.
17. Ibid.
18. T. J. de Boer, "Muslim Philosophy," Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.
19. Al-Shahrastani, op. cit., Chap Khaneh-i `Ilmi, Teheran, 1321/1903, p. 77.
20. Qur'an, ii, 120
21. The tradition: Innakum sataraua rabbakum kama tarauna hadh al-qamar.
22. The tradition: Kullu al-nas fi dhata Allahi humaqa'.
23. The tradition: La tufakkiru fi Allahi fatahlaku.
24. Ma 'arafnaka haqqa ma'rifatika.
25. 'Anqa' is a fabulous bird said to be known as to name but unknown as to body.
26. Al-Shahrastani has criticized this statement of Mu'ammarr, op. cit., p. 29.
27. Al-Baghdadi, op. cit., pp. 188-89.
28. Muhammad Najm al-Ghani Khan, Madhahib al-Islam, Lucknow, 1924, p. 132.

Chapter 11: Ash'arism

Ash'arism by M. Abdul Hye, M.A, Ph.D, Professor of Philosophy, Government College, Rajshahi (Pakistan)

Al-Ashari's Life and Work

Asharism is the name of a philosophico-religious school of thought in Islam that developed during the fourth and fifth/tenth and eleventh centuries. This movement was "an attempt not only to purge Islam of all non-Islamic elements which had quietly crept into it but also to harmonize the religious consciousness with the religious thought of Islam."

It laid the foundation of an orthodox Islamic theology or orthodox Kalam, as opposed to the rationalist Kalam of the Mu'tazilites; and in opposition to the extreme orthodox class, it made use of the dialectical method for the defence of the authority of divine revelation as applied to theological subjects.

The position at the end of the third/ninth century was such that the development of such a movement as orthodox Kalam was inevitable. The rationalization of faith, which developed, at the beginning of the second century of the Hijrah as a systematic movement of thought, in the name of rationalism in Islam or Mu'tazilite movement, was, in its original stage, simply an attempt to put Islam and its basic principles on a rational foundation, by giving a consistent rational interpretation to the different dogmas and doctrines of Islam.

But when the Mu'tazilite rationalists began to study the Arabic translations of the works of Greek physicists and philosophers made available to them by the early 'Abbasid Caliphs, particularly by al-Mansur and al-Mamun, they began to apply the Greek philosophical methods and ideas to the interpretation of the basic principles of Islam as well.

Some of the early 'Abbasid Caliphs, particularly al-Mamun, began to patronize the rationalism of the Mu'tazilites in public. The Mu'tazilite speculation, in the hands of the later Mu'tazilites, those of the second and third generations, under the influence of Greek philosophy and with the active support and patronage of the Caliphs, tended to be purely speculative and "absolutely unfettered, and in some cases led to a merely negative attitude of thought."¹

They made reason the sole basis of truth and reality and thus identified the sphere of philosophy with that of religion. They tried to interpret faith in terms of pure thought. They ignored the fact that the basic principles of religion are, by their very nature, incapable of logical demonstration or rational proof. The basic principles of Islam deal with supersensible realities and, as such, they must first be accepted on the authority of revelation.

The Mu'tazilites, in their zeal to judge everything by reason alone, destroyed the personality of God and reduced Him to a bare indefinable universality or to an abstract unity. This idea of an abstract, impersonal, absolute God could not appeal to the ordinary Muslims. The orthodox section of the people reacted strongly against the Mu'tazilite rationalism and began to consider the Mu'tazilites to be heretics.

The extreme rationalistic attitude of the later Mu'tazilites was followed by powerful reaction from the orthodox section of the people. This reaction was greatly aggravated by the unfortunate attempt of the Caliph al-Mamun to force Mu'tazilism (rationalist Kalam) on his subjects by introducing mihnah (a compulsory test of faith) in the Mu'tazilite doctrines, particularly in their doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'an. The whole of the third/ninth century was a time of reaction.

The orthodox Muslims (and among them were the Traditionists [the Muhaddithin]), the Zahirites (the followers of Dawud ibn `Ali), and the Muslim jurists (fuqaha') adhered strictly to Tradition and literal interpretation of the Qur'an and the Sunnah,² and refused to admit any "innovation" (bid'ah) in the Shari'ah (the Islamic Code). Any theological discussion was considered an "innovation" and was as such a cause of dis-pleasure to them.³ The reactionary influence of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal and his Zahirite followers was very strong at that period and the orthodox Muslims kept themselves safely aloof from the Mu'tazilites and the philosophers.

The reaction against the rationalist Kalam went to such an extreme that even the anthropomorphic verses of the Qur'an were interpreted by them in a purely literal sense. Malik bin Anas said: "God's settling Himself firmly upon His Throne is known, the how of it is unknown; belief in it is obligatory; and questioning about it is an innovation."⁴ Any speculation about sacred things was considered an innovation. Every dogma was to be believed in with-out raising the question how or why (bila kaifa).

But such an attitude of blind faith could not be maintained for any length of time. Islam, as a universal religion and as a living force, had to adapt it-self to new thoughts and to new surroundings. So, as time went on, there arose gradually a party, from amongst the orthodox section of the Muslims, who real-ized the necessity of putting Islam on a solid ground by advancing "reasons" for the traditional beliefs, of defending these beliefs against all sorts of attacks internal and external, and thus purging their faith of all the non-Islamic elements that had crept into it.

They founded the orthodox theology of Islam by using Kalam or the philosophical method in order to meet the dialectical reasoning of the Mu'tazilites. These theologians who employed Kalam for the defence of their faith were, therefore, known as the Mutakallimun (orthodox theologians).⁵

But, although these thinkers used philosophical method in their discussions, they obtained the primary materials from revelation. They deve-loped a rival science of reasoning to meet the Mu'tazilites on their own ground. In the beginning this new orthodox theological movement developed privately and secretly. It was at first a gradual unconscious drift. It could not come to the open for fear of public criticism.

Al-Junaid, for instance, had to discuss the unity of God behind closed doors. Al-Shafi'i held that some trained people might defend and purify the faith but that should not be done in public. Al-Muhasibi and other contemporaries of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal incurred his displeasure for defending the faith with arguments or reason. But gradually the movement

gathered strength and began to be openly preached almost at the same time in different places of the Muslim world-in Mesopotamia by Abu al-Hasan `Ali bin Isma`il al-Ashari (d. 330 or 334/941 or 945), in Egypt by al-Tahawi (d. 331/942), and in Samarqand by Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (d. 333/ 944).

But of these three, al-Ash'ari became the most popular hero, before whom the Mu'tazilite system (the rationalist Kalam) went down, and he came to be known as the founder of the orthodox philosophical theology, and the school founded by him was named after him as Ash`arism.

Al-Ash'ari was born at Basrah. Regarding his date of birth there is difference of opinion. Ibn Khallikan, in his discussion of the life of al-Ash'ari, mentions that he was born in 260 or 270/873 or 883 and died at Baghdad in 330/941 or some time after that.⁶

According to Shibli Nu'mani and Ibn `Asakir (the author of Tabyin Kidhb al-Muftari, on the life and teachings of al-Ash'ari), he was born in 270/873 and died in 330/941.⁷ He was buried between Karkh and Bab al-Basrah (the gate of Basrah). He was a descendant of Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, one, of the famous Companions of the Prophet.

Al-Ash'ari, in his early youth, came under the care of the great Mu'tazilite scholar of the Basrite school, Abu 'Ali Muhammad bin `Abd al-Wahhab al-Jubba'i, and, as a disciple of his, became an adherent of the Mu'tazilite school and continued to support its doctrines up to the age of forty. After that there happened a sudden change in his mind and one day he went to the Mosque of Basrah and declared: "He who knows me, knows who I am, and he who does not know me, let him know that I am Abu al-Hasan 'Ali al-Ash'ari, that I used to maintain that the Qur'an is created, that eyes of men shall not see God, and that the creatures create their actions. Lo! I repent that I have been a Mu'tazilite. I renounce these opinions and I take the engagement to refute the Mu'tazilites and expose their infamy and turpitude."

What brought about this sudden change in al-Ash'ari is not definitely known to us. Shibli in his `Ilm al-Kalam says that "the change came to him due to some directions which he had obtained in a dream..."⁸ Ibn Khallikan mentions in this connection the story of a public discussion in which al-Ash'ari met his old Mu'tazilite teacher, al-Jubba'i, on the problem of *salah wa'l aslah*, i. e., the problem whether God's actions are to be based on rational consideration and whether He is bound to do what is best for His creatures.

Al-Ash'ari came to al-Jubba'i and presented the case of three brothers, one being God-fearing, another godless, and a third having died as a child, and asked him as to what would be their positions in the next world. Al-Jubba'i could not give a satisfactory and consistent reply to that question and, on his having failed to justify rationally the Mu'tazilite doctrine of *salah wa'l aslah*, al-Ash'ari abandoned the Mu'tazilite camp.⁹

But whatever might have been the cause of this change, when he changed he was terribly in earnest. After the change he wrote a number of books and Ibn Furak says that the number amounted to three hundred. Ibn `Asakir Dimashqi has given the titles of ninety-three of them, but only a few have been preserved and are enumerated by Brockelmann.

His work al-Ibanah `an Usul al-Diyanah was printed at Hyderabad, Deccan (India), in 1321/1903 and a small treatise Risalah fi Istihsan al-Khaud fi al-Kalam was printed in 1323/1905 and reprinted at Hyderabad in 1344/1925. Al-Ash'ari's other famous works are al-Maqalat al Islamiyyin (published in Istanbul in 1348/1929), Kitab al-Sharh wal-Tafsil, al-Luma`, Mu'jaz, I`adah al-Burhan, and Tab'in.

Of these books the Maqalat al- Islamiyyin wa Ikhtilaf al Musalliyyin is the most authentic book on the views of different schools about religious dogmas and doctrines. Al-Maqalat was written much earlier than the other books on the same subject, such as Shahrastani's Kitab al-Milal wal-Nihal, or Ibn Hazm's al-Fasl fi al-Milal wal-Ahwa' wal- Nihal.

Ibn Taimiyyah said in his Minhaj al-Sunnah that the most comprehensive of the books he went through on the views of different people on the basic principles of Islam was al-Ash'ari's al-Maqalat al-Islamiyyin and that he (al-Ash'ari) discussed many of such views in details as were not even mentioned by others. Ibn al-Qayyim also spoke very highly of this work. In his Hadi al-Arwah and Ijtima` al-Juyush al-Islamiyyah, he said, "Shahrastani, `Abd al-Qahir Baghdadi, and other later writers on the subject simply copied from al-Ash'ari's book and did not discuss the views in details."

Al-Ash'ari's other famous book al- Ibanah `an Usul al-Diyanah seems to have been written by him just after his abandoning the Mu'tazilite views. In this book we find he is almost a Zahirite. The reaction against the Mu'tazilite speculation might have been very strong in his mind at that period. Al-Maqalat seems to be a later work. The Risalah fi Istihsan al-Khaud deals with the objections raised by the extremely orthodox against the use of Kalam, and the replies given by al-Ash'ari, justifying its use in matters of faith.

Al-Ash'ari's theology has been discussed mainly in these books. He had a good number of pupils who passed as famous theologians and who spread and developed his doctrines and dogmas. Some of those older Ash'arites were abu Sahl Saluqi, Abu Quffal, Abu Zaid Maruzi, Zahir bin Ahmad, Hafiz Abu Bakr Jurjani, Shaikh Abu Muhammad Tabari, and Abu al-Hasan Bahili. Some of the pupils of these older Ash'arites became still more famous and the best known among them are Qadi Abu Bakr Baqillani, Abu Bakr bin Furak, Abu al-Qasim al-Qushairi and abu Ishaq Isfra'ini and his pupil Abu al-Ma'ali al-Juwaini, known as Imam al-Haramain.¹⁰

Ash'arite Theology

Al-Ash'ari maintains an intermediary position between the two diametrically opposed schools of thought prevailing at the time. He had to

fight against both the opposing parties. At the one extreme were the Mu'tazilites who made reason in preference to revelation the sole criterion of truth and reality and, thus, passed slowly into comparatively innocuous heretics. At the other extreme were the orthodox groups, particularly the Zahirites, the Mujassimites (anthropomorphists), the Muhaddithin (Traditionists), and the Jurists, all of which were wholly opposed to the use of reason or Kalam in defending or explaining religious dogmas and condemned any discussion about them as innovation. Al-Ash'ari wrote his *Istihsan al-Khaud* mainly to meet the objections raised by the orthodox school against the use of reason in matters of faith.

In that treatise he says: "A section of the people (i.e., the Zahirites and other orthodox people) made capital out of their own ignorance; discussions and rational thinking about matters of faith became a heavy burden for them, and, therefore, they became inclined to blind faith and blind following (taqlid). They condemned those who tried to rationalize the principles of religion as 'innovators.'

They considered discussion about motion, rest, body, accident, colour, space, atom, the leaping of atoms, and attributes of God, to be an innovation and a sin. They said that had such discussions been the right thing, the Prophet and his Companions would have definitely done so; they further pointed out that the Prophet, before his death, discussed and fully explained all those matters which were necessary from the religious point of view, leaving none of them to be discussed by his followers; and since he did not discuss the problems mentioned above, it was evident that to discuss them must be regarded as an innovation."

They further contended that these so-called theological problems were either known to the Prophet and his Companions and yet they kept silent and did not discuss them or they were not known to them. If they knew them and yet did not discuss them, we are also to follow them in keeping silent, and if they could remain unaware of them we can also do so. In both cases discussion about them would be an "innovation." These were, in brief, their objections against the use of Kalam in matters of faith.

Al-Ash'ari, then, proceeds to justify theological discussions about matters of faith. He tries to meet these objections in three ways. First, by turning the objections of the orthodox against themselves by pointing out to them that the Prophet had not said that those who would discuss these problems were to be condemned and charged as innovators. Hence, their charging or condemning others as innovators was itself an innovation, for it amounted to discussion about matters which the Prophet did not discuss, and condemn the action of those whom the Prophet did not condemn.

Secondly, "the Prophet was not unaware of all these problems of body, accident, motion, rest, atoms, etc., though he did not discuss each of them separately. The general principles (usul) underlying these problems are present in general, not in details, in the Qur'an and the Sunnah." Al-Ash'ari then proceeds to prove his contention by citing verses from the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet, and thereby showing that the principles underlying the problems of harakah, sukun, tawhid, etc., are, as a matter of fact, present in the Qur'an and the Sunnah.¹¹

Thirdly, “the Prophet was not unaware of these matters and knew them in detail, but as problems about them did not arise during his life-time, there was no question of his discussing or not discussing them.” The Companions of the Prophet discussed and argued about many religious matters which appeared during their life-time, although there was no direct and explicit “saying” of the Prophet about them, and because of the absence of any explicit injunction from the Prophet they differed in their judgments about them.

Had the ques-tion, for instance, of the creation of the Qur'an, or of atoms or substance, been raised in so many words in the life of the Prophet, he would have definitely discussed and explained it as he did in the case of all those problems which were then raised. “There is no direct verdict (nass) from the Prophet, for instance, as to whether the Qur'an is created or uncreated. If to call the Qur'an created is an `innovation,' then, on the same ground, to call it un-created must also be an `innovation.’” Al-Ash'ari then concludes that Islam is not opposed to the use of reason; on the other hand, rationalization of faith is a necessity in Islam.

Al-Ash'ari discussed the main theological problems in his Maqalat al-Islamiy-yin and al-Ibanah `an Usul al-Diyanah. In these books al-Ash'ari selects a few principles which distinguish the Ash'arites from the Mu'tazilite school of thought. Later on al-Ghazali put them in a consolidated form in his Ihya¹² as the “Principles of Faith” or Qawa'id al-`Aqa'id, and Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Razi explained them more elaborately. The main problems about which the Ash'arites differed from the Mu'tazilites are:

- (1) The con-ception of God and the nature of His attributes.
- (2) Freedom of the human will.
- (3) The criterion of truth and the standard of good and evil.
- (4) The vision (ru'yah) of God.
- (5) Createdness of the Qur'an.
- (6) Possibility of burdening the creatures with impossible tasks.
- (7) Promise of reward and threat of punishment.
- (8) The rational or non-rational basis of God's actions.
- (9) Whether God is bound to do what is best for His creatures.¹³

The problems discussed by the Ash'arites in their system may be broadly classified into two categories: (i) theological, and (ii) metaphysical.

Fundamental Principles Of The Ash'arite Theology

1. Conception of God and the Nature of His Attributes

According to the Ash'arites, God is one, unique, eternal, existent Being; He is not a substance, not a body, not an accident, not limited to any direction, and not in any space. He possesses attributes such as knowledge, power, life, will; He is hearing and seeing and has speech.

About the nature of divine attributes two extreme views were held before the Ash'arites. On the one hand, there were the extreme Attributists (Sifatists), the Anthropomorphists (Mujassimin), and the Comparers (Mushabbihin), who maintained that God possesses all the attributes mentioned in the Qur'an and that all such attributes as God's having hands, legs, ears, eyes,

and His sitting firmly (istiwa) on His Throne must be taken in their literal sense.

Such a view of the attributes of God is pure anthropomorphism, implying God's bodily existence. On the other hand, there were the Mu'tazilites who held that God is one, eternal, unique, absolute Being, having no touch of dualism in Him. His essence is self-contained. He does not possess any attributes apart from His essence. His essence is, for instance, knowing, powerful, seeing, willing, etc. They denied the attributes of God as anything other than an addition to His essence.

The Ash'arites maintained a view which was, so to say, a reconciliation between the two extreme views. In agreement with the Sifatis and in opposition to the Mu'tazilites and the "philosophers" (those who were under Greek influence), the Ash'arites held that God possesses attributes in general. They classified the attributes of God into two main groups: (i) sifat-i salbiyyah, or negative attributes, and (ii) sifat-i wujudiyyah or existential or positive attributes. According to them, the sifat-i wujudiyyah, which they also called sifat-i 'aqliyyah or rational attributes, were seven: knowledge, power, will, life, hearing, seeing, and speech.

The extreme Sifatis asserted that even those attributes of God which imply His bodily existence are also to be taken in their true literal sense. As against them, the Ash'arites maintained that God possesses the apparently anthropomorphic attributes no doubt, but these should be understood not in their literal sense. They are to be believed in *bila kaifa*, without asking "how," and *bila tashbih*, without drawing any comparison.¹⁴

The Ash'arites here introduced a principle that the attributes of God are unique and fundamentally different from those of the created beings and as such should not be compared to them. This is known as the doctrine of *mukhalafah*, or absolute difference. This doctrine signifies that if any quality or term is applied to God, it must be understood in a unique sense and never taken in the sense in which it is normally used when applied to created beings. Because of the doctrine of *mukhalafah*, the Ash'arites held that we are not allowed to ascribe any attribute to God unless it is expressly so applied in the Qur'an. God's attributes differ from those of the creatures, not in degree but in kind, i. e., in their whole nature.

The Ash'arites, as against the Mu'tazilites, held that "God has attributes which inhere eternally in Him and are in addition to His essence."¹⁵ These attributes are eternal, but they are neither identical with His essence, nor are they quite different from or other than His essence. God is knowing, for instance, means that God possesses knowledge as an attribute, which is inherent in God, and although it is not exactly the same as His essence, yet it is not something quite different from and other than His essence. The Ash'arites, here, maintained a very difficult position. They were between the two horns of a dilemma. They could neither assert the eternal attributes of God to be identical with nor wholly different from the essence of God.

They could not agree to the Mu'tazilite view and assert the identity of the attributes with the essence of God, because that would be a virtual denial of the attributes. They could not also assert that these eternal attributes are

something absolutely different, or other than and separate, from God, as that would lead to multiplicity of eternals, and go against divine unity.

They, therefore, maintained that these attributes are, in one sense, included in and, in another sense, excluded from, the essence of God.¹⁶ It is common knowledge that the Asharites contended that essence (mahiyah), and attributes (sifat) are two different things and they cannot be otherwise in the case of God, the Supreme Being.

The Ash'arites made a distinction between the meaning or connotation (mafhum) of a thing and its reality (haqiqah). So far as their meaning is concerned, the attributes and the essence of God are not the same and as such the attributes are in addition to the essence of God, i.e., they have different meanings. The meaning of dhat (essence) is different from the meanings of different attributes.

God's essence, for instance, is not knowing or powerful or wise, but so far as their ultimate haqiqah (reality or application) is concerned, the attributes are inherent in the divine essence, and hence are not something quite different from or other than the essence of God.¹⁷

In support of the above view of theirs, the Ash'arites advanced the following arguments:

The analogical argument of the Ash'arites of the older generation: God's actions prove that He is knowing, powerful, and willing; so they also prove that He possesses knowledge, power, will, etc., because the ground of inference cannot differ in different things. What is true in the case of a created being must also be true in the case of the Divine Being.¹⁸ In the case of a human being, by "knowing" we mean one who possesses knowledge and even common sense and draws a line of demarcation between an essence and its attributes.

On the same analogy, distinction must be drawn between the essence of God and His attributes. The essence and the attributes should not be supposed to be blended in the Divine Being. Hence the attributes of God cannot be identical with His essence, as the Mu'tazilites held. But this analogical reasoning is very weak, for what is true of a finite being need not necessarily be true of an infinite being. But, according to the doctrine of mukhalafah, God's knowledge or power or will and, as a matter of fact, all His rational attributes signify quite different meanings when applied to created beings.

Secondly, they argued that if all the attributes of God are identical with His essence, the divine essence must be a homogeneous combination of contradictory qualities. For instance, God is merciful (rahim) and also revengeful (qahhar); both the contradictory attributes would constitute the essence of God, which is one, unique, and indivisible (ahad), and that is absurd.

Further, if the attributes are identical with God's essence, and if, for instance, His being knowing, powerful, and living is His essence itself, no useful purpose will be served by ascribing them to Him, for that would ultimately be the virtual application of His essence to itself, which is useless. Hence the divine attributes cannot be identical with the divine essence.

Thirdly, if the attributes of God are not distinct from His essence, the meanings of the different attributes will be exactly the same, for God's essence is a simple and indivisible unity. The meanings of knowing, willing, and living, for instance, will be exactly the same, and thus knowledge will mean power, or power will mean life, and so on.¹⁹

This also is an absurdity. These different attributes imply different meanings and hence they cannot be identical with God's essence. His essence is one and He possesses many attributes which eternally inhere in Him and, though not identical with His essence, yet they are not absolutely different from His essence.

2. Free will

On the question of free-will or on the ability of man to choose and produce actions, the Ash'arites took up again an intermediary position between the libertarian and fatalistic views, held by the Mu'tazilites and the Jabrites respectively. The orthodox people and the Jabrites maintained a pure fatalistic view. They held that human actions are predetermined and predestined by God.

Man has no power to produce any action. "Everything," they contended, "is from God." God has absolute power over everything including human will and human actions. The Mu'tazilites and the Qadarites, on the other hand, held that man has full power to produce an action and has complete freedom in his choice, though the power was created in him by God.

The Ash'arites struck a middle path. They made a distinction between creation (khalq) and acquisition (kasb) of an action. God, according to the Ash'arites, is the creator (khaliq) of human actions and man is the acquirer (muktasib). "Actions of human beings are created (makhlūq) by God, the creatures are not capable of creating any action."²⁰ "There is no creator except God and the actions of man are, therefore, His creation."²¹ Power (qudrah), according to them, is either (i) original (qadamah) or (ii) derived (hadithah). The original power alone is effective. Derived power can create nothing. The power possessed by man is given by God and as such it is derived.²²

Al-Ash'ari said, "The true meaning of acquisition is the occurrence of a thing or event due to derived power, and it is an acquisition for the person by whose derived power it takes place."²³ God is, thus, the creator of human actions and man is the acquirer. Man cannot create anything; he cannot initiate work. God alone can create, because absolute creation is His pre-rogative. God creates in man the power and the ability to perform an act. He also creates in him the power to make a free choice (ikhtiyar) between two alternatives - between right and wrong.

This free choice of man is not effective in producing the action. It is the habit or nature of God to create the action corresponding to the choice and power created by Himself in man. Thus, the action of man is created by God, both as to initiative and as to production or completion. Man is free only in making the choice between alternatives and also in intending to do the particular action freely chosen: Man, in making this choice and intending to do the act, acquires (iktisab) either the merit of appreciation and

reward from God if he makes the right choice, or the demerit of condemnation and punishment if he makes the wrong choice.

The Ash`arites, thus, in order to avoid the fatalistic position, introduced the doctrine of acquisition by which, they thought, they could account for man's free-will and lay responsibility upon him. Man has no free-will in the Mu'tazilite sense; he has no real and effective power, but has some derived power by which he acquires a share in the production of the act: In the case of voluntary actions of human beings, there are, so to say, two causes.

The action is the combined effect of the real cause, God, and the choice and intention of man, the acquirer, the possessor of ineffective power because of its being derived power. God creates in two ways: either with a locus (mahall) or without a locus. Human actions are His creation with a locus.²⁴

“God creates, in man, the power, ability, choice, and will to perform an act, and man, endowed with this derived power, chooses freely one of the alternatives and intends or wills to do the action and, corresponding to this intention, God creates and completes the action.”²⁵

It is this intention on the part of man which makes him responsible for his deeds. Man cannot take the initiative in any matter, nor can he originate any action. But the completion of the act is partially due to his intention: He, thus, acquires the merit or demerit of the action because of his intending to do a good or bad action. Man's free choice is, so to say, an occasion for God's causing the action corresponding to that choice.

In this the Ash`arites come very close to the occasionalism of Malebranche which was expounded in Europe eight centuries and a half later. This correspondence and harmony between the choice of man and God's creation, according to the Ash'arites, is not due to a harmony established by God previously, but because of His habit or nature to create the harmony whenever human action is done.

This, in short, is the solution of the problem of free-will offered by the Ash'arites. The Ash'arite view on this problem is not free from logical and ethical difficulties. It was really very difficult for them to reconcile the absolute determination of all events by God with man's accountability and responsibility for his deeds. Some, of the later Ash'arites, particularly Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, discarded the veil of acquisition in order to escape the charge of fatalism, and advocated naked determinism.²⁶

3. The Problem of Reason and Revelation and the Criterion of Good and Evil

-The Ash`arites differ from the Mu'tazilites on the question whether reason or revelation should be the basis or source of truth and reality: Both the schools admit the necessity of reason for the rational understanding of faith, but they differ with regard to the question whether revelation or reason is more fundamental and, in case of a conflict, whether reason or revelation is to get preference.

The Mu'tazilites held that reason is more fundamental than revelation and is to be preferred to revelation. Revelation merely confirms what is accepted by reason and, if there be a conflict between the two, reason is to

be preferred and revelation must be so interpreted as to be in conformity with the dictates of reason.

The Ash`arites, on the other hand, held that revelation is more fundamental as the source of ultimate truth and reality, and reason should merely confirm what is given by revelation. The Ash`arites prefer revelation to reason in case of a conflict between the two. As a matter of fact, this is one of the fundamental principles in which the rational Kalam of the Mu'tazilites differs from the orthodox Kalam of the Ash`arites.

If pure reason is made the sole basis or source of truth and reality, including the truth and reality of the most fundamental principles or concepts on which Islam is based, it would be a pure speculative philosophy or at best a rational theology in general and not a doctrinal theology of a particular historic religion, i. e., that of Islam in particular. Islam is based on certain fundamental principles or concepts which, being suprasensible in nature, are incapable of rational proof. These principles, first, must be believed in on the basis of revelation.

Revelation, thus, is the real basis of the truth and reality of these basic doctrines of Islam. This faith, based on revelation, must be rationalized. Islam as a religion, no doubt, admits the necessity of rationalizing its faith. But to admit the necessity of rationalizing faith is not to admit pure reason or analytic thought to be the sole source or basis of Islam as a religion. Reason, no doubt, has the right to judge Islam and its basic principles, but what is to be judged is of such a nature that it cannot submit to the judgment of reason except on its own terms.

Reason must, therefore, be subordinated to revelation. Its function is to rationalize faith in the basic principles of Islam and not to question the validity or truth of the principles established on the basis of revelation as embodied in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The problem of the criterion of good and evil follows as a corollary to the problem of reason and revelation. The problem of good and evil is one of the most controversial problems of Islamic theology.

The Mu'tazilites held that reason, and not revelation, is the criterion or standard of moral judgment, i.e., of the goodness and badness of an action. The truth and moral value of things and human actions must be determined by reason. They contended that moral qualities of good and evil are objective; they are inherent in the very nature of things or actions and as such can be known by reason and decided to be good or bad.

The Ash`arites, as against the Mu'tazilites, held that revelation and not reason is the real authority or criterion to determine what is good and what is bad. Goodness and badness of actions (husn wa qubh) are not qualities inhering in them; these are mere accidents (a'rad). Actions-in-themselves are neither good nor bad. Divine Law makes them good or bad.

In order to make the ground of controversy between the Mu'tazilites and the Ash`arites clearer, we may explain here the three different senses in which these two terms, good and evil, are used.²⁷

(i) Good and evil are sometimes used in the sense of perfection and defect respectively. When we say that a certain thing or action is good or

bad (for instance, knowledge is good and ignorance is bad), we mean that it is a quality which makes its possessor perfect or implies a defect in him.

(ii) These terms are also used in a utilitarian sense meaning gain and loss in worldly affairs. Whatever is useful or has utility in our experience is good, and the opposite of it is bad. So whatever is neither useful nor harmful is neither good nor bad.

Both the Ash'arites and the Mu'tazilites agree that in the two senses, mentioned above, reason is the criterion or standard of good and evil. There is no difference of opinion in the above two senses. But good and bad in the second sense may vary from time to time, from individual to individual, and from place to place.

In this sense there will be nothing permanently or universally good or bad; what is good to one may be bad to others and vice versa. This implies that good and evil are subjective and not objective and real. Hence actions are neither good nor bad, but experience or workability would make them so and, therefore, they can be known by reason without the help of revelation.

(iii) Good and evil are also used in a third sense of commendable and praise-worthy or condemnable in this world and rewardable or punishable, as the case may be, in the other world.

The Ash'arites maintained that good and evil in their third sense must be known through revelation, not by reason as the Mu'tazilites had held. According to the Ash'arites, revelation alone decides whether an action is good or bad. What is commanded by Shar' is good, and what is prohibited is bad. Shar` can convert previously declared good into bad and vice versa.

As actions by themselves are neither good nor bad, there is nothing in them which would make them rewardable (good) or punishable (bad). They are made rewardable or punishable by revelation or Shar'. As there is no quality of good or evil seated in the very nature of an act, there can be no question of knowing it by reason.

4. The Problem of the Eternity of the Qur'an

There was a great controversy over the question whether the Qur'an is created or uncreated and eternal. This question is bound up with another question whether speech is one of God's attributes or not. The orthodox section of the Muslims, including the Ash'arites, held that God has it as one of His seven rational attributes, and as His attributes are eternal, divine speech, i.e., the Qur'an, is also eternal.

As regards the eternity of the Qur'an, the Ash'arites adopted again an inter-mediary position between the extreme views of the Zahirites and the Mu'tazilites. The Hanbalites and other Zahirites (extreme orthodox schools) held that the speech of God, i. e., the Qur'an, is composed of letters, words, and sounds which inhere in the essence of God and is, therefore, eternal. Some of the Hanbalites went to the extreme and asserted that even the cover and the binding of the Qur'an are eternal.²⁸

The Mu'tazilites and a section of the Rafidites went to the other extreme and maintained that the Qur'an was created. They denied all attributes of God, including the attribute of speech, on the ground that if it be an eternal attribute of God, there would be multi-plicity of eternals, to believe which is polytheism and contrary to the basic principles of Islam. They further

argued that “the Qur'an is composed of parts, successively arranged parts, and whatever is composed of such parts must be temporal.”²⁹

Hence the Qur'an must be created. The Ash'arites maintained that the Qur'an is composed of words and sounds, but these do not inhere in the essence of God. They made a distinction between the outward and concrete expression of the Qur'an in language, and the real, self-subsistent meaning of it, and held that the Qur'an, as expressed in words and sounds, is, no doubt, temporal (hadath); but against the Mu'tazilites they asserted that the Qur'an in its meanings is uncreated and eternal.

The “self-subsisting meaning” eternally inheres in the essence of God. These meanings are expressed; their expression in language is temporal and created. It is so because the same meaning, while remaining the same, might be expressed differently at different times, in different places by different persons or nations. They further maintained that this meaning is an attribute other than knowledge and will and, as such, inheres eternally in the essence of God and is, therefore, eternal.³⁰

In support of this contention the Ash'arites advanced the following arguments:³¹

(i) The Qur'an is “knowledge from God”; it is, therefore, inseparable from God's attribute of knowledge which is eternal and uncreated. Hence it is also eternal and uncreated.

(ii) God created everything by His word kun (be) and this word, which is in the Qur'an, could not have been a created one, otherwise a created word would be a creator, which is absurd. Hence God's word is uncreated, i. e.. eternal.

(iii) The Qur'an makes a distinction between creation (khalq) and command (amr) when it says, “Are not the creation and command His alone?” Hence God's Command, His word or Kalam, which is definitely something other than created things (makhluq), must be uncreated and eternal.

(iv) Further, God says to Moses, “I have chosen thee over mankind with My apostolate and My word.” This verse signifies that God has speech. Again, Moses is addressed by God with the words: “Lo, I am thy Lord.” Now, if the word which addresses Moses is a created thing, it would mean that a created thing asserts that it is Moses Lord (God), which is absurd. God's word, therefore, must be eternal.

The Ash'arites further pointed out that all the different arguments advanced by the Mu'tazilites (and in Sharh-i Mawaqif as many as eight such arguments have been mentioned), in support of their view that the Qur'an is created, would apply only to the expressed Qur'an and not to the real Qur'an, the latter being the “meanings of the Qur'an.”³²

5. The Problem of the Beatific Vision

On the question of the beatific vision, the Ash'arites, true to their attitude of reconciliation, again tried to adopt a course lying midway between the extreme anthropomorphic view of the Zahi-rites and other orthodox Muslims on the one hand and the view of the Mu'tazilites and the “philosophers” on the other.

The extreme orthodox Muslims and the Zahirites, in particular, held that it is possible to see God and the righteous persons would actually have His vision as the chief reward for their good actions. They further held that God is settled firmly on His Throne, He exists in different directions, and is capable of being pointed out. The Mu'tazilites and the "philosophers" denied the possibility of seeing God with eyes, as that would imply His bodily existence, which is absurd.

The Ash'arites, as against the Mu'tazilites and the "philosophers," and in agreement with the orthodox class, held that it is possible to see God;³³ but they could not agree to their view that God is extended and can be shown by pointing out. They accepted the philosophical principle that whatever is extended or spatial must be contingent and temporal, and God is not an extended and temporal being.

This admission landed them into a difficulty, for if God is not extended and only extended things can be seen, God cannot be seen;³⁴ but this conclusion conflicts with their position that beatific vision is possible. So, in order to get out of this difficulty, they asserted the possibility of seeing an object even if it is not present before the perceiver.³⁵ This was a very peculiar and untenable position, for it repudiated all the principles of optics.

It is possible to see God even though our sense of vision does not receive the corresponding "impression" of the object on it. Besides, it is possible for God to create in human beings the capacity to see Him without the necessary conditions of vision, such as the presence, in concrete form, of the object itself in space and time, normal condition of the appropriate sense-organ, absence of hindrance or obstruction to perception, and so on; and though God is un-extended and does not exist in space and time, "yet He may make Himself visible to His creature like the full moon."

They further contended that the vision of God is possible without any impression on our sense-organ for another reason. There is practically no difference between a "sensation" and an "after -image" except that the sensation possesses an additional quality over and above the common qualities present in both, and this additional quality, i.e, impression on the sense-organ produced by the external object, does not make any difference in the perception of an object.

Hence, though this impression is missing in the case of seeing God, it may still be called "seeing." The weak-ness of this argument is apparent to any student of psychology, because an after-image is possible only when it is preceded by an actual impression of the object on the sense-organ. The actual impression of the object is, there-fore, a precondition of an after-image in the case of beatific vision too.

The Ash'arites were faced with another difficulty. The Mu'tazilites had pointed out that if seeing of God is possible, it must be possible under all circumstances and at all times, for this possibility is due either to His essence or to an inseparable attribute in Him. In either case, it should be possible at all times. And if it is possible at all times, it must be possible now; and if it is possible to see Him now, we must see Him now, for when all the conditions of "vision" are present, the actual seeing must take place.

The Ash`arites met this objection in a very naive manner by saying, "We do not admit the necessity of actual seeing taking place, even when all its eight conditions are present."

The Ash'arites supported their views on the basis of revelation. According to the Qur'an, Moses asked of God, "O, my Lord, show Thyself to me so that I can see Thee." Had seeing been impossible, Moses would not have said so, for, otherwise, it must be assumed that either he knew its impossibility or did not, and both the alternatives are absurd, because an intelligent person like him could not have been ignorant of this impossibility and could not have asked for what he knew was impossible.

Again, according to the Qur'an, God said to Moses, "If the mountain remains fixed in its place, you can see Me," and if the antecedent is possible the consequent must be possible. Here, evidently, the antecedent, fixity of the mountain, is in itself a possible thing. Therefore, the consequent, the vision of God, must also be possible. Some other verses also support the conclusion.³⁶

There are a few more controversial problems of secondary importance, in which the Ash`arites differed from the Mu'tazilites. These are, for example, promise of reward and threat of punishment by God; whether God can make His creatures responsible for the actions for which they have no ability; whether God's actions are bound to be based on rational considerations and on purpose; whether He is bound to do what is best for His creatures; and whether the knowledge of God or recognition of His existence is based on reason or revelation.

These theological problems of secondary importance are more or less the corollaries of the main principles in which the Ash'arites and Mu'tazilites differed.

The Ash'arites held that God is the only real cause of everything; He alone possesses real and effective power and this power is unlimited; His will is absolutely free - not determined by anything. Whatever power human beings apparently possess is given by God. Man does not possess any real and effective power. God, being absolutely free in His action, is not bound to act on rational purpose. He does not act teleologically for, otherwise, His actions would be determined by something external to and other than Himself and He would not remain absolutely free. External purpose would put a limit to God's omnipotence.

Like Spinoza, al-Ash'ari held that there is no purpose in the mind of God which would determine His activity. From this anti-teleological view it follows that as God's action is not teleological, He is not bound to do what is best for His creatures. He does whatever He wills. But as He is an absolutely intelligent and just being, His actions, as a matter of fact, are all full of wisdom.³⁷

As against the Mu'tazilites, the Ash'arites held that God can make us responsible for the actions which we have no power to do. The Mu'tazilites held that God cannot do so, because that would be an irrational and unjust act on His part. It is admitted by all schools of thought in Islam that power or ability of men to do a thing is given by God. But opinions differ on the question whether this power or ability is really effective in producing any

action. The Mu'tazilites and the Qadarites held that man's power is fully effective and can produce an action. But the Ash'arites maintained that, being derivative, it can have no effective force. Similar are their respective positions with regard to the ability to act.

This ability is no doubt given by God as an accident, but the Mu'tazilites, particularly Abu al-Hudhail `Allaf, held that this ability is given to man simultaneously with the performance of the act. But the Ash'arites maintained that it is given before the actual performance of the act,³⁸ but being a mere accident in man, it has only a momentary existence and is of no practical use to man in performing the act.

As a matter of fact, it ceases to exist when the actual action takes place. Man, therefore, does the act, practically without having the power and the ability to do so. He is held responsible for his actions because of his choosing freely one of the two alternative actions and intending to do the action so chosen. But neither his choice nor his intention can produce the action. It is God who creates the action and is thus its effective and real cause.³⁹

There is an almost similar controversy over the question of God's promise of reward to the virtuous and His threat of punishment to the wrong-doer. This was one of the five main problems with which the Mu'tazilite movement started.⁴⁰

The Mu'tazilites held that God is bound to fulfil His promises of reward and punishment. Every action, good or bad, must take its own course and be followed by its logical and normal consequence. A right action, therefore, must be followed by its reward and a wrong one by punishment. God has made promises in the Qur'an and He, being a just being, cannot do otherwise, i.e., He cannot punish the virtuous and forgive the wrong-doer.

On the other hand, the Ash'arites maintained that, being all-powerful and absolutely free in His will, God can punish His creatures even if they have not committed any sins or reward His creatures even though they have done no virtuous deeds. There is nothing binding on God; His will is not subject to teleological considerations.

It is by the inner necessity of His own nature that He fulfils His promises of reward to the virtuous and does not do otherwise. And it is in His infinite mercy that He may forgive any wrong-doer or vicious person, in spite of the threats of punishment for his vicious acts. This act of forgiveness will also be in accordance with His nature as the most generous and gracious being.

Ash'arite Metaphysics

Al-Ash'ari's interest was purely theological and his discussions did not contain much metaphysics.⁴¹ But the subsequent Ash'arites found it impossible to achieve their main object of defending the faith and harmonizing reason with revelation without making reference to the ultimate nature of reality.

Al-Ash'ari's theological system was, thus, considered to be incomplete without a support from metaphysics. The system was fully developed by the later Ash'arites, particularly by Qadi Abu Bakr Muhammad bin Tayyyib al-Baqillani who was one of the greatest among them. He was a Basrite, but he

made Baghdad his permanent residence and died there in 403/1013. He was a great original thinker and wrote many valuable books on theology and various other subjects.

He made use of some purely metaphysical propositions in his theological investigations, such as substance is an individual unity, accident has only a momentary existence and cannot exist in quality, and perfect vacuum is possible, and thus gave the school a metaphysical foundation.

About him a Western scholar has remarked: "It is his glory to have contributed most important elements to, and put into fixed form what is, perhaps, the most daring metaphysical scheme, and almost certainly the most thorough theo-logical scheme, ever thought out. On the one hand, the Lucretian atoms raining down through the empty void, the self-developing monads and pre-established harmony of Leibniz; and all the Kantian "things-in-themselves" are lame and impotent in their consistency beside the parallel Ash'arite doctrines; and, on the other, not even the rigours of Calvin; as developed in Dutch confessions, can compete with the unflinching exactitude of the Muslim conclusions".⁴²

The Ash'arites, being primarily interested in theological problems, kept their philosophical discussions mainly confined only to those questions which they thought had a direct or indirect bearing on these problems.⁴³ Willingly or unwillingly, they had to philosophize "in order to meet the contemporary philosophers on their own ground." But when they began philosophizing, they were very earnest and became great metaphysicians.

In dealing with the most important basic principles of Islam: (i) the existence of God, as the creator of the universe, and His unity and oneness, and (ii) the belief in the prophethood of Muhammad, they had to use certain proofs which necessitated some metaphysical and epistemological discussions. Hence they had to develop a theory of knowledge and a theory of reality, which were peculiarly their own. God, the ultimate principle, is, according to the Ash'arites, a necessary existent; His existence is identical with His essence.

In proving God's existence the Ash'arites used three arguments. Their argument from the contingent nature of motion is not of much importance to our discussion. The other two are:

(i) All bodies, they argued, are ultimately one in so far as their essence is concerned. But, in spite of this basic unity, their characteristics are different. Hence there must be an ultimate cause for these divergent characteristic, and that ultimate cause is God.

(ii) The world is contingent. Every contingent thing must have a cause; therefore, the world must have a cause, and as no contingent thing can be the cause, that cause must be God. The major premise (i.e., every event must have a cause) does not require a proof. The minor premise - the world is con-tingent - they proved in the following manner: Everything that exists in the world is either a substance or a quality. The contingent character of a quality is evident, and the contingency of substance follows from the fact that no substance could exist apart from qualities. The contingency of quality neces-sitates the contingency of substance; otherwise, the eternity of substance would necessitate the eternity of quality.⁴⁴

The Ash'arites believed in miracles which were considered to be the basis of the proof of prophethood and, in order to defend this view, they had to deny the laws of nature. They also denied causality in nature and made God the only cause of everything.

Now, in order to explain the full implication of the above arguments, it was necessary for them to develop a theory of knowledge and a metaphysics.

The world consists of things. Now, the question arises: What is meant by a thing, what is its nature, and how far do we know it?

Al-Baqillani defined knowledge as the cognition of a thing as it is in itself.⁴⁵ A thing is defined by the Ash'arites as "that which is existent." Everything is an existent and every existent is a thing.⁴⁶ So, according to the Ash'arites, existence, whether necessary or contingent, is the thing or the essence of the thing-in-itself and not a quality in addition to it, as the Mu'tazilites held.

Al-Jahiz, al-Jubba'i, and some other Mu'tazilites of the Basrite school defined a "thing" as that which is known,⁴⁷ and held that existence is a quality of it, added to its essence. The Ash'arites, as against these Mu'tazilites, contended that if existence is an additional quality, the essence-in-itself would be a non-existent and hence a non-entity and the subsequent-addition of the quality of "existence" to it would involve a clear contradiction in so far as it would make the non-existent existent.⁴⁸

This is an absurdity. The thing-in-itself which is the object of knowledge according to the Ash'arites, is, therefore, an existent thing or a body. Everything that exists in the world has a contingent existence and is either substance or quality. In this sense God is not a thing.

The Aristotelian categories of thought were subjected by the Ash'arites to a searching criticism. Only two of those categories, substance and quality, were retained by them. The other categories, quantity, place, time, etc., are nothing but relative characteristics (i'tibarat) that exist subjectively in the mind of the knower, having no corresponding objective reality.

Like Berkeley, the Irish philosopher, they also did not make any distinction between the primary and secondary qualities of objects. The world, therefore, consists of substance, on which the mind reflects, and qualities, which are not in the thing-in-itself but only in the mind of the knower. The qualities are mere accidents which are fleeting, transitory, and subjective relations, having only a momentary existence. A quality or accident cannot exist in another accident but only in a substance. No substance could ever exist apart from a quality. The substance, being inseparable from its accidents, must also be transitory, having only a moment's duration, just as the accidents are. Everything that exists, therefore, consists of mere transitory units (subjective), having only a moment's duration.

The Ash'arites, thus, rejected the Aristotelian view of matter as "a permanent potentiality (hayula) of suffering the impress of form (surah)," because a possibility is neither an entity nor a non-entity but purely a subjectivity. With inert matter, the active form and all causes must also go.

They, too, are mere subjectivities. This led them straight to the atomists and, as a matter of fact, they did become atomists after their own fashion.

In this connection we may observe that the object of the Ash'arites was, like that of Kant, to fix the relation of knowledge to the thing-in-itself; and they showed here a great originality in their thought. On this question they not only anticipated Kant but, in reaching the thing-in-itself, they were much more thorough than Kant. "In his examination of human knowledge regarded as a product and not merely a process, Kant stopped at the idea of 'Ding an sich' [thing-in-itself], but the Ash'arite endeavoured to penetrate further, and maintained, against the contemporary Agnostic-Realism, that the so-called underlying essence existed only so far as it was brought in relation to the knowing subject."⁴⁹

Ash'arite Atomism

The substances perceived by us are atoms which come into existence from vacuity and drop out of existence again. The world is made up of such atoms. The Ash'arite atoms are fundamentally different from those of Democritus and Lucretius. The Ash'arite atoms are not material; they are not permanent; they have only a momentary existence; they are not eternal but every moment brought into being, and then allowed to go out of existence by the Supreme Being, God, the only cause of everything in the universe. These atoms are not only of space but of time also. They are non-material or ideal in character. They resemble the monads of Leibniz.

But the Ash'arite monads differ from those of Leibniz in having no possibility of self-development along certain lines. Each monad has certain qualities but has extension neither in space nor in time. They have simply position, not bulk, and are isolated from and independent of one another. There is absolute void between any two monads. Space and time are subjective. All changes in the world are produced by their entering into existence and dropping out again, but not by any change in themselves.

The Ash'arite ontology necessitated the existence of God. Their monads must have a cause, without which they could not have come into being, nor could there be any harmony or connection between them. This cause must be a cause sui; otherwise there would be an infinite regress of the causal nexus. The Ash'arites found this cause in the free-will of God. It creates and annihilates the atoms and their qualities and, thus, brings to pass all motion and change in the world.

The Ash'arites were, thus, thoroughgoing metaphysicians. Being was all-important in their ontology. The will of that Being or God must, therefore, be the ground of all things. Hence they did not find any difficulty, as Leibniz did, in explaining the harmony and coherence among the isolated, windowless, and independent monads, constituting the one orderly world.

Leibniz had to bring in, in his monadology, a Monad of monads or God, and fall back upon the Theory of Pre-established Harmony to bring his monads into harmonious and orderly relations with one another, and this he could do only at the cost of his monadology, and by abandoning his pluralistic and individualistic meta-physics.

But the Ash'arites, consistently with their ontology, fell straight back upon God, and found in His will the ground of orderliness and harmony in the universe. They were, thus, more thorough and consistent than Leibniz in their theory of monads. The Ash'arite atomism approaches that of Lotze's, who in spite of his desire to save external reality, ended in its Complete reduction to ideality. But, like Lotze, they could not believe their atoms to be the inner working of the infinite Primal Being.

The necessary consequence of their analysis is a thorough going idealism like that of Berkeley. Their theory of knowledge reduced the universe to a mere show of ordered subjectivities which, as they maintained like Berkeley, found their ultimate explanation in the will of God. Their interest, as we have already pointed out, was mainly theological. Interest in pure monotheism was very strong with them. Their metaphysical and epistemological discussions were actuated by a pious desire to defend the idea of divine creations, to drive men back to God and His revelation and compel them to see in Him the one grand fact of the universe.

The Ash'arites are here more consistent than Berkeley. God, according to them, is the only cause in the true sense of the term. No created thing, having created power, could be the cause of anything.

The attitude of the Ash'arites towards the law of causation was sceptical. They denied objective validity of causality in nature. No created thing or being can be the cause of anything. Things or beings in nature do not possess any power or quality which could produce any effect. The so-called power which men and objects of nature seem to possess is not an effective power, for it is a derived power, not an original power which alone can produce effect.⁵⁰ Whatever power the creatures might possess must have been given by God, who alone possesses all real power. Being (God) is the only Ultimate Reality.

The things of the world are composed of indivisible units monads which, every moment, are created and annihilated; and it is God who creates and annihilates them and their qualities, thereby bringing about all the motion and change in the world. There is, thus, no such thing as a law of nature and the world is sustained by a constant, ever repeated activity of God.

There is no such thing as a secondary cause; when there is the appearance of such a cause, it is only illusionary. God produces the appearance of the effect as well as the effect. Things of the world do not possess any permanent nature. Fire, for instance, does not possess the nature or quality of burning; it does not burn. God creates in a substance "a being burned" when fire touches it.

The Ash'arites thus denied power in the cause as well as the necessary connection between the so-called cause and effect. Shibli mentions that the Ash'arites rejected the idea of causation with a view to defending the possibility of miracles on the manifestation of which, according to them, pro-phethood depended. The orthodox school believed in miracles as well as in the universal law of causation; but they also maintained that, at the time of manifesting a miracle, God suspends the operation of this law and thus brings about an exception.

Asha`ari, however, maintained that a cause must have always the same effect (i.e., the effect of one and the cause could not be different at different times). Having accepted this principle as formulated by their leader, the Ash'arites could not agree to the orthodox view and, therefore, to prove the possibility of miracles they rejected the law of causation altogether. According to them, there is no power in the antecedent to produce the consequent. "We know nothing but floating impressions, the phenomenal order of which is determined by God."⁵¹

Objection might be raised against the Ash'arite metaphysics that it es-tablishes in effect a relationship between God and the atoms, but relation-ships, according to the Ash'arites, are subjective illusions. In reply to this objection it may be pointed out that all relationship applies only to contingent beings or things perceived by the senses. It would not hold in the case of the Necessary Being, God, who is suprasensible. And according to their principle of mukhalafah, nothing which is applied to created things or beings can be applied to God in the same sense. God is not a natural cause but a free cause.

This is the Ash'arite system as completed by Qadi Abu Bakr al-Baqillani. It faced a strong opposition from the orthodox, particularly from the followers of Abmad bin Hanbal. Al-Ashari's opinions did not get much recognition outside the Shafi'ite group to which he belonged. The Hanafites preferred the doctrines of his con-temporary al-Maturidi who differed from al-Ash'ari in certain minor contro-versial points. Shibli has mentioned nine such points.⁵²

In Spain, Ibn Hazm (d. 456/1063) opposed the Ash'arite doctrines. The Saljuq Sultan Tughril Beg, who was an adherent of the Hanbalite school, treated the Ash'arites very badly, but his successor Sultan Alp Arsalan and especially his famous vizier, Nizam al-Mulk supported the Ash`arites and put an end to the persecution to which they had been exposed. Nizam al-Mulk founded the Nizamite Academy at Baghdad in 459/1066 for the defence of Ash'arite doctrines. It is under his patronage that Abu al-Ma'ali `Abd al-Malik al-Juwaini got the chance of preaching the Ash'arite doctrine freely.⁵³

The Ash'arite system could not obtain widespread acceptance until it was popularized by al-Juwaini and al-Ghazali in the East and by Ibn Tumart in the West. It was al-Juwaini who could legitimately claim the credit of making the Ash'arites' doctrines popular. His vast learning and erudite scholarship brought him the title of Dia' al-Din (the light of religion).

Al-Juwaini received his early education from his father, Shaikh Abu Muhammad `Abd Allah, and after the death of his father, he got further education from his teacher, abu Ishaq al-Isfara'ini, a great Ash'arite scholar. Al-Juwaini, in course of time, was recognized by the scholars of the time to be Shaikh al-Islam (the chief leader of Islam) and Imam al Haramain (the religious leader of Makkah and Madinah). For thirty years, he continued teaching and preaching the Ash'arite doctrines.

Al-Juwaini was the teacher of al-Ghazali. He wrote many books on various subjects. Some of these are: al-Shamil, on the principles of religion; al-Burhan, on the principles of jurisprudence; al-`Aqidat al-Nizamiyyah; and Irshad, on theology. He was born in 419/1028 and died at Nishapur in 478/1085.⁵³ Being the Shaikh al-Islam and the Imam of Makkah and Madinah, al-Juwaini's Fatawa (judgments on religious matters) used to be respected by people in general throughout the Muslim world; and for this reason, his writings got the widest circulation and, through these writings, Ash'arite doctrines became known everywhere.

One great theological result of the Ash'arite system was that it checked the growth of free thought which tended to dissolve the solidarity of the Islamic Shari'ah. The Ash'arite mode of thought had its intellectual results also.

It led to an independent criticism of Greek philosophy and prepared the ground for philosophies propounded by men like al-Ghazali and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi. Al-Ghazali is generally included among the Ash'arites and it is he who maybe said to have completed the Ash'arite metaphysics. It was he who, by giving a systematic refutation of Greek philosophy in his famous work, Tahafut al-Falasifah, completely annihilated the dread of intellectualism which had characterized the minds of the orthodox. It was chiefly through his influence that people began to study dogma and metaphysics together.⁵⁴

Strictly speak-ing, al-Ghazali was not an Ash'arite, though he admitted that the Ash'arite mode of thought was excellent for the masses. "He held that the secret of faith could not be revealed to the masses; for this reason he encouraged exposi-tion of the Ash'arite theology, and took care in persuading his disciples not to publish the results of his private reflection."⁵⁵

Al-Ghazali made the Ash'arite theology so popular that it became practically the theology of the Muslim community in general and has continued to remain so up to the present time.

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Notes

1. Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, p. 53.
2. Ahmad Amin, *Duha al-Islam*, p. 36.
3. Al-Ash'ari, *Istihsan al-Khaud*, p. 4.
4. Al-Shahrastani, *al-Milal wal-Nihal*, p. 50.
5. The subject originally was not called `Ilm al-Kalam. This name was given afterwards, during al-Mamun's time. See Shibli, *`Ilm al-Kalam*, p. 31.
6. Ibn Khallikan, *Wafayat al-A'yan*, p. 454.
7. Shibli, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Ibn Khallikan, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
10. Shibli, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-57.
11. Al-Ash'ari, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-9.
12. Al-Ghazali, *Ihya Ulum al-Din*, p. 53.
13. Shibli, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
14. Al-Ash'ari, *al-Ibanah*, p. 47.
15. *Idem.*, *al-Maqalat*, p. 291.
16. Abu al-`Ala, *Sharh-i Mawaqif*, p. 571.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 581-82.
18. Al-Shahrastani, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
19. Al-Ash'ari, *al-Maqalat*, p. 484.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 291.
21. Al-Ash'ari, *al-Ibanah*, p. 9.
22. *Idem.*, *al-Maqalat*, pp. 539-54.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 542.
24. Abu al-`Ala, *op. cit.*, p. 625.
25. Al-Shahrastani, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
26. Shibli, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
27. Qadi `Add and Sayyid Sharif, *Mawaqif*, vol. IV, p. 182; *Musallam al-Thubut*, p. 114.
28. Baihaqi, *Kitab al-Asma' wal-Sifat*, p. 198.
29. Qadi `Add and Sayyid Sharif, *op. cit.*, p. 601.
30. *Sharh-i Mawaqif*, p. 602; *al-Ibanah*, pp. 23-42.
31. *Al-Maqalat*, p. 292.
32. Dhahabi, *Mizan al-`Itdal* (Allahabad edition), pp. 179-93; *al-Ash'ari, al-Maqalat*, pp. 582-602.
33. *Al-Ibanah*, p. 9.
34. Shibli, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
35. *Sharh-i Mawaqif*, pp. 610-24.
36. *Al-Ibanah*, pp. 13-20.
37. *Al-Maqalat*, p. 252; Shibli, *`Ilm al-Kalam*, p. 59.
38. *Al-Maqalat*, p. 43.
39. Al-Shahrastani, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
40. Mas'udi, *Muruj al-Dhahab*.
41. Shibli, *op. cit.*, p. 57; Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
42. Macdonald, *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory*, pp. 200-201.
43. *Sharh-i Mawaqif*, p. 15.

44. Shibli, op. cit., pp. 87, 88.
45. Sharh-i Mawaqif, p. 15.
46. Ibid., p. 128.
47. Al-Maqamat, p. 520.
48. Sharh-i Mawaqif, p. 109.
49. Iqbal; op. cit., p. 57.
50. Sharh-i Mawaqif, p. 262; al-Maqalat, p. 539
51. Shibli, op. cit., p. 64.
52. Ibid., p. 92.
53. Ibn Khallikan, vol. I, p. 312.
54. Iqbal, op. cit., p. 59.
55. Shibli, op. cit., p. 66.

Chapter 12: Tahawism

Tahawism by A.K.M Ayyub Ali, M.A, Ph.D, Principl Government Rajshahi Madrasah, Rajshahi (Pakistan)

Tahawi's Life and Works

Abu Ja'far Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Salamah al-Azdi, al-Hajri, al-Tahawi, was born at Taha, a village in Upper Egypt. His forefathers came from the Yemen to Egypt and settled there after it had come under the Muslim rule. There is a considerable difference of opinion as to the year of his birth. The years 229/843, 230/ 844, 238/852 and 239/853 are mentioned by different biographers. Al-Sam'ani asserts that he was born in 229/843 and this is correct. He died in Egypt in 321/933.¹

Al-Tahawi was mainly interested in Hadith and Fiqh, and was regarded as one of the greatest Muhaddithin and fuqaha' of his time. According to Abu Ishaq al-Shirazi, he was the last leader of Hanafi Fiqh in Egypt.²

He began to study Shafi'i Law under his maternal uncle abu Ibrahim Ismail al-Muzani (d. 264/878), the most celebrated pupil of Imam al-Shafi'i, and then leaving his school he took up the study of Hanafi Law under al-Shaikh abu Jafar Ahmad b. abi ,`Imran (d. 285/898), who became the Chief Qadi of Egypt in 270/883. Different versions are given by his biographers of his conversion to Hanafi school, but the most probable reason seems to be that the system of Imam abu Hanifah appealed to his critical insight more than that of Imam Shafi`i.

Al-Tahawi went to Syria in 268/882 for further studies in Hanafi Law and became a pupil of Qadi abu Khazim `Abd al-Hamid b. Ja'far, the then Chief Justice of Syria.³ He learnt hadith from a large number of Shaikhs especially from those who visited Egypt at his time, and had also many pupils of distinc-tion.⁴

He is a distinguished author of many important works of which the following may be mentioned here: 1. Sharh Ma'ani al-Athar, 2. Mushkil al-Athar, 3. Ahkam al-Qur'an, 4. Ikhtilaf al-Ulama', 5. al-Nawadir al-Fiqhiyyah, 6. Kitab al-Shurut al-Kabir, 7. al-Shurut al-Ausat, 8. Sharh al-Jami` al-Saghir, 9. Sharh al-Jami' al-Kabir, 10. al-Mukhtasar, 11. Manaqib Abi Hanifah, 12. Tarikh al-Kabir, 13. al-Radd `ala Kitab al-Mudallisin, 14. al-Radd `ala Abi `Ubaid, 15. al-Radd `ala `Isa b. Abban, 16. Hukm `Aradi Makkah, etc.

His original contribution to Hadith literature, so far as we can estimate is that he introduced a new system of collecting legal traditions, developed a new method of interpreting and harmonizing the conflicting traditions, and adopted a new criterion for criticizing them. His predecessors and contem-poraries, the authors of al-Sihah al-Sittah (the Six Canonical Compilations) collecting traditions according to their own standards and principles, left out a large number of genuine traditions.

Al-Tahawi made a strenuous effort to collect all the genuine legal traditions of the Prophet, narrated by different authorities on a particular subject, together with the opinions of the Companions of the Prophet, their Successors and the distinguished jurists. He then scrutinized

traditions (ahadith) and showed by evidence which of them were authentic, strong, weak, unknown, or such as might be supposed to have been repealed.

Thus, his collection provided for the scholars an un-precedented opportunity to judge for themselves the merits or demerits of a particular tradition. The criterion for judging the genuineness of a tradition, according to the Traditionists in general, was the isnad (chain of the nar-rators), and so they paid greater attention to the scrutiny of the isnad than to the scrutiny of the text (matn) of a tradition. But al-Tahawi, while scrutiniz-ing a tradition, took into consideration the matn as well as the isnad of the tradition. He also aimed at a harmonizing interpretation in case of conflicting traditions.

Al-Tahawi, like al-Maturidi, was a follower of Imam Abu Hanifah (d. 150/ 767) in jurisprudence as well as in theology. He wrote a little treatise on theology named Bayan al-Sunnah w-al-Jama'ah, generally known as al-`Aqidat al-Tahawiyyah.⁵

In the introduction to this treatise he says he will give therein an account of the beliefs of the Ahl al-sunnah w'al-jama'ah according to the views of Imam Abu Hanifah, Abu Yusuf, and Muhammad al-Shaibani - the well-known jurists of the community. So the importance of his creed lies in the fact that it corroborates the views of Imam Abu Hanifah, the founder of the school, that have come down to us from different sources. Al-Tahawi made no attempt to explain the views of the Imam or to solve the old theological problems by advancing any new arguments. His sole aim was to give a summary of the views of the Imam and to show indirectly that they were in conformity with the traditional views of the orthodox school.

The difference between him and al-Maturidi the two celebrated authorities on the views of the Imam is quite evident. Al-Maturidi was a thorough dialectician and his main endeavour was to find out a philosophical basis for the views of the leader and to support these views by scholastic reasoning, and thereby bring them closer to the views of the rationalists.

Al-Tahawi, as a true traditionist, did not favour, as will be seen, any rational discussion or speculative thinking on the articles of faith, but preferred to believe and accept them without questioning. There is no reference in his creed to the critical examination of the method, sources, and means of knowledge, or the foundation on which his theological system is built. So his system may be termed as dogmatic, while that of al-Maturidi as critical. The critical method followed by al-Tahawi in Hadith is quite lacking in theology. Thus, though both of them belong to the same school and uphold faithfully the doctrines of their master, they differ from each other in temperament, attitude, and trends of thought.

In order to indicate the characteristics of the system of al-Tahawi and to make an estimate of his contributions to theology, we propose to give in the following pages an outline of the views of Imam Abu Hanifah along with the views of both al-Tahawi and al-Maturidi on some of the most important theological problems that arose in Muslim theology.

Imam Abu Hanifah directed his movement against the Kharijites, Qadarites, Mu'tazilites, Shiites, Jabrites, the extreme Murji'ites, and the Hashwiyyah, the last being a group of the orthodox people who under the influence of the converted Jews, Christians, and Magians fell into gross anthropomorphism, and ascribed to God all the characteristics of a created being.⁶

He was the first theologian among the fuqaha' who adopted the principles and method of reasoning and applied them to a critical examination of the articles of faith and the laws of the Shariah. That is why he and his followers were called by the Traditionists the People of Reason and Opinion (ashab al-ra'i w-al-qiyas). This rational spirit and philosophical attitude were more consistently main-tained by al-Maturidi than by al-Tahawi. Their views on the nature of faith, attributes of God, beatific vision, divine decree, and human freedom may be mentioned here to indicate the distinctive features of their methods.

Nature of Faith

Faith, according to the well-known view of Imam Abu Hanifah, consists of three elements: knowledge, belief, and confession; knowledge alone or confession alone is not faith.⁷ Al-Maturidi holds the same view and lays emphasis on knowledge (ma'rifah) and belief (tasdiq). But, according to his explanation, knowledge is the basis of faith and confession is not in reality an integral part of faith but only an indication (ʿalamah) of faith, a condition for enforcement of Islamic laws and enjoyment of the rights and privileges of the Muslim com-munity. So the belief based on the knowledge of God is the basis of faith.⁸

Al-Tahawi excludes knowledge from his definition of faith and holds that it consists in believing by heart and confessing by tongue.⁹

As regards the relation between faith and action Imam Abu Hanifah main-tains that Islam demands from its followers two things: belief and practice, and both are essential for a perfect Muslim. The two are very closely related like back and belly, but they are not identical. Practice is distinct from faith and faith is distinct from practice, but both are essential elements of Islam. "Allah has ordained practice for the faithful, faith for the infidel, and sincerity for the hypocrite." The term al-din (religion) includes both faith and action.¹⁰

Faith, according to him, is a living conviction of the heart - an absolute and indelible entity having its own existence independent of action. From this definition of faith he arrived at the following conclusions: (a) Faith is not liable to increase or decrease.¹¹ (b) Faith is impaired by doubt.¹² (c) The faith-ful are equal in faith but different in degree of superiority regarding practice.¹³ (d) No Muslim should be declared devoid of faith on account of any sin, if he does not declare it to be lawful. One may be a man of faith with bad be-haviour, but not an infidel.¹⁴ (e) A believer who dies unrepentant, even though guilty of mortal sins, will not remain in hell for ever. Allah may grant him for-giveness or punish him in accordance with his sins.¹⁵

Pointing out the differences between himself and the Murji'ites, Imam Abu Hanifah says: "We do not say that sins do not harm the faithful, nor do we say that he will not enter hell, nor do we say that he will remain there for ever, although he should be a man of evil practice (fasiq), after having departed from this world as a man of faith. And we do not say that our good actions are accepted and our sins are forgiven, as the Murji'ites say.

But we say that no one who performs a good action, fulfilling all its conditions and keep-ing it free of all defects, without nullifying it by infidelity, apostasy, or bad conduct during any part of his life, shall be neglected by God. God may punish in hell or grant complete forgiveness to a person who commits an evil deed (polytheism and infidelity excluded) and dies without repenting.¹⁶

The Kharijites and Mu'tazilites laid so much emphasis on the doctrine of threats (wa'id) that they led the believers to despair and take a depressing view of life; while the Murji'tes emphasized the doctrine of promise (wa'd) so much that they quite endangered the ethical basis of Islam. Imam Abu Hanifah endeavoured to strike a middle course between these two extremes.

Sins, according to him, are not without consequences; a sinner is always liable to blame or punishment, but to drive him out from the fold of Islam, to declare him an infidel, or to condemn him to eternal punishment is quite inconsistent with divine justice. His broad outlook and tolerant attitude were consistently continued by al-Maturidi and al-Tahawi. The latter has summarized the views of his master on these questions in the following words:

"We do not declare anyone of the people of qiblah an infidel on account of a sin, so long as he does not deem it lawful. And we do not say that sin with faith does no harm to him who commits it. We entertain hope for the righteous among the faithful, but we have no certainty about them, and we do not certify that they will be in paradise. We ask forgiveness for their evil actions and we have fear for them, but we do not drive them into despair. Sense of security and despair both turn a man away from religion. The true way for the people of qiblah lies midway between these two. A faithful servant does not go out of the field of faith except by renouncing what had brought him into it."¹⁷

Al-Tahawi substituted the phrase ahl al-qiblah for mu'min and Muslim, evidently to avoid the theological controversies regarding their identification, and to make the circle of the believers wider and at the same tune to give the question a practical bias. He also avoided the theoretical definition of a Muslim or mu'min, and instead described how one could be regarded as such. He says: "We give those who follow our qiblah the name Muslim or mu'min, so long as they acknowledge what the Prophet brought with him and believe in what he said and what he narrated."¹⁸

Knowledge of God and belief in Him may save those who are guilty of mortal sins from eternal punishment, and they may entertain hope of deliverance from hell through divine mercy and the intercession of the righteous. "Those who are guilty of grievous sins will not remain eternally in hell, if they died as unitarians, even if they were not repentant. They are left to God's will and judgment; if He wills He will forgive them out of His

kindness, as He has said: 'Surely Allah will not forgive the setting up of other gods with Himself; other sins He may forgive if He pleases;' ¹⁹ and if He wills He will punish them in hell in proportion to their sins as demanded by His justice. Then He will bring them out of it through His mercy and the intercession of His obedient people, and finally He will send them to paradise. This is because Allah is the Lord of those who know Him well, and He has not destined them in either world to be like those who denied Him, went astray from His guidance, and did not obtain His help and favour."²⁰

It may be noticed here that, although al-Tahawi did not include knowledge in his definition of faith, he was fully conscious of the cognitive aspect of it.

As regards intercession, Imam Abu Hanifah seems to restrict it to the prophets in general and particularly to Prophet Muhammad,²¹ but al-Tahawi extends this privilege to the righteous and the pious among the faithful.

As regards the independent character of faith and equality of the faithful, al-Tahawi says: "Faith is one and the faithful are equal; their comparative eminence lies in fear²² (of Allah), in righteousness, in disobeying lust, and in pursuing what is best. All the believers are friends of the Merciful. The most honourable among them before God are those who are the most obedient and the best followers of the Holy Qur'an."²³

On the question whether it is obligatory for a man to know God before the advent of His messenger, and whether to follow precedence (taqlid)²⁴ is allowed in matters of faith, al-Tahawi does not express his opinion explicitly, though his master was quite outspoken on these questions. These questions pertain to the Mu'tazilites doctrine of promise and threat (al-wa'd w'al-wa'id), which gave rise to the discussion of the nature and value of reason and revelation.

They held that as God has endowed men with reason and they can easily perceive by proper use of this faculty that the world has a creator, it is obligatory on their part to know God even if the call of the Prophet does not reach them. But they were divided as to whether knowledge of God is acquired and a posteriori (kasabi) or necessary and a priori (daruri).²⁵

Imam Abu Hanifah agreed with the Mu'tazilites on the original question and main-tained that "no one can have any excuse for ignorance about his creator, as he sees the creation of the heaven and the earth of his own as well as of others. So even if Allah should not have sent any messenger to the people, it was obligatory on them to know Him by means of their intellect."

God's Essence and Attributes

As to the relation between God's essence and attributes Imam Abu Hanifah is stated to have advised his pupils not to enter into discussion on this ques-tion, but to be content with ascribing to God the qualities which He Himself ascribed to Himself.²⁶ He even once declined to discuss this problem with Jahm.²⁷ In order to avoid the difficulties involved in affirming attributes, he simply declared that "they are neither He, nor other than He" (la huwa wa la ghairuhu).²⁸ According to the explanation of al-Maturidi,

this phrase means that the attributes of God are neither identical with nor separate from His essence.²⁹

Al-Tahawi made no reference to the philosophical problem of the relation between God and His essence, nor did he make a clear distinction between the attributes of essence and those of actions. But he emphatically asserts the eternity of the attributes and says: "Allah has eternally been with His attributes before He created the world and nothing has been added to His qualities after the creation, and as He has been from eternity with His qualities, He will remain with these to eternity"³⁰

Expressing his vigorous attitude against the Anthropomorphists he declared "Whosoever attributes to Allah any of the human senses (ma'ani), he becomes an infidel." The true path lies, he asserts, between tashbih and ta'til. "He who does not guard against denial (of attributes) and assimilation, slips and does not attain tanzih. Verily our Lord the High and Exalted has been attributed with the attribute of oneness and has been qualified with the quality of uniqueness. No one of the creation possesses His qualities. Allah is most high and praise be to Him. He is without limits, ends, elements, limbs, and instru-ments. The six directions do not encompass Him as they do the created things."³¹

It may be inferred from the above statement and the similar one in the `Aqidah, that al-Tahawi is against the literal interpretations of the anthropo-morphic expressions of the Qur'an, such as the face of Allah, His eyes and hands, etc. But he does not indicate what these terms signify. Abu Hanifah clearly states that these terms denote His qualities. Even then he also is not in favour of giving any rational interpretation of them, as he fears that this may lead to the denial of His qualities.

He says: "He has hand, face, and soul as mentioned in the Qur'an, and whatever Allah mentioned in the Qur'an as face, hand, or soul is unquestionably His quality. It should not be said with the Qadarites and the Mu'tazilites that by His hand is meant His power or His bounty, because this leads to the rejection of certain attributes. Nay, His hand is His attribute without description."³²

The Imam had also adopted the principle of leaving the judgment to God (tafwid)³³ regarding the interpretation of the ambiguous verses of the Qur'an; al-Tahawi stuck to this principle very consistently.

He says: "The foot of Islam does not stand firm but on the back of submission and surrender. Who-soever wishes to attain that knowledge which was forbidden for him and whose intelligence does not remain content with submission, his desire certainly hinders him from access to pure concept of unity (tawhid), clear knowledge, and correct faith, and he then wavers between faith and infidelity, belief and disbelief, confession and denial as a sceptic, distracted, eccentric, and fugitive person without being a faithful believer or a faithless disbeliever."³⁴

The attitude of al-Maturidi on this question is more rational and liberal than that of al-Tahawi. According to the former, leaving judgment to God and passing an interpretative judgment for oneself are both allowed; and he is in favour of interpreting them in the light of explicit verses of the Qur'an.³⁵

Throne of Allah

Regarding the Throne of Allah ('arsh) as mentioned in the Qur'an,³⁶ Abu Hanifah maintains that the expression should not be taken in the literal sense to mean a particular place. God being the creator of place cannot be thought of to be limited by place. He is where He has been before the creation of place. Abu Muti` al-Balkhi, one of the disciples of the Imam, asked him, "What will you say if anyone asks: `Where is Allah the Exalted?'" He replied: "He should be told that Allah has been existing while there was no place before He created the universe; He has been existing while there was no `where (aina), no created being, nor anything else. He is the creator of everything."³⁷

Refuting the idea of the Anthropomorphists that God is in a particular place, he declared: " We confess that Allah has seated Himself on the Throne without any necessity on His part, and without being fixed on it. If He had been under any necessity, He would not have been able to create the world and would have governed it like the created beings; and if He should feel any necessity to sit down and remain seated, where then was He before the creation of the Throne? God is exalted and high far above such ideas."³⁸

It is evident that, according to Abu Hanifah, God, being eternal and incorporeal, cannot be conceived as being encompassed by direction and place. Al-Tahawi, as has been quoted above, firmly holds this view. "God is without limits, ends, elements, limbs, and instruments. The six directions do not encompass Him as they encompass the created things."³⁹ Referring to the Throne and the Chair, he states: "The Throne and the Chair are realities as Allah described them in His honoured Book. But He is not in need of the Throne nor of what is besides the Throne. He encompasses everything and is above everything."⁴⁰

Al-Maturidi went a step further to allow rational interpretation of those verses, the apparent sense of which created an impression of His being in a place. He refuted the view of those who thought that the Throne was a particular place and God was on it, in it, or encompassed by it, as well as the views of those who thought that He was in every place.

According to him, God being eternal, infinite, and incorporeal is free of time and space which imply rest, change, motion, and movement. Explaining the verses⁴¹ which were interpreted to prove His being in a particular place or in every place by the champions of these views, he asserts that these verses refer to His creative function, controlling power, absolute authority, sovereignty, eternity, and infinitude and indirectly prove that He is above the limitations of time and space.⁴²

Beatific Vision

This question was discussed with much fervour by the Companions of the Prophet. Besides their intense love of God and an ardent desire to enjoy the happiness of seeing their Lord in the next world, the accounts of Ascension (mi'raj), and the prayer of Moses to have a vision of his Lord as referred to in the Qur'an,⁴³ aroused in them fervent zeal for a discussion of this topic. It seems quite certain that as a result of this discussion they arrived at the following conclusions: (a) God is invisible in this world; no

human being saw Him or will ever see Him in this world⁴⁴ except the Prophet Muhammad who, according to some of them, saw Him on the night of mi'raj; (b) God will be seen by the faithful in paradise.⁴⁵

The eager inquiries of the Companions of the Prophet whether he saw his Lord⁴⁶ or whether believers will see Him in the next world⁴⁷ and the vehement opposition of a group of leading Companions, including `A'ishah, to the common belief that the Prophet saw his Lord,⁴⁸ all clearly indicate that the Companions were fully conscious of the difficulties involved in answering these questions.

Their standpoint on this question, like that on the problem of essence and attributes was just to believe and refrain from a detailed discussion of such matters as cannot be comprehended by human reason. The seeing of God in paradise was regarded by them as the highest blessing and happiness for the believers and the summum bonum of their life. They believed in it without description (wasf) or rational explanation. (ta'wil).

The Anthropomorphists, in the subsequent period, found in this belief a strong basis for their gross and crude anthropomorphic conception of God. As God will be seen in paradise He must have body and form and may be seen in this world, nay, He may even assume the form of a beautiful man.⁴⁹

It was Jahm who, in order to oppose tashbih, laid great emphasis on tanzih and quite consistently with his idea of abstract God denied for the first time, according to our present information, the vision of God in paradise.⁵⁰ The Mu'tazilites adopted this view and interpreted the beatific vision allegorically. Imam Abu Hanifah upheld the view of the Companions and discarded both anthropomorphic and allegorical interpretation of "seeing God."

God will be seen by the faithful in paradise, he maintains, with their bodily eyes, but without any idea of place, direction, distance, comparison, or modality and without any description.⁵¹ Al-Tahawi maintains the same position and emphasizes that beatific vision is an article of faith and it must be accepted with-out any doubt, without any rational interpretation, and without any idea of anthropomorphism. Any attempt to interpret it by reason will amount, according to him, to the denial of this tenet.⁵²

Al-Maturidi also supported this orthodox view and opposed tashbih and ta'wil and showed by elaborate discussion that the verses of the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet on this question do not allow any allegorical interpretation. His main argument, as we have already seen, is that the conditions of seeing a physical object in this world should not be applied to seeing God who has no body and no form and is not limited by time and space, and that too in the next world where nature of things and state of affairs would be quite different from what pre-vails here.⁵³

Speech of God and the Qur'an

Speech (kalam), according to Abu Hanifah, is an attribute of God pertaining to His essence and is eternal like all other divine attributes, and God speaks by virtue of this eternal speech.⁵⁴ As regards the relation between kalam of Allah and the Qur'an, he says: "We confess that the Qur'an is the uncreated speech of Allah; inspiration or revelation from Him

is neither He nor other than He, but His quality in reality, written in the copies, recited by the tongues, and preserved in the breasts. The ink, the paper, the writing are created, for they are works of men.

The speech of Allah, on the other hand, is uncreated; the writings, the letters, the words, and the verses are signs (dalalat)⁵⁵ of the Qur'an for the sake of human needs. The speech of Allah is self-existing and its meaning is understood by means of these symbols. Whosoever says that the speech of Allah is created, he is an infidel: His speech, though recited, written, and retained in the hearts, is yet never dissociated from Him.”⁵⁶

Abu Hanifah thus refutes the ideas of the Mu'tazilah who denied the attribute of speech being identical with divine essence and declared the Qur'an to have been created, as well as the ideas of those Mushabbihah and Hashwiyyah (extreme orthodox) who thought that divine speech, like human speech, con-sists of words and sounds and that the script in which the Qur'an was written was as eternal as the Qur'an itself.⁵⁷

Kalam of Allah, according to him, is not identical with His Being, for this will make His Being complex and lead to the plurality of Godhead; nor can it be something other than Himself, for this will mean that He acquired a new quality and became what He was not before. This also implies imperfection and change in the divine nature; hence absurd. Divine speech, therefore, must be eternal, and as the Qur'an is uni-versally accepted to be the speech of Allah, it is necessarily uncreated.

Al-Tahawi treated this subject with great caution and condemned controversies about the Qur'an and practically declined to enter into a philosophical discussion on the nature of divine speech. He says: “Verily the Qur'an - the kalam of Allah - originated (bada`) from Him as words without description (bila kaifiyyah) and He sent it down to His Prophet as revelation; and the faithful believed it to be truly as such, and they knew for certain that it was in reality the kalam of Allah, the Exalted, not created like the speech of the created beings. So whoever supposes it to be human speech is an infidel.”⁵⁸

The main point of controversy, it may be mentioned here, between the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah, on the one hand, and the orthodox, on the other, was on the nature of the divine word and its relation to the Qur'an, after they had all agreed that the Qur'an was the revealed book of Allah. So al-Tahawi, in fact, bypassed the main point at issue. He also made no reference to the relation of the speeches of created beings or that of Allah's word addressed to them such as to the Prophet Moses, as mentioned in the Qur'an, with the eternal speech - a problem, which evidently bewildered the minds of Ja'd, Jahm, and their followers. Abu Hanifah sought to remove this doubt with reference to the eternal divine attributes of knowing and creating. “Allah had indeed been speaking before He spoke to Moses, as Allah had indeed been creating from eternity before creating any creatures.

So, when He spoke to Moses, He spoke to him with His speech which is one of His eternal attributes.” Similarly, “whatever Allah mentions in the Qur'an, quoting from Moses and other prophets and from Pharaoh and Iblis, is the eternal speech of Allah about them. The speech of Allah is uncreated,

but the speech of Moses and other created beings is created. The Qur'an is the speech of Allah and not their speech; therefore, it is eternal.”⁵⁹

Divine Will and Human Freedom

The all-pervading will of God, His eternal decree (qadar) and infinite power, on the one hand, and freedom of the human will and action, on the other, are equally stressed in the Qur'an.⁶⁰

According to the Qur'an, divine will, decree, and power are not inconsistent with human freedom. These problems were discussed by the Prophet and his Companions. Belief in qadar was declared by the Prophet as an article of faith, but at the same time he asserted that qadar does not deprive a man of his freedom in his limited sphere.

Thus, according to the Qur'an and the Tradition, God is the creator of all things including their nature, and nothing can go against this nature. He is the creator of the human soul and its nature and He has created in it free-will and bestowed upon it the faculty of knowing, thinking, and distinguishing and the power of judging, choosing, and selecting. God, being the omniscient creator, knows from eternity what His creatures will do in future - this is the “writing of the destiny” and “the eternal divine decree.”⁶¹

That the Prophet laid stress both on qadar and human freedom and on the possibility of human action side by side with divine action, is also evident from his famous saying on natural religion (din al-fitrah): “Every child at birth is born in the fitrah, then it is his parents who make of him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian.” This is testified by the Qur'anic verse, “The fitrah of Allah in which He hath created mankind, there is no change.”⁶²

The sayings of the Prophet that divine decree comprises all human care and precautions for life, that prayer can change destiny,⁶³ and that God has provided remedy for every disease,⁶⁴ and similar other traditions also clearly indicate that the divine decree is not despotic or tyrannical in its nature and that it does not imply any compulsion, nor is it inconsistent with freedom and responsibility.

The Companions of the Prophet also believed both in qadar and human freedom and emphatically denied the idea of compulsion (jabr). Some prominent Companions explained qadar as foreknowledge. Abu Musa al-Ash`ari said: “God decreed as He knew.”⁶⁵ `Abd Allah b. `Amr (d. 63/682) used to say: “The Pen has dried up according to the knowledge of God.”⁶⁶

`Ali (d. 40/661) gave a clear exposition of his view on the problem and said: “Perhaps you think that the judgment (qada') is binding and the decree (qadar) is final. Had it been so, then reward and punishment would be meaning-less and the promise and threat null and void, and no reproach then should have come from Allah against a sinner and no promise for a righteous person. This is the view of the brethren of Satan Verily Allah has enjoined discre-tion, issued prohibitions, and given warnings. He has not burdened (men) with compulsion, nor has He sent the prophets in vain . . .”⁶⁷

Imam Abu Hanifah made a bold attempt to harmonize the contradictory views of the self-determinists and the predeterminists by explaining the nature of divine power, will, and decree and enunciating the doctrines of

natural religion (din al-fitrah), divine help, and guidance (taufiq), abandoning (khadh-lan) and acquisition (kasb). God had knowledge concerning things before they existed from eternity, and His will, decree, decision, and writing on the Pre-served Tablet are in accordance with this foreknowledge. So the eternal decree is of a descriptive nature and not of a decisive nature. God created men with natural dispositions (fitrah), endowed them with intellect, then addressed them and commanded them through His messenger to believe and abstain from unbelief.

Thereupon some people deviated from this natural religion, disavowed truth, and turned to unbelief. This unbelief is their own act, their own acquisition, preferred by their free-will, which God created in them, and is not due to any compulsion from Him, but due to His leaving them to themselves. Those who clung to their nature received divine help and guidance. "Allah did not compel any of His creatures to be infidel or faithful, and He did not create them either as faithful or infidel, but He created them as individuals, and faith and unbelief are acts of men All the acts of man, his moving as well as his resting, are truly his own acquisition, but Allah creates them and they are caused by His will, His knowledge, His decision, and His decree." But while good actions are according to His desire, pleasure, judgment, command, and guidance, evil actions are not in accordance with these.⁶⁸

Al-Maturidi, as we have already noticed, explained this view quite elaborately and laid emphasis on the freedom of acquisition and choice. Al-Tahawi discourages all speculative thought on the subtle and mysterious question of predestination (taqdir), because this may lead one to despair and disobedience.⁶⁹ But he asserts that all human actions are creations in relation, to God and acquisition an relation to men, and God is never unjust to them so as to burden them beyond their power and capacity.⁷⁰

Conclusion

It will be noticed from what has been said in the foregoing pages that al-Tahawi did not introduce any new doctrine or system in theology, but summarized faithfully and honestly the views of his master on important theological questions, in his own language. So "Tahawism," in fact, does not imply a new school of thought in Islamic theology; it is only another version of Imam Abu Hanifah's theological system. The importance of al-Tahawi's creed, mainly consists in the fact that it makes the position of his master quite clear. Imam Abu Hanifah occupied so important a place in theology and law and his system exerted so much influence on the educated mind that the Mu'tazil-ites, the Murji'ites, and the orthodox equally claimed him for themselves. The Mu'tazilites for this reason even denied his authorship of any book in theology.⁷¹

Prominent pupils of Imam Abu Hanifah and his followers mainly engaged themselves in a close study of the problems of practical life, and generally it was they who occupied the posts of judges and legal advisers during the reign of the `Abbasids and even afterwards. By virtue of their work they could get little time for a detailed study of speculative theology.⁷²

Their trends of mind also, it appears, were not in favour of pure speculation. Their time, energy, and genius were devoted to legal studies, and theological speculation was left for others. Thus, their contribution to theology is negli-gible in contrast to their contributions to law and jurisprudence. A few of them, like Hammad and Isma'il, the son and grandson of Abu Hanifah, Bishr al-Marisi, Hafs al-Fard, Bishr b. Walid, Muhammad b. Shuja', and others who took some interest in theology, could not quite consistently explain and expand the views of their leader.

During the reign of al-Mamun and his immediate successors, the Hanafi judges openly supported the Mu'tazilites' stand on some of the controversial questions and co-operated with the rulers in suppressing the views of the extreme orthodox. Besides the Mu'tazilites and the Murji'ites, the followers of Imam Abu Hanifah themselves were divided in interpreting his views.

Al-Tahawi, like al-Maturidi, rendered valuable services in removing the doubts and confusions and making the position of the Imam quite clear. The influence of al-Tahawi on theology can easily be estimated from the numerous commentaries written on his creed. In short, al-Tahawi's credit lies in the fact that he very nicely and elegantly presented the summaries of the views of Imam Abu Hanifah, the first founder of the theological school of Ahl al-sunnah - summaries for which he must have relied, besides the latter's works, on other reliable sources which had already received recognition from a large number of orthodox people.

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Abu Hanifah, al-'alim w-al-Muta'allim, ed. Muhammad Zahid al-Kauthari; al-Fiqh al-Akbar, Hyderabad; al-Qari, Sharh al-Fiqh al-Akbar; Sharh al-Wafiyyah, Hyderabad; ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Intiqah. Cairo, 1350/1931; al-Ash'ari, Maqalat, Cairo, 1950; Maturidi, Kitab al-Tauhid, MS. Cambridge; Sharh al-Taha-wiyyah, Mecca, 1349/ 1930; al-Taftazani, Sharh al-'Aqa'id al-Nasafiyyah, Cawnpore. 1347/1928; al-Tahawi, Bayan al-Sunnah w-al-Jama'ah, Halab, 1344/1925; al-Biyadi, Isharat; al-Makki, al-Manaqib; Bukhari and Muslim, "Kitab al-Qadar"; Wali al-Din, Mishkat al-Masabih, Delhi; ibn Hajar, Lisan al Mizan; Yaqut, Mu'jam; Yafi'i, Mir'at; Haji Khalifah, Kashf al-Zunun; al-Murtada al-Zabidi, al-Munyat w-al-'Amal, Hyderabad; Tash Kubrazadah, Miftah al-Sa'adah, Hyderabad.

Notes

1. Al-Sam'ani, al-Ansab, Leiden, 1912, fol. 368; Ibn Qutlubugha, Taj al-Tarajim, ed. G. Flugel, Leipzig, 1862, p. 6; Ibn al-Nadim, al-Fihrist, Cairo, 1348/1929, p. 292; `Abd al-Qadir al-Qarashi, al-Jawahir al-Mud'iyah, Hyderabad, 1332/1913, Vol. I, pp. 102-05; Jalal al-Din, al-Suyuti, Husn al-Muhaddrah, Vol. I, p. 147; Ibn Khallikan, Wafayat al-A'yan, Vol. I, p. 19; al-Dhahabi, Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, Hyderabad, 1334/1915, Vol. III, p. 28; `Abd al-Hayy Lakhnawi, al-Fawa'id al-Bahiyah, Cairo, 1324/1906, pp. 31-34.
2. Al-Dhahabi, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 28; al-Suyuti, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 147.
3. Cf. authorities cited above.
4. Muhammad Zahid al-Kauthari, al-Hawi, Cairo, 1368/ 1948, pp. 6-11; al-Qarashi, op. cit.; Lisan al-Mizan.
5. The `Aqidah was published in Halab in 1344/1925. Several commentaries were written on this creed (cf. Kashf al-Zunun, Istanbul, II, 1143) one of which named Kitab Sharh al-Tahawiyah fi al-`Aqidat al-Salafiyyah was published at Makkah in 1349/1930, and was ascribed to Sadr al-Din 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Adhra'yi.
6. It was `Abd Allah ibn Saba, a convert from Judaism, who introduced and propagated anthropomorphic ideas among the Muslims during the caliphate of 'Ali. The foreign influence is traceable at the background of all sorts of ideas of tashbih, tajsim, and hulul (cf., al. Shahrastani, al-Baghdadi). The anthropomorphic expressions in the Qur'an were never understood by the Prophet or his Com-panions in the strict literal sense.
7. Abu Hanifah, Al-'alim w-al-Muta'allim, ed. Muhammad Zahid al-Kauthari, pp. 13, 29, idem, al-Wasiyyah, MS. Cairo, pp. 1, 2; al-Fiqh al-Akbar, Hyderabad, p. 11; al-Qari, Sharh Fiqh al-Akbar, pp. 76 et sqq.; Sharh Wasiyyah, Hyderabad, p. 75; ibn Abd al-Barr al-Intiqah, Cairo, 1350/1931, p. 168; al-Ash'ari, Maqalat, Cairo, 1950, Vol. I. p. 202.
8. Maturidi, Kitab al-Tauhid, MS. Cambridge, pp. 193 et sqq.; al-Makki, Manaqib Abi Hanifah, Vol. I, p. 148; Sharh al-Tahawiyah, Makkah, 1349/1930, p. 261; al-Taftazani, Sharh al-`Aqa'id al-Nusafiyyah, Cawnpore, 1347/1928, p. 91.
9. Al-Tahawi, Bayan al-Sunnah w-al-Jama'ah, Halab, 1344/ 1925, p. 7.
10. Al-Fiqh al-Akbar, pp. 10-11; al-Wasiyyah, MS. Cairo, p. 2; Sharh al-Wasiyyah. p. 78 ; al-`Alim w-al Muta'allim, pp. 12 et sqq.; Risalat Abi Hanifah, ed. al-Kauthari, pp. 35 et sqq.
11. Al-Fiqh al-Akbar, p. 10; al-Wasiyyah, p. 2; al-`Alim w-al Muta'allim. pp. 14 et sqq.; Sharh al- Wasitiyyah, p. 76; al Qari, Sharh al-Fiqh al-Akbar, pp. 78 et sqq.; Abu al-Muntaha, Sharh al-Fiqh al-Akbar, Hyderabad, pp. 58 et sqq.
12. Al-Wasiyyah, p. 2; Sharh al-Wasiyyah, p. 77 ; al-Fiqh al-Absat ed. al-Kauthari, pp. 45 et sqq.; Musnad al-Imam al-A'zam, ed. Muhammad `Abid al-Sindhi, Lucknow, 1316/1898, p. 12.
13. Al-Fiqh al-Akbar, p. 10; al-`Alim w-al-Muta'allim, pp. 14, et sqq.; Sharh al-Wasiyyah, p. 76.
14. Al-Fiqh al-Akbar, p. 9; al-Fiqh al Absat, pp. 41 et sqq.; Risalat Abi Hanifah, p. 37; al-`Alim w-al-Muta'allim, pp. 25 et sqq.; al-Makki, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 78 et a'qq.; Musnad al-Imam al A'zam, p. 10.
15. Musnad al-Imam al-A'zam. pp. 11 et sqq.
16. Abu Hanifah, al-Fiqh al-Akbar.
17. Al-Tahawi, al-'Aqidah, p. 7.
18. Ibid., p. 7 .
19. Qur'an, iv, 48.
20. Al-Tahawi, al-'Aqidah, p. 8.
21. Al-Fiqh al-Akbar, p. 11.
22. In the printed text the word is al-Haqiqah which most probably is al-Khashiyah, cf. Sharh al-Tahawiyah, p. 261.
23. Al-`Aqidah, pp. 7-8.
24. To act or believe on the authority of others.

25. Cf. the views of the Mu`tazilites, especially of `Allaf and al-Nazzam, in al-Badghadi's al-Farq and Usul al-Din, and al-Shahrastani's Milal. This question was discussed by the Mu'tazilites, by Ghailan al-Dimashqi (prose-cuted by Hisham b. `Abd al-Malik [d. 125/743]), who taught that knowledge is of two kinds: natural or instinctive (fitri) and acquired (muktasab). Faith, according to him, is the rational knowledge, not the instinctive knowledge. (Milal, Vol. I, p. 274; al-Farq, p. 125; Maqalat, Vol. I, p. 200.)
26. Al-Biyadi, Isharat, p. 149.
27. Al-Makki, al-Manaqib, Vol. I, p. 145.
28. Al-Wasiyyah, p. 4; al-Biyadi, op. cit., p. 118.
29. Al-Isharat, p. 118; Sharh al-Fiqh al-Akbar, ascribed to al-Maturidi, Hyder-abad, p. 19.
30. al-`Aqidah, p. 4.
31. Ibid., p. 5.
32. Al-Fiqh al-Akbar, p. 6.
33. Leaving the true meaning to the knowledge of Allah.
34. Al-`Aqidah, p. 4.
35. See the chapter on al-Maturidi.
36. Qur'an, vii, 54; xx, 5; xxx, 75; lix, 17, etc.
37. Al-Fiqh al-Absat, p. 57.
38. Al-Wasiyyah, pp. 3-4; Sharh al-Wasiyyah, p. 81; Isharat, p. 195.
39. al-`Aqidah, p. 5.
40. This translation is according to the text given in the Sharh al-Tahaiyyah, p. 213.
41. Such verses of the Qur'an as vii, 54; xx, 5; xliii, 84; lix, 17; 1, 16; ivi, 58; lviii, 7.
42. Kitab al-Tawhid, pp. 32-37; Ta'wilat, Surah vii, 54; xx, 5.
43. Qur'an, vii, 143.
44. "None among you will ever see his Lord till he dies" is a saying of the Prophet, Isharat, p. 65.
45. Traditions on this point have been narrated by more or less thirty Companions: Sharh al-Tahawiyah, p. 24; Isharat, p. 205.
46. Ibn Kathir, Tafsir, Vol. III, p. 9; al-Nawawi, Sharh Muslim, Cairo, 1929, Vol. III, p. 12.
47. Al-Nawawi, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 17 et sqq.
48. Ibid., pp. 8, et sqq.; Isharat, p. 317; Ibn Kathir, Tafsir, Vol. II, pp. 161 et sqq.; Vol. IV, pp. 247 et sqq.
49. Al-Ash'ari, Maqalat, Vol. I, p. 263.
50. Shahrastani, Milal, Vol. I, p. 137
51. Al-Fiqh al-Akbar, p. 10; al-Wasiyyah, p. 7; Sharh al-Wasiyyah, p. 97; Isharat, p. 201.
52. Al-`Aqidah, p. 4.
53. Cf. the chapter on Maturidism.
54. Al-Fiqh al-Akbar, p. 5.
55. In one MS. the word. is alah. (instrument).
56. Al-W'asiyyah, p. 4; Sharh al-W'asiyyah, pp. 82-83.
57. Al-Ash'ari, Al-Irshad, pp. 128-29.
58. Al-`Aqidah, p. 3; cf. p. 7.
59. Abu Hanifah, al-Fiqh al-Akbar, pp. 5-6.
60. Qur'an, vi, 39, 125, 149; xxii, 14; lxxxv, 16; lxxxvi, 30; liv, 49 and other verses referring to the divine will and decree. And the verses: iv, 111; x, 44, 108; xi, 101; xiii, 11; xvii, 15-17; 84; xviii, 29; xli. 46: xlv. 15, and many others refer to freedom.
61. Cf. also verses of the Qur'an, 1, 4, 16.
62. Bukhari and Muslim, "Kitab al-Qadar"; also Qur'an, xxx, 30.
63. Tirmidhi, "Kitab al-Qadar."
64. Mishkat, "Kitab al-Tibb."

65. Al-Biyadi, op. cit., p. 33. This sentence has been chosen by Bukhari as the heading of a section of "Kitab al-Qadar" in his Sahih.

66. Wali al-Din, Mishkat al-Masabih, Delhi, Ch. "Qadar," p. 22.

67. Al-Murtada al-Zabidi, al-Munyat al-'Amal. Hyderabad, 1920, p. 7.

68. Al-Fiqh al-Akbar, pp. 7-8; al-Wasiyyah, pp. 3, 5-6; Sharh al-Wasiyyah, pp. 79-80, 84-85; cf. al-Makki, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 104; al-Bazzazi, al-Manaqib, Vol. II, p. 84; ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Insab, pp. 164-65.

69. Al-'Aqidah, p. 5.

70. Ibid., p. 11.

71. Al-Bazzazi, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 107; Tash Kubrazadah, Miftah al Sa'adah, Hyderabad, 1328/1910, Vol. II, p. 29.

72. Some books on theology were written by Muhammad al-Shaibani, al-Hasan b. Ziyad and Zufar b. Hudhail - all pupils of Abu Hanifah.

Chapter 13: Maturidism

Maturidism by A.K.M Ayyub Ali, M.A, Ph.D, Principal Government Rajshahi Madrasah, Rajshahi (Pakistan)

A detailed discussion of the fundamental principles of Islam led Muslim scholars in the second and third/eighth and ninth centuries of Hijrah to philo-sophical reasonings on the nature and attributes of God and His relation to man and the universe. As a result, a new science of Muslim scholasticism called 'Ilm al-Kalam came into being.

As a matter of fact, it was the Mu'tazilites who laid the foundation of this new science and made lasting contributions for its development. They started their movement by adopting a rational attitude in respect of some theological questions, but when they reached the height of their power, they adopted an aggressive attitude towards their opponents. The orthodox Muslims opposed the Mu'tazilite movement from the very beginning and tried to refute their doctrines by the traditional method. A section of the orthodox people took recourse even to violent methods.

Conflicting ideas and antagonistic attitudes created chaos and confusion in Muslim thought and shook the foundation of old ideas and traditional beliefs. The need for reconciliation and solving the crisis by adopting a middle course and a tolerant attitude was keenly felt. At this critical period of the history of Muslim theology there appeared, in three parts of the Muslim world, three eminent scholars: al-Maturidi in Central Asia, al-Ash'ari in Iraq, and al-Tahawi in Egypt.

They all endeavoured to reconcile conflicting ideas and settle the theological problems of the time by adopting a system that would satisfy reason and conform to the general tenets of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. They exercised profound and lasting influence on the subsequent development of Muslim philosophy and theology and were considered to be the fathers of the three schools of thoughts named after them.

Ash'arism and Tahawism have been dealt with in separate chapters; here we are concerned with Maturidism.

Life and Works of Maturidi

Abu Mansur Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Mahmud, al-Maturidi, al-Ansari, al-Hanafi, was born at Maturid,¹ a village or quarter in the neighbourhood of Samarqand, one of the great cities of Central Asia. According to some writers, he came of the renowned family of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari of Madinah.²

This statement is also corroborated by the fact that some other Arab families of Madinah also settled in Samarqand³ and that al-Maturidi's daughter was married to al-Hasan al-Ash'ari, the father of Imam Abu al-Hasan `Ali al-Ash'ari and a descendant of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari of Madinah.⁴

Almost all the biographers who give only short sketches of al-Maturidi's life in their works agree that he died in the year 333/944, but none of them mentions the date of his birth. One of the teachers of al-Maturidi, namely, Muhammad b. Muqatil al-Razi is stated to have died in 248/862, which

proves that al-Maturidi was born before that year and possibly about the year 238/853. According to this assumption, al-Maturidi was born during the reign of the 'Abbasid Caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 232-247/847-861) who combated the Mu'tazilite doctrines and supported the traditional faith⁵.

Al-Maturidi flourished under the powerful rule of the Samanids, who ruled practically the whole of Persia from 261/874 to 389/999 actively patronized science and literature, and gathered around their Court as number of renowned scholars.⁶ He was brought up in the peaceful academic atmosphere and cultural environment of his native land and received good education in different Islamic sciences under four eminent scholars of his time: Shaikh Abu Bakr Ahmad b. Ishaq, Abu Nasr Ahmad b. al-'Abbas known as al-Faqih al-Samar-qandi, Nusair b. Yahya al-Balkhi (d. 268/881), and Muhammad b. Muqatil al-Razi (d. 248,/862), Qadi of Rayy. All of them were students of Imam Abu Hanifah (d. 150/767)⁷

In recognition of his scholarship and profound knowledge in theology (and his invaluable services to the cause of Ahl al-sunnah w-al-jama'ah) people conferred on him the title of Imam al-Huda and Imam al-Mutakallimin. Mahmud al-Kufawi mentioned him as "leader of guidance, the model of the Sunnite and the guided, the bearer of the standard of Ahl al-sunnah w-al-jama'ah, the uprooter of misguidance arising from disorder and heresies, leader of the scholastics, and rectifier of the faith of the Muslims."⁸

Works - Al-Maturidi wrote a number of important books on Tafsir, Kalam, and Usul, a list of which is given below:

1. Kitab Tawilat al-Qur'an or Tawilat Ahl al-Sunnah.
2. Kitab Ma'khadh al-Shari'ah.
3. Kitab al-Jadal.
4. Kitab al-Usul (Usul al-Din).
5. Kitab al-Maqalat.
6. Kitab al-Tauhid.
7. Kitab Bayan Wahm al-Mu'tazilah.
8. Kitab Radd Awa'il al-Adillah li al-Ka'bi.
9. Kitab Radd Tahdhib al-Jadal li al-Ka'bi.
10. Kitab Radd Wa'id al-Fussaqa li al-Ka'bi.
11. Radd al Usul al-Khamsah li abi Muhammad al-Bahili.
12. Radd Kitab al-Imamah li ba'd al-Rawafid.
13. Kitab al-Radd `ala al-Qaramitah⁹

Unfortunately, not a single work of al-Maturidi has so far been published. His Tawilat al-Qur'an, Kitab al-Tauhid, and Kitab al-Maqalat which are by far the most important and valuable of all his works, exist only in manu-scripts. The Tawilat al-Qur'an is a commentary on the Qur'an in the scholastic method in which he endeavoured to establish the liberal orthodox theology, both traditionally and rationally, and to provide for it a sound basis.¹⁰ Com-menting on this momentous work, Sheikh `Abd al-Qadir al-

Qarashi says, “A unique book with which no book of the earlier authors on this subject can have any comparison.”¹¹

In his *Kitab al-Tauhid*, al-Maturidi gave an elaborate exposition of his system and sought to harmonize the extreme views of both the traditionists and the rationalists. The book bears testimony to his broad outlook, deep insight, and intimate acquaintance with the philosophical systems of his time.

The evidence at our disposal at present shows that al-Maturidi was the first Mutakalim to introduce the doctrine of the sources of human knowledge in a book on theology such as *Kitab al-Tauhid* and thereby made a thorough attempt to build up his system on a sound philosophical basis. This method was followed by other theologians and the subject was later on elaborately treated by the Ash'arite scholars, al-Baqillani (d. 403/1013), and al-Baghdadi (d. 429/1037).

Al-Maturidi is one of the pioneers amongst the Hanafite scholars who wrote on the principles of jurisprudence and his two works *Ma'khadh al-Shari'ah* and *Kitab al-Jadal* are considered to be authoritative on the subject.¹²

It is evident from the list of works written by al-Maturidi that he took great care to refute the views and ideas of the Qarmatians, the Shiites, and especially those of the Mu'tazilites. His contemporary abu al-Qasim `Abd Allah al-Ka'bi (d. 317/929) was the leader of the Mu'tazilite school of Baghdad.¹³ Al-Maturidi combated the doctrines of al-Ka'bi in his *Kitab al-Tauhid* and wrote three books on criticism of al-Ka'bi's three books. It may be observed here that while al-Maturidi in the East engaged himself in fighting the Mu'tazilites in general and particularly the Baghdad group, his contemporary al-Ash'ari in Iraq took a prominent part in resisting the Mu'tazilites of Basrah. But it appears to us that al-Maturidi began his movement long before al-Ash'ari appeared on the scene and most probably while the latter was still in the Mu'tazilite camp.¹⁴

Method

Al-Maturidi in his *Kitab al-Tauhid* gave a short critical account of the different views regarding the matter and sources of human knowledge and the best method to be followed in order to acquire knowledge. Means of acquiring knowledge, according to him, are three: (1) Sense-organs (al-a'yan); (2) Reports (al-akhbar); (3) Reason (al-nazr).

He severely criticized the conflicting views of different groups who thought that knowledge is not attainable at all, or that senses cannot supply true knowledge, or that reason alone is sufficient to give us all knowledge. Refuting the views of those who deny or doubt the possibility of knowledge altogether or the possibility of acquiring knowledge through sense-organs, al-Maturidi says that even animals perceive by their senses what may preserve or destroy them and what may be useful or harmful to them.

So theoretical arguments with those who pretend to deny the objective reality of things is useless. Yet he says, they may be humorously asked: “Do

you know what you deny?” If they say “No,” their denial stands cancelled, but if they answer affirmatively, they admit the reality of their denial and thereby become opposers of their opposing. A more effective way than this is to make them subject to physical torture so that they may be compelled to admit what they deny of the reality of sensuous knowledge.

Reports are the means of acquiring knowledge concerning genealogy, past occurrences, remote countries, useful and harmful things, foodstuffs, medicine, etc. These are of two kinds, historical reports (khabr al-mutawatir) and reports of the prophets (khabr al-rusul), possessing sure signs to prove their honesty. Though both kinds of reports are proved to be sources of knowledge, we should be very critical in accepting reports of the prophets, because they are handed down through chains of narrators who are not infallible and who may commit mistakes in reporting.

Those who reject report as a source of knowledge are, al-Maturidi asserts, like those who reject sensuous knowledge. In order to convince them, they should be physically tortured and if they complain of pain, they should be told: Your words of complaint are nothing but reports which cannot give us any real knowledge.¹⁵

Reason, according to al-Maturidi, is the most important of all other sources of knowledge, because without its assistance sense and report can give no real knowledge. Knowledge of metaphysical realities and moral principles is derived through this source. It is reason which distinguishes men from animals. Al-Maturidi has pointed out many cases where nothing but reason can reveal the truth. This is why the Qur'an repeatedly enjoins man to think, to ponder, and to judge by reason in order to find out the truth. Refuting the ideas of those who think that reason cannot give true knowledge, he says that they cannot prove their doctrine without employing reason.¹⁶

Reason, no doubt, occupies a very eminent place in the system of al-Maturidi, but it cannot give, he holds, true knowledge concerning everything that we require to know. Like senses, it has a limit beyond which it cannot go. Sometimes the true nature of the human intellect is obscured and influenced by internal and external factors such as desire, motive, habit, environment, and association, and, as a result, it even fails to give us true knowledge of things that are within its own sphere. Divergent views and conflicting ideas of the learned concerning many a problem are mentioned by al-Maturidi as one of the proofs in support of his statement.

Hence, reason often requires, he asserts, the service of a guide and helper who will protect it from straying, lead it to the right path, help it understand delicate and mysterious affairs, and know the truth. This guide, according to him, is the divine revelation received by a prophet. If anyone will deny the necessity of this divine guidance through revelation and claim that reason alone is capable of giving us all the knowledge we need, then he will certainly overburden his reason and oppress it quite unreasonably.¹⁷

The necessity of the divine revelation is not restricted, according to al-Maturidi, to religious affairs only, but its guidance is required in many worldly affairs too. The discovery of the different kinds of foodstuffs,

medicine, inven-tion of arts and crafts, etc., are the results of this divine guidance. Human intellect cannot give any knowledge in respect of many of these matters, and if man had to rely solely on individual experience for the knowledge of all these things, then human civilization could not have made such rapid progress.¹⁸

Al-Maturidi refutes the idea of those who think that the individual mind is the basis of knowledge and criterion of truth. He also does not regard in-spiration (ilham) as a source of knowledge. Inspiration, he argues, creates chaos and conflicts in the domain of knowledge, makes true knowledge impossible, and is ultimately liable to lead humanity to disintegration and destruction for want of a common standard of judgment and universal basis for agreement.¹⁹

It is evident from this brief account that reason and revelation both occupy a prominent place in the system of al-Maturidi. The articles of religious belief are derived, according to him, from revelation, and the function of reason is to understand them correctly. There can be no conflict between reason and revelation if the real purport of the latter be correctly understood. His method of interpreting the Scriptures may be outlined in the following words: The passages of the Holy Qur'an which appear to be ambiguous or the meanings of which are obscure or uncertain (mubham and mushtabah) must be taken in the light of the verses that are self-explaining and precise (muhkam).

Where the apparent sense of a verse contradicts what has been established by the "precise" (muhkam) verses, it must then be believed that the apparent sense was never intended, because there cannot be contradiction in the verses of the Holy Qur'an, as God has repeatedly declared. In such cases, it is per-missible to interpret the particular verse in the light of the established truth (tawil) or to leave its true meaning to the knowledge of God (tafwid).²⁰

The difference between the attitude of al-Maturidi and that of the Mu'tazilites in this respect is quite fundamental. The latter formulated certain doctrines on rational grounds and then tried to support their views by the verses of the Holy Qur'an, interpreting them in the light of their doctrines. As regards the traditions of the Prophet, their attitude was to accept those which supported their views and to reject those which opposed them.²¹

Criticism of the Mu'tazilites

Al-Maturidi always tried to adopt a middle course between the extreme Rationalists and the Traditionists. He would agree with the Mu'tazilites on many points, but would never accept the Aristotelian philosophy as a basis of religious doctrines. Similarly, he is in accord with the Traditionists on fundamentals, but is not ready to take the Qur'an and the Hadith always in their literal sense and thereby to fall into gross anthropomorphism.

He agrees with the Mu'tazilites that it is obligatory on the part of every rational being to acquire knowledge of the existence of God through his reason even if no messenger were sent by Aim for this purpose; that things are intrinsically good or bad and the Shari' (God) takes into consideration

these values in His amr (command) and nahi (prohibition); that God has endowed man with reason through which he can often distinguish right from wrong.

But, contrary to the Mu'tazilites, he maintains that reason cannot be the final authority for human obligation and religious law. The basis of religious obligation, according to him, is revelation, not reason.²² It seems that al-Maturidi's view on this question and on the authorship of human action, as will be seen, is mainly guided by the Qur'anic verses such as "To Him belong creation and command."²³

Al-Maturidi bitterly criticized the Mu'tazilite doctrine of divine justice and unity. Their interpretation of divine justice led them to deny the all-pervading will and power of God, His authorship of human action, and made Him quite helpless and subject to external compulsion. Divine grace and mercy find no place in their system as is evident from their view on grave sins. Their doctrine of al-aslah (salutary) cannot explain satisfactorily the existence of evil, natural calamities, and sufferings of innocent children and animals.

According to their doctrine, man enjoys more power and freedom than the Creator of the universe. They did not follow, al-Maturidi tried to prove, the explicit decisions of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, nor the dictates of sound reason.²⁴ Their interpretation of tauhid reduced God to an unknown and unknowable non-entity (ta'til).²⁵

Their view that Non-Being is a thing (al-ma'dumu shai'un) only supports the atheists' doctrine of the eternity of the world, makes an eternal partner with God, and thereby contradicts the Qur'anic doctrines of creation and tauhid. They made God quite imperfect and subject to changes by denying His eternally creative function.²⁶

Maturidi's System

Al-Maturidi built up his own system mainly on two principles: freedom from similitude (tanzih) and divine wisdom (hikmah). On the principle of freedom from similitude he opposes similitude (tashbih) and anthropomorphism (tajsim) in all their forms, without denying divine attributes. The anthropomorphic expressions used in the Qur'an like the hands, the face, the eyes of God, and His sitting on the Throne should not be taken in their ap-parent sense, because the literal interpretation of these expressions contradicts the explicit verses of the Qur'an.

These passages, therefore, should be inter-preted in the light of the clear passages of tanzih in a manner consistent with, the doctrine of tauhid, and permissible according to the usage and idiom of the Arabic language, or their true meanings should be left to the knowledge of God.²⁷

On the principle of divine wisdom (hikmah) al-Maturidi tried to reconcile the conflicting views of the Determinists (Jabrites) and the Mu'tazilites and prove for man certain amount of freedom, without denying the all-pervading divine will, power, and decree. Wisdom means placing a thing in its own place; so divine wisdom comprises both justice ('adl) and grace and

kindness (fadl). God possesses absolute power and His absoluteness is not subject to any external laws but His own wisdom.²⁸

Al-Maturidi applied this principle also to combat the Mu'tazilites' doctrine of al-aslah (best) on the one hand, and the orthodox view that God may overburden his servants (taklif ma la yutaq) on the other. It is inconsistent with divine wisdom, which includes both justice and kindness, to demand from man performance of an act which is beyond his power, such as to command a blind man: "See," or to command one who has no hands: "Stretch your hands."²⁹

Similarly, it would be an act of injustice if God would punish the believers in hell for ever or reward the infidels in paradise for ever.³⁰ He agreed with the Mu'tazilites on these questions in opposition to the orthodox,³¹ but he strongly opposed the former's doctrine that God must do what is best for man.

This Mu'tazilite doctrine, he argues, places God under compulsion to do a particular act at a fixed time for the benefit of an individual and denies His freedom of action. It only proves the right of a man on Him and not the intrinsic value and merit of an action which the divine wisdom keeps in view. Moreover, this doctrine cannot solve the problem of evil. Al-Maturidi, there-fore, maintains that divine justice consists not in doing what is salutary to an individual, but in doing an action on its own merit and in giving a thing its own place.³²

After this brief outline, we give below a somewhat detailed account of Al-Maturidi's view on the most important theological problems of his time, viz., the relation between God and human action, divine attributes, and beatific vision.

Relation between God and Man

Al-Maturidi in his Kitab al-Tauhid and Tawilat al-Qur'an has dealt at length with different aspects of this broad problem, the will, the power, the eternal decree, and the creative function of God; His wisdom and existence of evil in this world; freedom of man; and the basis of religious obligation and responsibility, etc.

Al-Maturidi combated the views of the Jabrites and the Mu'tazilites on the above questions and he also disagreed with al-Ash'ari on certain points. Refuting the absolute determinism of the Jabrites, he says that the relation between God and man should not be considered to be the same as that between God and the physical world. God has endowed man with reason, with the power of distinguishing between right and wrong, and with the faculties of thinking, feeling, willing, and judging, and has sent messengers and revealed books for his guidance.

Man inclines and directs his mind towards something which he thinks may benefit him, restrains himself from what he thinks will harm him, chooses one of the alternative courses of action by the exercise of his own reason, and thinks himself responsible for the merits or demerits of his actions.

Now, while he thinks, desires, inclines, chooses, and acts, he always considers himself quite free, and never thinks or feels that any outside

agency compels him to do any of his actions. This consciousness of freedom, al-Maturidi asserts, is a reality, the denial of which will lead to the denial of all human knowledge and sciences. Quoting passages from the Qur'an³³ he also shows that the actions enjoined or prohibited by God are ascribed to men, and that they will be accountable for their "own" actions.

All this clearly proves that God has granted men freedom of choice and necessary power to perform an action. The denial of this freedom will mean that God is wholly responsible for all human actions and is liable to blame or punishment for sins committed by men, yet on the Day of Judgment He will punish them for His own actions. This is quite absurd, as God has described Himself in the Qur'an as the Most wise, just, and compassionate.³⁴

But how can human freedom be reconciled with the Qur'anic conception of the all-embracing divine will, power, eternal decree, and God's authorship of all human actions? Al-Maturidi's explanations may be summed up as follows.

Creation belongs to God alone and all human actions, good or bad, are willed, decreed, and created by Him. Creation means bringing forth of an action from non-existence into existence by one who possesses absolute power and complete knowledge in respect of that action. As man does not know all the circumstances, causes, conditions, or the results of his action, and does not possess within himself the requisite power for producing an action, he cannot be regarded as the creator (khaliq) of his action.

Now, when it is proved that God is the creator of all human actions, it will necessarily follow that He also wills these actions, because divine action must be preceded by divine will. So nothing can happen in the world against or without the will of God. But, though God wills and creates human actions, He is not liable to blame or accountable for their actions, because divine will is determined by divine knowledge and He creates the action when a man in the free exercise of his reason chooses and intends to perform an action.

Thus, God wills an action good or evil, which He knows a man will choose, and when ultimately he chooses and intends to acquire it God creates that act as a good or evil act for him. From this, it will be clear that God's willing or creating an evil action is not inconsistent with His wisdom and goodness.

Because, God wills the happening of the evil because He desires the individual to exercise free choice, but being wise and just He always prohibits the choice of evil. So, though sins are in accordance with His will, they are never in accordance with His command, pleasure, desire, or guidance. Sin, then, according to al-Maturidi, consists not in going against the divine will, but in violating the divine law, command, guidance, pleasure, or desire.

The basis of man's obligation and responsibility (taklif), al-Maturidi maintains, does not consist in his possessing the power to create an action, but it is the freedom to choose (ikhtiyar) and the freedom to acquire an action (iktisab), conferred on man as a rational being, which make him responsible and accountable.³⁵

As regards eternal divine decree (qada' and qadar) al-Maturidi holds that it is not inconsistent with human freedom, nor does it imply any compulsion on the part of man, because it is an eternal record based on foreknowledge. God decrees the act He knows from eternity that a man will choose and acquire freely.

Man cannot deny his own responsibilities on the ground of the divine decree, al-Maturidi adds; he cannot do so on account of time and space within which actions must be done. So, though man is not absolutely free, God has granted him necessary freedom consistent with his obligation and, therefore, the divine decree relating to human actions should not be regarded the same as in relation to the physical world.³⁶

It may not be out of place to note here the points of difference between al-Maturidi and al-Ash'ari on this question. In order to make a man responsible for his action al-Maturidi laid great stress, as we have just noticed, on the freedom of choice (ikhtiyar) and freedom of acquisition (iktisab). Divine will, decree, and foreknowledge do not deprive a man of this freedom.

An action is a man's own action, though created by God, because it is the result of his own choice and it has been acquired by him without any compulsion. God provided for him all the means and facilities for acquiring an action, endowed him with the power of judgment and self-control, and granted him freedom to choose whatever means and course he prefers to adopt.

Al-Ash'ari also used the term acquisition (kasb)³⁷ but interpreted it differently. It seems that he did not favour the idea of the freedom of choice. According to him, God being omnipotent, all objects of power fall under His power, as God being omniscient all objects of knowledge fall under His knowledge. So a man's will has no effect or influence at all on his action; it is always determined by the divine will. Even the desire and power of acquisition fall under divine power and are the creation of God.³⁸ Acquisition then; according to al-Ash'ari, means only a general coincidence of the divine power and human actions.

It is God who in reality creates as well as acquires the action through man. This view, as is evident, does not differ in essence from that of the Determinists and hence he was regarded by some writers as being one of them.³⁹ Even most of the prominent Ash'arites like Qadi Abu Bakr al-Baqillani (d. 403/1013), Shaikh Abu Ishaq al-Isfara'ini, and Imam al-Haramain al-Juwaini (d. 478/ 1085) could not agree with him on this question and gave different interpretations of the term kasb.⁴⁰

Divine Attributes

Human languages do not possess any term, al-Maturidi says, to explain the nature and attributes of God in a way that will not imply any idea of resemblance or comparison. Yet it is a necessity for human understanding to ascribe some names and attributes to the Creator of the world. Giving a critical account of the views of the philosophers, the pluralists, the dualists, and the atheists, al-Maturidi asserts that the belief in one Supreme Power

and Ultimate Reality is universal, but the people differ greatly from one another in giving names and attributing qualities to this Supreme Being. Among the people of tauhid, it is only the Mu'tazilites, he says, who by denying the divine attributes and their eternity endangered this universal belief in the existence of one God.

Refuting the views of the Mu'tazilites on this question, he says that it is agreed that God has beautiful names and it will be quite futile to apply these names to Him divested of the meanings and contents which they imply; for otherwise it will not be unreasonable to ascribe to Him any name whatsoever. So, when, for example, it is said that God is wise, it must mean that He possesses the quality of wisdom. The denial of the divine attributes (ta'til) only creates confusions, makes the knowledge of God im-possible, and ultimately reduces Him to an unknown and unknowable Non- Being. The denial of the eternity of the attributes makes God imperfect in the beginning and subject to changes, and, thus, it shakes the very basis of tauhid.

The idea of pluralism or anthropomorphism that may arise due to affirmation of the eternal attributes can easily be eradicated by firm belief in the absolute unity of God together with the idea of tanzih (denial of likeness and similitude) and mukhlafah (difference from the created being). Thus when we say that "God is knowing," we also add to this (as a safeguard against any blasphemous idea concerning Him), "but not like the learned, and His knowledge is not like our knowledge." The consequences of the denial of the divine attributes or their eternity are far more dangerous than those of their affirmation.

As regards the relation between divine essence and attributes, al-Maturidi says that the problem is so complicated that no human reason can hope to solve it satisfactorily. So we should believe that God is one, has attributes which He ascribes to Himself, without similitude, comparison, and asking how. We should not go further than asserting that "the attributes are not identical with nor separated from His essence" (la huwa wa la ghairuhu).⁴¹

Al-Maturidi also maintains that all the attributes of God whether belonging to His essence or action are eternal. The word takwin has been used to denote all the attributes pertaining to action such as creating, sustaining, etc. Takwin, according to al-Maturidi, is an eternal attribute distinct from power (qudrah).

So God is the creator before and after the creation. This does not indicate in any way the eternity of the world, because as knowledge and power are eternal attributes, though the objects of knowledge and power are created, takwin is an eternal attribute, though the object of takwin (mukawwan) is created. The non-existence of the world at the beginning does not imply God's inability, as He created it at the appropriate time in accordance with His eternal know-ledge and will.⁴²

Al-Ash'ari on this question is in agreement with the Mu'tazilites and holds that the attributes of action are originated.⁴³ It seems to us that he agreed with them in order to evade the Aristotelian argument which aims at

proving the eternity of the world by the eternal, creative power of God. Al-Maturidi's main argument is that the idea of the createdness of any of the divine attributes is fundamentally opposed to the conception of God as a perfect, self-subsistent, eternal Ultimate Reality and is, therefore, in conflict with the doctrine of tauhid.

As regards the Word of God (Kalam Allah), al-Maturidi maintains that like all other attributes His attribute of speaking as well as His speech is eternal without similitude and comparison. The exact nature of this eternal speech or the attribute of speaking is not known, but it is certain that the divine speech cannot be composed of sounds and letters like human speech, because sounds and letters are created.

So, in reality, he asserts, only the "meaning" of which the words are an expression can be termed as the kalam of Allah. This "meaning" which existed with God from eternity can be heard and understood only through the medium of created sound.

Accordingly, Moses did not hear the eternal speech, but God made him hear and understand the eternal speech through created words and sounds. Now, what is heard by or revealed to the prophets is called the kalam of Allah figuratively (majazan) for three reasons: (1) They heard (understood) the purport (al-ma'na) of the kalam, that is, divine command, prohibition, forbidding, sanctioning, etc., which belong to God alone. (2) God Himself composed it (allafa wa nazama); hence it was inimitable by any human being. (3) It explains the eternal speech and proves His attribute of speech.⁴⁴

It is evident from the above account that al-Maturidi refutes the idea of the orthodox section who identified the revealed Qur'an with the eternal speech, and he agrees in principle with the Mu'tazilites who held it to be a creation of God. So the subject of contention between him and the Mu'tazilites is not whether the recited Qur'an is created, but whether God has eternal speech and the attribute of speaking.

Al-Ash'ari, like al-Maturidi, maintains that God has eternal speech and the attribute of speaking,⁴⁵ but it is not clear from his lengthy discourses in Kitab al-Luma and al-Ibanah what he exactly meant by kalam of Allah and what, according to him, was eternal in the Qur'an-words or meanings? He maintained that the eternal speech could be heard directly without the medium of created sound.⁴⁶

This statement, together with general trends of his ideas and his mode of reasonings as reflected in his printed books, corroborates a statement according to which both words and meanings were regarded by him as eternal.⁴⁷ But al-Shahrastani asserts that, according to al-Ash'ari, the words are created and the "mental" meaning (al-ma'na al-nafsi) is eternal,⁴⁸ this last is the view of all the eminent Ash'arites.⁴⁹ If so, there is not much difference on this question between the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites.

Beatific Vision

It has been noticed that al-Maturidi, like the Mu'tazilites, strongly opposed the anthropomorphic idea of God and interpreted meta-phorically those passages of the Qur'an which appear to create such an impression. But

on the question of seeing God in paradise by the believers, he is wholly in agreement with the orthodox, and firmly holds that the passages of the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet on this subject must be taken in their literal sense.

By scholastic reasonings he shows that the letter and spirit of these verses and traditions do not allow us to take them allegorically and to interpret seeing God as "seeing His signs and rewards or knowing Him by the heart." This latter type of seeing is common for believers and non-believers in the next world and may even happen in this world. The texts must always be taken in their literal and real sense, he argues, except where that is impossible.

The vision of God in the next world is not impossible and it does not necessarily prove His corporeality, and hence if the literal sense were rejected, its consequences would be dangerous and it might ultimately lead to the denial of the existence of God. As God is knowing and doing; for example, without His being a body or accident or without His being limited by time and space, so will He be an object of vision in the next world. Some people were misled because, as they had no experience of seeing what is not a body or an accident, they compared the vision of God in paradise with the vision of a material object in this world.

Thus, the Corporealists (Mujassimin) erred in saying that God is a body, because He will be seen, and the Mu'tazilites erred in saying that He cannot be seen because He is not a body. Conditions of vision, al-Maturidi says, differ from stage to stage, person to person, and genus to genus. Many things exist, but we do not see them. Angels who are not corporeal beings see us, though we do not see them. Conditions of seeing: rays of light, darkness, and shadow, are not the same as those of seeing solid material objects.

So it is quite unreasonable to apply the conditions of seeing a physical object in this world to the seeing of the Being which is not a body in the next world, where conditions will be totally different from those in this world. Seeing God, therefore, may be impossible in this world, but not in the next world.

He also argues that vision may not happen sometimes for some reason or other, although the conditions of vision exist; in the same way, vision may happen in the absence of those conditions. Another argument of his is that, according to our sense-experience, only the knowledge of matter and accidents can be acquired by a man, yet we assert the possibility of acquiring knowledge of the realities beyond experience. This principle is also applicable to beatific vision.

In short, al-Maturidi asserts that the vision of God in paradise is the highest spiritual and intellectual delight and the most coveted reward of the believers; it is an article of faith based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah and supported by reason. So we must accept this as such, without going into details.⁵⁰

Conclusion

The theological systems of al-Maturidi and al-Ash'ari have long since been accepted by the general populace of the Muslim world. Though ascribed to them, neither al-Maturidi nor al-Ash'ari was, in fact, the author of his system, nor was either of them a pioneer in this field. Imam Abu Hanifah (d. 150/767) was the first renowned scholar among the Ahl al-sunnah wa'l Jama'ah, who studied theology for long before he had taken up the study of Fiqh, combated the heretical sects of his time, and founded the first orthodox school in theology.⁵¹

Al-Maturidi followed his system, explained it in the light of the philosophy of his time, tried to defend it by argument and reason, and this provided for it a firm foundation. Hence this school is ascribed to its founder as well as to its interpreter who fixed its ultimate form and brought victory to it.

The difference between the attitude of al-Maturidi and of al-Ash'ari may be judged from this: If al-Ash'ari's attempt during the later period was to strike a middle path between rationalism and traditionalism, al-Maturidi certainly took a position between what may be called Ash'arism and Mu'tazilism. The important points of difference between these two leaders of orthodox Kalam, more strictly, between the two schools, have been reckoned by some writers as fifty in number.⁵² (References have already been made in the fore-going pages to some of the most important of them and we need not enter here into a discussion of the rest.)

As a result of these differences, there was once a tendency of bitter rivalry between the followers of these two schools but happily in course of time this tendency subsided and both the schools were regarded as orthodox. But how profoundly the educated Muslims of today are influenced by the system of al-Maturidi may easily be realized from the fact that the `Aqa'id of al-Nasafi (d. 537/1142), which gives the sub-stance of the former's Kitab al-Tauhid, has been recognized as an authority and prescribed as a text-book on theology in many educational institutions of the Muslim world.

A comparative study of the arguments employed by al-Maturidi and by the great Ash'arite scholars like `Abd al-Qahir al-Baghdadi (d. 429/1031) and Imam al-Haramain al-Juwaini (d. 478/1085) to prove the non-eternity of the world, the existence of God, His unity and attributes, the value of human reason, the necessity of the divine revelation, and the prophethood of Muham-mad, will show how deep and enormous his influence was on the orthodox dialecticians who came after him, and what a lasting contribution he made towards the development of orthodox Kalam.

That Shaikh Muhammad `Abduh (d. 1323/1905), one of the leaders of the modern reform movement in Islam, in his endeavour to reconstruct Islamic theology, closely followed the system of al-Maturidi, is evident from his Risalat al-Tauhid and his observations on several controversial questions in his note on the Sharh `Aqa'id al-`Adudiyyah.

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Notes

1. The word is also pronounced as Maturid and Maturit. Cf, al-Sam'ani, al-Ansab, fol. 498b; Ibn al-Athir, al-Lubab, vol. III, p. 76; Ahmad Amin, Zuhr al-Islam. vol. I, p. 365. It was wrongly transcribed by some writers as Matarid.
2. Al-Maturidi, Kitab al-Tauhid, MS. Cambridge, fol. 1, footnote al Sayyid Murtada, Sharh Ihya' of al-Ghazali, Cairo, 1893, V ol. II, p. 5.
3. Imam Abu Nasr al-'Ayadi, al-Samarqandi, one of al-Maturidi's teachers, was a descendant of Sa'd b. `Ubadah, vide 'Abd al-Hay Lakhnawi, al-Fawa'id al -Bahiyyah, Cairo, 1324/1906, p. 23.
4. Al-Sam'ani, op. cit., fol. 498.
5. Abd al-Qadir al-Qarashi, al-Jawahir al-Mud'iyah, MS. Cairo, p. 251 (it has been printed at Hyderabad); Mahmud al-Kufawi, Kata'ib A'lam al-Akhyar, MS. Cairo, pp. 129-30; Qasim b. Qutlubugha, Taj al-Tarajim, Leipzig, 1862, p. 44; Tash Kubrazadah, Miftah al-Sa'adah, Hyderabad, 1928, vol. II, p. 22; Sayyid Murtada, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 5-14; `Abd al-Hayy Lakhnami, op. cit., p. 195.
6. For Samanids see al-Maqdisi, Ahsan al-Taqasim, p. 294; Ahmad Amin, op. cit. vol. I, pp. 261 et sqq.
7. Kamal al-Din al-Biyadi, Zaharat at-Maram, Cairo, 1949, p. 23; Sharh Ihya' vol. II, p. 5, and books on Hanafi ,Tabaqat.
8. Kata'ib A'lam al-Akhyar, p. 129.
9. Three other works, viz., Sharh Fiqh al-Akbar of Imam Abu Hanifah, 'Aqidah abi Mansur and Sharh al-Ibanah of Imam al-Ash'ari are erroneously ascribed to him.

10. MSS. of this book are found at the Cairo, Istanbul, and Berlin Libraries. Sheikh 'Ala al-Din Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Samarqandi wrote a commentary on this book in eight volumes, an incomplete copy of which can be found at the Patna Library.

11. Al-Jawahir al-Mud'iyah, MS. Cairo, p. 251.

12. Kashf al-Zunan, Istanbul, 1943, vol. I, pp. 110-11.

13. For al-Ka'bi, see al-Shahrastani, Milal, al-Azhar ed., vol. I, pp. 116-17; al-Baghdadi, Kitab al-Fariq, Cairo, pp. 108-09.

14. Al-Ash'ari was born in 260/873 or 270/883 and remained in the Mu'tazilites' camp up to the fortieth year of his age, so he must have begun his movement after the end of the third century of Hijrah. Al-Maturidi was born before 248/862, and supposing that he spent about thirty years in acquiring knowledge, then his movement seems to have begun before the end of the third century A.H.

15. Al-Maturidi, op. cit., pp. 3, 13.

16. Ibid., pp. 4-5, 68-69.

17. Ibid., pp. 92-95; Tawilat, Surah vii, 54.

18. Ibid., pp. 91 et sqq.

19. Ibid., pp. 2-4.

20. Ibid., p. 116; Tawilat, MSS. Istanbul & Hyderabad, Preface; 'Ali al-Qari, Sharh al-Fiqh al-Akbar, Cairo, 1323/1905, p. 75.

21. Zuhdi Hasan, al-Mu'tazilah, Cairo, 1947, pp. 247-48; Ahmad Amin, Duha al-Ialam, Cairo, vol. III, p. 32.

22. Kitab al-Tauhid pp. 48-49, 91-92; Sharh al-'Aqa'id al-'Adudiyah with commentaries of Sialkuti and Shaikh Muhammad 'Abduh, Cairo, 1322/1904, p. 180, Nazm al-Fara'id Cairo, 1317/1899, pp. 32-37; al-Raudat al-Bahiyah, Cairo, 1322/1904, pp. 34-39.

23. Qur'an, vii, 56.

24. Kitab al-Tauhid, pp. 41-42, 48, 144-69, 178; Tawilat, Surah vii, 10.

25. Kitab al-Tauhid, pp. 13, 21, 46.

26. Ibid., p. 59; Tawilat, Surah xxxix, 62.

27. Tawilat, Surah vii, 54; v, 64; iv, 27; xi, 37; Kitab al-Tauhid, pp. 12, 32.

28. Kitab al-Tauhid, pp. 46-47, 61-62.

29. Ibid., pp. 134-35; Tawilat, Surah ii, 286.

30. Ibid., pp. 186 et sqq.

31. For al-Ash'ari's views on these questions, see his Kitab al-Luma', Cairo, 1955, pp. 113 et sqq.; al-Ibanah, Hyderabad, 1948, p. 59:

32. Kitab al-Tauhid, pp. 48, 61, 112.

33. Qur'an, ii, 77, 167; xxliii, 17; xli, 40; xcix, 7, etc.

34. Kitab al-Tauhid, pp. 115 et sqq., 165.

35. Ibid., pp. 117 et sqq.

36. Ibid., p. 161.

37. The evidence at our disposal does not clearly indicate when and by whom the doctrine of kasb was first formulated. But it is quite evident that neither al-Maturidi nor al-Ash'ari was the originator of this doctrine. The term kasb or iktisab had been used long before them by Imam Abu Hanifah and his contemporaries: Jahm b. Safwan (d. 128/745), Hafis, al-Fard, and Dirar b. 'Amar. Cf. al-Ash'ari, al-Maqalat, Cairo, vol. I, pp. 110, 313; al-Baghdadi, op. cit., pp. 129 et sqq.; Muhammad b. al-Murtada al-Yamani, Ithar al-Haqq, pp. 312, 316.

38. al-Ash'ari, Kitab al-Luma', Cairo, 1955, pp. 72 et sqq.

39. Ibn al-Nadim, al-Fihrist, chapter on the Jabrites; al-Shahrastani, Milal, vol. I, p. 134.

40. Al-Shahrastani, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 157 et sqq.; Imam al-Haramain, al-'Aqidat al-Nizamiyyah, p. 34; Shari'a al-'Aqa'id al-'Adudiyah, p. 88; al-Biyadi; Isharat al-Maram, p. 255.

41. Kitab al-Tauhid, pp. 12, 21, 31, 44, 51; al-Biyadi, op. cit., p. 118; al-Subki, Sharh `Aqidah. MS. Madinah.
42. Kitab al-Tauhid, pp. 23 et sqq.; Tawilat, Surahs i, 3; ii, 117.
43. The three schools differ from one another in defining the attribute of an action. Cf. Ali al-Qari, Sharh Fiqh al-Akbar, Cairo, 1323/1905, p. 19.
44. Kitab al-Tauhid, pp.26-28; Tawilat, Surahs ix, 6; xlii, 51; vii, 143; iv, 164.
45. Kitab al-Luma`, pp. 33 et sqq.; al-Ibanah, pp. 19 et aqq.
46. Kitab al-Luma`, p. 63; also Ibn Humam al-Musayarah, Cairo, 1347/1928, p. 11; `Abd al-Rahim, Nazm al-Fara'id, Cairo, 1317/1899, pp. 15-18; Abu `Udhbah, al -Raudat al-Bahiyyah, Hyderabad, pp. 44-45.
47. Sharh al-`Aqa'id al-`Adudiyyah, p. 188.
48. Nihayat al-Iqdam, p. 320.
49. Imam al-Haramain, al-Irshad, Cairo, 1950, pp. 102 et sqq.; al-Ghazali, al -Iqtisad, Cairo, pp. 71-72.
50. Kitab al-Tauhid, pp. 37-41; Tawilat, Surahs vi. 103; vii, 143; x, 26; lxxv, 22-23.
51. Al-Baghdadi, op. cit., p. 220; Usul al-Din, vol. I, p. 308; al-Makki and Bazzaz, al-Manaqib; al-Biyadi, op. cit., pp. 19-23. There are five books on theo-logy ascribed to Imam Abu Hanifah: al-Fiqh al-Akbar, al-Fiqh al-Absat, al-Risalah al-`Alim w-al-Muta'alim and al- Wasiyyah. These books, we are convinced, represent the correct views of the Imam.
52. Al-Biyadi, op. cit., pp. 53-56; Shaikhzadah, Nazm al-Fara'id, Cairo, 1317/1899; Sayyid Murtada, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 8 et sqq.; Abu 'Udhbah, op. cit.; `Abd Allah b. `Uthman, Risalah fi al-Khilaf bain al Ash'ariyyah wa'l-Maturidiyyah. MS. Cairo.

Chapter 14: Zahirism

Zaharism by Omar A. Farrukh, Ph.D, Member of the Arab Academy, Damascus (Syria)

Background

Since the second/eighth century, an interminable dispute dragged on between those who upheld the authority of Tradition (ahl al-hadith) in all matters of theology and jurisprudence, and those who advocated opinion (ashab al-ra'i).

It was expected, as pointed out by Ibn Khaldun in his *Muqaddimah* (p. 805) that the people of the Hijaz, particularly those of Madinah, should be versed in the science of Tradition (the sayings and doings of the Prophet Muhammad). With the rise of the `Abbasid Caliphate and the shifting of the political power and the religious leadership completely to Iraq, where the people had had less access to the sayings of the Prophet, and where the aspects of life, the agrarian problems, for instance, were more diverse and complicated through the inter-mingling of the successive civilizations since times immemorial, a new school, that of opinion, made its inevitable appearance.

The upholders of opinion, however, did not neglect Tradition, but they found it necessary to supplement Tradition with additions drawn from older codes and prevalent usages or framed by considerations of the actual situation in their new environment. At the same time an esoteric movement also began among the Shiites under a variety of names, the most current of which was the *Batiniyyah*¹ (seekers after the inner or spiritual interpretation of revelation). The forming of this sect is attributed to a certain Maimun of whose descent we are completely in the dark.

The *Batiniyyah* movement took its name from the belief of its followers that every *zahir* (apparent state of things) has a *batin* (an inner, allegorical, hidden, or secret meaning), especially in connection with revelation.² Since this movement adopted some aspects of Greek philosophy, such as emanation-ism,³ its followers were considered by Sunni authors to be heretics and out-side the pale of faith.⁴

During the Caliphate of al-Mamun (198/813-281/833) the *Batiniyyah* movement was quite strong;⁵ some half a century later it was widely spread in Iraq, Persia, Sind (western India), and Oman (south-east Arabia), as well as in North Africa, but it did not enjoy an enduring influence.⁶ It is to be remarked, however, that while a number of individuals in Muslim Spain had shared ideas with the *Batiniyyah*, no sectarian or heretical doctrine ever struck roots or succeeded in winning over communities of any dimensions there.

So, the second/eighth century had witnessed a heavy atmosphere of esotericism weighing on some fundamentals of Islam such as the essence of God, the understanding of the Qur'an, and the attitude towards the Caliphate. Added to this there was a trend of upholding opinion as a valid source of jurisprudence at the same level with the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet. At the same time there was also the *Mu'tazilite* school which

assumed reason as a more deciding factor than revelation in all matters of religion.

Since all these movements had chosen Iraq as their principal battle-field, another school, contrary to all of them and as extremist as any of them -appeared in Iraq itself and insisted on the verbal understanding of the Qur'an and of the sayings of the Prophet Mubammad as the sole guiding line to their real meanings clothed in the words of God and of His Apostle. This school was founded by a jurist Dawud ibn 'Ali, and it received its name the Literalists' (Zahiriyyah) school from the clinging of its followers to the wording of the revelation and not to the interpretation of it.

Dawid ibn 'Ali, His Doctrine and His School

The family of Dawud ibn 'Ali belonged to Kashan, a town in the neighbour-hood of Isfahan. His father was a secretary (katib) to `Abd Allah ibn Khalid, judge of Isfahan, in the days of the Caliph al-Mamun.⁷ Dawud⁸ himself was born in Kufah in 202/817. His family moved later to Baghdad where he was brought up, educated, and afterwards laid the foundation of his school of jurisprudence which bore his name al-madhab al-Dawudi,⁹ but which was better known as the Zahirite school (al-madhab al-zahiri).

In Baghdad, Dawud ibn 'Ali attended the lectures of many eminent jurists, the most prominent of whom was Abu Thaur (d. 246/860); a friend and follower of Shafi'i. The trend of education he received from them made him shift from the Hanafite rite to that to which his father belonged,¹⁰ the Shafi'ite, apparently because most of his professors (shuyukh) were more inclined to the Traditionists (ahl al-hadith) school to which Shafi'is belonged than to the school of the upholders of opinion (ashab al-ra'i) who were the followers of Abu Hanifah par excellence. Dawud perfected his education by an academic trip to Nishapur to meet Ishaq ibn Rahawaih (d. 237/851 or 238/852),¹¹ who also was a friend and follower of Shafi'i. Afterwards, he returned to Baghdad where he wrote his books.

Perhaps it is not very strange that a close and profound study of the Shafi'ite school of jurisprudence led Dawud ibn 'Ali finally to be dissatisfied with it. He forsook it and founded a new school, the Zahirite school, which recognized the Qur'an and the Hadith as the only sources of jurisprudence. He accepted, at any rate, consensus (ijma`) of the Companions of the Prophet, but he rejected analogy (qiyas), opinion (ra'i), personal approval (istihsan), and decisions on the authority of older generations (taqlid) altogether.¹²

Dawud ibn 'Ali was accomplished, trustworthy, learned, God-fearing, pious, and ascetic; he was also versed in logic and proficient in the art of disputation.¹³ It was said that he believed that the Qur'an was created and not eternal, but it seems that this was only an accusation.¹⁴ He died in 270/884 in Baghdad.

Dawud ibn 'Ali was a prolific writer. Ibn al-Nadim enumerates about one hundred and fifty titles from him.¹⁵ It seems that many of these titles were only chapters of some of his books. But there are also titles which represent bulky works of two thousand, three thousand, and even four thousand folios¹⁶ each. A few of these books touched the fundamentals of religion, e.

g., “On the Usul,” “On the Caliphate,” “Consensus and the Refutation of Qiyas,” and “On the Refutation of Taqlid.”¹⁷ Most of his other books treated of branches (furu`) or minor aspects of Fiqh concerning worship and legal transactions. Unfortunately no book has reached us from him. Ibn Hazm, nevertheless refers to him frequently. Muhammad al-Shatti (d. Damascus 1307/1889) made a collection of Dawud's Fiqh gleaned from the various works of his followers.¹⁸

It was related that Dawud ibn 'Ali admitted analogy where the cases in question were obvious,¹⁹ but it is more probable that he rejected analogy wholly, whether the cases were ambiguous or obvious.²⁰ As for consensus (ijma'), his position was totally different: he admitted the ijma` of the Companions of the Prophet only,²¹ on the ground that these Companions were in constant contact with the Prophet and fully aware of his intentions.

In his theology in particular he maintains, for example, that God is hearing, seeing, etc. But he says: “I do not say that He is seeing with the agency of sight ...”²²

Dawud ibn 'Ali re-examined all aspects of Fiqh on the basis of his Zahirite attitude. The following are three examples illustrating his trend of thought and argumentation in this respect.

1. Prayer on a Journey - God has said in the Qur'an: “And when you journey in the earth, there is no blame on you if you shorten the prayer.”²³

This led the Muslims to reduce prayer on a journey from four rak'ahs to only two.²⁴ Muslim jurists generally assert that this verse envisages cutting the prayer short on a journey of some duration.²⁵ Dawud, on the other hand, maintained that since there is no mention of the duration of the journey in the Qur'an,²⁶ prayer should be cut short on any journey whatever, even though it is a journey from one encampment to another.

2. Fasting on a Journey - Muslims fast in Ramadan, the ninth month of the lunar year. In this connection we read in the Qur'an: “But he among you who shall be sick, or on a journey, shall (not observe the days on which he travels but he shall) fast the same number of other days (when he returns home).”²⁷ It is agreed upon by all Sunni jurists that a Muslim may not observe Ramadan fasts on a journey which involves certain hardship, either on account of its long duration or its difficult nature, on hot days for example.²⁸

Dawud and his followers assert that a Muslim should not observe fasts on a journey because the wording of the verse does not stipulate any condition. If a Muslim, according to Dawud, did observe fasts for some days on a journey, even then he should keep fast for the same number of days when he returns home, for his fasting while journeying was not valid.²⁹

3. The Question of Usury (Riba) - Usury is forbidden in Islam.³⁰ But a difficulty arose from a tradition concerning it. It is related that the Prophet Muhammad said: “(You may barter) gold for gold, silver for silver, wheat for wheat, barley for barley, dates for dates, and salt for salt, only in equivalent quantities and on the spot. In all other commodities you may deal as you like, provided (the barter is transacted) on the spot.”³¹

Early Muslim jurists concluded from this tradition that a quantity of any commodity should not be bartered for a larger quantity of the same

commodity; otherwise, the surplus taken would be usury (riba). But if, for instance, a quantity of wrought gold was bartered for a larger quantity of unwrought gold, the surplus would be a gain or, better, a wage for craftsmanship.

Furthermore, they considered the six commodities named by the Prophet to be examples only; thus bartering copper, coffee, leather, apples, or wool for a larger quantity of these commodities respectively is also regarded - by analogy - as a form of usury.

Dawud ibn `Ali, on the other hand, believed that the Prophet Muhammad had named these commodities on purpose. Had he intended to prolong the list, nothing would have prevented him from doing so. Accordingly, if a man bartered a quantity, say of iron, maize, apples, or pepper for a larger quantity of the same commodity, the surplus would not be usury but gain.

The jurists contemporary with Dawud ibn `Ali took a very critical attitude regarding him and his school.³² The Shafi'ites in general criticized him severely and considered the Zahirite school to be worthless. Al-Isfara'ini (d. 418/1027) maintained that no account should be taken of the Zahirites. Since they rejected analogy (qiyas), he asserted, they could not have been able to exercise judgment and, therefore, no one of them should be elevated to the position of a judge.

Some others presumed that Dawud ibn `Ali was ignorant; others considered him to be a disbeliever. Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 241/855), the famous founder of the Hanbalite school, did not hold him in estimation.³³ Abu `Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Zaid al-Wasiti (d. 306/918-919), an eminent Mu'tazilite of Baghdad, looked down upon the Zahirite school as ridiculous.³⁴ The followers of Dawud ibn `Ali, nevertheless, were not only numerous but some of them were also prominent.³⁵

Dawud ibn `Ali was succeeded, as the head of the Zahirite school, by his son, Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Dawud (c. 255/869-297/910). But the latter was more of a poet, litterateur, and historian than an enthusiastic scholar of jurisprudence.³⁶ At any rate, he propagated the tenets of his father's school and bestowed on it so much prestige that the Zahirite rite was in his own days the fourth of the four rites prevailing in the East, the other three being the Shafi'i, Maliki, and Hanafi rites. Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Dawud owes his real fame, however, to an anthology of love-poetry known as *Kitab al-Zahrah*³⁷ The first and only extant half of this anthology was edited by A.R. Nykl³⁸ and Ibrahim Tukan. Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Dawud had some inclination towards philosophy, but philosophy did not constitute a component part of Zahirism before Ibn Hazm.

In the fourth/tenth century the Zahirite school had enjoyed its widest expansion and the climax of its prestige. The `Abbasid poet Ibn al-Rumi (d. 283/896) praised Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Dawud in a poem which opens with the words: "O son of Dawud! O jurist of Iraq!"³⁹

The famous historian, Tabari (d. 310/923), though not a Zahirite, paid close attention to Zahirite jurisprudence and studied it with Dawud ibn `Ali himself.⁴⁰ The foremost jurist of the Zahirite school in the fourth/tenth

century was Abd Allah ibn Ahmad ibn al-Mughallis (d. 324/936), through whom the Fiqh of Dawud ibn `Ali became popular in the Muslim world.⁴¹

In the following century the Zahirite school was already losing ground in the East; and before the middle of the century, in the days of the Hanbalite judge Abu Ya'la (d. 459,/1066), the Hanbalite rite took its place.⁴² The Zahirite school, at any rate, continued to enjoy in Syria some prestige until 788/1386.⁴³ In Egypt the school lived longer and had deeper roots. Al-Maqrizi (d. 845/ 1442), the famous historian of the Mamluk age in Egypt, was not a follower of the Zahirite school, but he had a favourable attitude towards Zahirism.⁴⁴

The Zahirite School in Muslim Spain

1. Al-Balluti

The first representative of Zahirism in Spain was Mudhir ibn Said al-Balluti who was born at al-Nashsharin, a suburb of Cordova, in 273/886. After completing his studies at Cordova, he travelled to Egypt and the Hijaz for a little over three years.

On his return, he was appointed as judge (Qadi) in the city of Merida, then transferred to the Northern Frontiers and finally made the Chief Justice of Cordova, which post he held until his death towards the end of 355/965. He upheld Dawud's doctrines and defended his views, though, in practice, he administered justice according to the established law of the country based on the Malikite school of jurisprudence. He was also a man of letters, poet, theologian, physiographer, and eloquent speaker. In fact, he was the real forerunner of Ibn Hazm.

2. Ibn Hazm

Life and Works

Ibn Hazm was the real founder of the Zahirite school in Muslim Spain and the most famous and prominent of the Zahirite jurists. With him the school reached its zenith, and with his death it died away. In reality, the Zahirite rite never recruited a community in Muslim Spain. It came on the stage as a philosophy supported by a single man who failed to use his genius in the right way.

Ibn Hazm was the descendant of a non-Arab, an Iberian in all probability, but he preferred to link his genealogy with a Persian freedman of Yazid ibn Sufyan, a brother of Mu'awiyah, the founder of the Umayyad Caliphate in the East.

The family did not attain any fame before Ahmad ibn Said, the father of Ibn Hazm, who became a minister to the Hajib al-Mansur ibn Abi Amir,⁴⁵ the Prime Minister of Hisham II, in 381/991. Ibn Hazm, who was born in 384/994 during the long ministerial term of his father, was brought up in a luxurious environment. He was fortunate enough to have been given a good education. The teacher who had the greatest influence on him was Ibn Muflit (d.426/1035), a Zahirite and a follower of Dawud ibn 'Ali; he chose to be eclectic in matters of worship and jurisprudence and did not agree that one should confine oneself to a particular school.

Ibn Hazm did not continue to enjoy prosperity and peace for long. With the outburst of the disturbances in 400/1009 and the death of his father only two years later, misfortunes began to overcome him and his family; and when he preferred, on this account, to withdraw from public life, his life became very obscure. A few years later, however, he decided to enter public life again. As a result, he experienced all ups and downs of life, from forming the cabinet to frequent imprisonments.

Six years after the fall of the Umayyad Caliphate in Cordova (422/1031) and the assassination of the fugitive Hisham III, life became unbearable for Ibn Hazm in the whole peninsula, not only because he was a client and partisan of the falling dynasty, but because he entertained also a religious doctrine which the rulers and the ruled in the peninsula did not share.

The only respite which Ibn Hazm had was during his stay on the island of Majorca, from 430/1039 to 440/1049. The local Governor of Majorca was Abu al-`Abbas Ahmad ibn Rashiq, an able statesman and a man of letters. For reasons inexplicable, he invited Ibn Hazm for a sojourn on the island. Ibn Hazm took refuge there and began, as soon as he could breathe freely, to propagate Zahirism.

Since he was supported by the Governor, some Majorcans followed him perhaps out of conviction, perhaps out of political tact - but it seems certain that the majority of the islanders were not in favour of the intruding doctrine. In 439/1047, the famous Maliki jurist, Abu al-Walid al -Baji (403/1013-474/1081) returned from a journey in the East.

He held debates with Ibn Hazm and caused his disgrace. In the following year, Ibn Hazm was obliged to leave the island and go back on the mainland, but he was chased out of every town and village in which he tried to secure a footing. Finally, after fifteen years of complete oblivion, he found asylum on the estate of his own family in Manta Lisham where he passed away in 456/1063.

Ibn Hazm was a very prolific writer on different subjects ranging from genealogical tables to epistemology. It is believed that his books were four hundred comprising 80,000 folios of some twenty million words. The most important of these books are Tauq al-Hamamah (the Dove's Neck-Ring - on confidence and confidants), Al-Milal wa'l-Nihal (Religions and Sects), Al-Ihkam fi Usul al-Ahkam (Precision Concerning the Principles of Religious Matters) and Al-Muhalla bi al-Athar (the Gilded or Ornamented with Revelation and Tradition). This last is a comprehensive book on the aspects of worship and jurisprudence in Islam. Ibn Hazm was also a man of letters, poet, and states-man, but he is more famous as a rationalist and theologian.

Ibn Hazm's Rationalism

In his book Al-Milal wa'l-Nihal, ibn Hazm appears to be a rationalist. The problems of a priori, of time and space which confronted Kant (d. 1804) so often in his Critique of Pure Reason, had busied Ibn Hazm in the same way. It is really astonishing that the Muslim theologian had tackled these problems in the same spirit of objectivity seven and a half centuries before the German philosopher. Let us take up the theory of know-ledge as

discussed by Ibn Hazm. Knowledge arises, according to him, from the following

(a) Sensory perception (shahadat al-hawas), that is, observation or sensory evidence.

(b) Primary reason (badihat al-`aql or awwal al-`aql), that is, a priori reason without the use of the five senses.

(c) Proof (burhan), which goes back, either closely or remotely, to the evidence of the senses or to primary reason.

Ibn Hazm holds definitely that man has six senses, and that the soul grasps perceptible objects (material objects) by the five senses; thus a pleasant odour is accepted by reason . . . thus also the soul is aware that red is different from green, yellow, etc., or that there is a distinction between rough and smooth, hot and cold, etc.

The sixth sense, ibn Hazm holds, is the soul's knowledge of primary things; that is, there are some things which man can know through his reason as being axiomatic, without requiring any proof for them. "Such is the soul's knowledge that the part is less than the whole; thus the young child, who is only just able to discriminate, cries when he is given only two dates, but is satisfied when you give him another.

This is because the whole is greater than a part, even though the child cannot define the limits of his knowledge The same sense gives the child the knowledge that two things cannot occupy the same spot; you will see him fight for a place where he wants to sit, knowing that that place is not big enough for another person, and that so long as another person occupies the place there is no room for him also ...

"This is a form of primary intelligence which is common to all except those whose reason is distorted ... or whose bodies are diseased or impotent in certain respects These truths of primary reason are truly axiomatic; they are beyond doubt and stand in no need of proof except to a madman . . . or to a scornful sophist."

Ibn Hazm's argument for the view that these things require no proof is this: "To demand proof of anything requires time; primary reason cannot possibly avoid that fact Yet between the soul's first learning to discriminate phenomena and its knowing the complete truth of all that we have mentioned, there is not a single minute, nor can there be."

But Ibn Hazm did not deny absolutely the necessity of proof to these things; rather, he held that such proof is a matter for personal acquisition which one may achieve, while another may not, and that it may carry weight only for such as have reached a high level of intellectual training.

Other means of acquiring knowledge, according to Ibn Hazm, are God's naming of things and men's convention as represented by the languages of the different nations. These two means, however, belong to theology and are discussed under that topic.

Philosophy and Science

Like all Muslim thinkers prior to his days, Ibn Hazm had no access to Greek originals. He had a predisposition towards argumentation, and was versed in the science of dialectics (Kalam). He claimed to have read (evidently through translations) the works of the Milesian and Eleatic

schools, of Euclid and Ptolemy, of Plato and Aristotle, and of Alexander of Aphrodisias, and to have had a general knowledge of astronomy, astrology, and medicine. He also stated that he was well versed in mathematics in general and geometry in particular.

Ibn Hazm does not agree with Heraclitus that the world is in constant flow nor with the Eleatics that motion is non-existent. On Being and Non-Being, he agrees with the Eleatics: Non-Being is not. In keeping with his general trend of thought, he affirms that space and time are limited and that they are, like all other things, created by God. In the same way he maintains that atoms are divisible because it is in the power of God to do everything, and to this power of His, infinite divisibility of an atom is no exception.

In physiography, he holds that the world is limited and the earth is spherical and that the sun is larger than the earth, but he agrees with Anaximenes that the sky is like a vault over the earth. He disagrees, however, with Pythagoras that there is a sister earth which helps the earth keep itself in the correct position.⁴⁶ The world, at any rate, is created, but it has existed for a very long time.

In ethics, he touches lightly on Greek philosophy and maintains with Prodicus of Ceos that death has no pain and that it should not be feared. He also holds with Epicurus and his contemporaries that the desire for pleasure and the repulsion from care are the criteria of happiness. But building up and improvement of character cannot be achieved by philosophy alone; the help of the prophets is necessary.

In his theory of knowledge, Ibn Hazm emphasizes, in addition to sensory perception and primary reason, three means of acquiring religious knowledge which are particularly fundamental in Islam. These are: the literal sense of the Qur'an, the sayings and doings of the Prophet Mubammad, and consensus (ijma').

The first and foremost source of knowledge is the literal sense of the text of the Qur'an. This must follow from the context of the fifty-ninth verse of the fourth Surah, "O ye who believe! obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those of you who are in authority, and if ye have a dispute concerning any matter refer it to Allah and to the Messenger . . ."

The text of the Qur'an must be understood literally unless the words in question are used metaphori-cally and in a way current among the early Arabs. No divergence is allowed from the text of the Qur'an except where one verse is modified or abrogated by another.⁴⁷ A total dependence on the Qur'an is made possible by the fact that every aspect of life and every need of men, material or spiritual, is treated in the Qur'an or provided for in it. God says, "We have neglected nothing in the Book."(6:38) This implicit meaning was reiterated explicitly in this verse: "This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour to you and chosen for you Islam as a religion."(5:3)

The second source of knowledge is the Tradition, the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad. Ibn Hazm accepts the true hadith or the Sunnah when related in a sure way and by reliable men in a connected chain which reaches the Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet is certainly trustworthy, and

Ibn Hazm quotes in this connection from the Qur'an: "Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed." (53:3-4)⁴⁸

Ibn Hazm accepts, as a third source of knowledge, consensus (ijma`) or general agreement of the Companions of the Prophet but on a further condition that all of them should have been aware of the matter agreed upon and that no one of them should have shown any disagreement or hesitation about it.

In contradistinction to the other schools of jurisprudence in Islam, the Hanafite school in particular, ibn Hazm rejects all other sources of jurisprudence such as intuition (ilham), hearsay (khabar), interpretation (ta'wil), deduction (istinbat), personal approval (istihsan), refraining from the un-seemly (ihtiyat), legitimating a matter passed over in silence (dalil al-khitab), looking for a reason in matters other than, mentioned in the Qur'an (ta'lil), and holding a belief on the ground that it has been held by one's predecessors or some prominent contemporaries (taqlid).

Only the Prophet Muhammad must be taken as a model in all matters of belief and behaviour. He equally rejected, and more forcibly, analogy (qiyas) and opinion (ra'i) or that which a man conceives as true but without a proof, or that which a man chooses out of mere desire. The Muslims should not abide by the beliefs and laws preached by prophets prior to Muhammad unless they are accepted by Islam as well.

Ibn Hazm's views about God, His essence and His attributes, are: God is one and unique; He is incorporeal; so nothing resembles Him nor does He take the shape of anything He has created. He is the creator of everything, of time, of space, and even of His own Throne. He is eternal, all-powerful and all-knowing. His power and knowledge as well as all His other names are eternal.

God cannot be conceived of as ruled by space and time, since He existed before there was space and time, for these were also created by Him. The verses in which God says of Himself: "The God of mercy sitteth on His Throne"⁴⁹ and "Then He directed Himself to the heaven,"⁵⁰ Ibn Hazm affirms with the Ash'arites that God's sitting or settling Himself on the Throne is known; but how it is done is unknown.

God has no attributes which modify His essence: His qualities are names and not adjectives, nor are they derived from adjectives. He says of Himself: "God's are the fairest names. Invoke Him by them."⁵¹

Thus, only these names, ninety-nine in number, by which God has named Himself, may be said to be His; we are not allowed to call Him by names which He has not mentioned as His, for example, the happy, the healthy, the beloved, the noble, or the brave, although these titles are, in themselves, true of Him and cherished by us. We are also not allowed to call Him by names, derived from the verbs with which He predicated Himself. God says: "And when they (the disbelievers) meet the faithful they say, 'We believe'; but when they are apart with their satans (comrades), they say, 'Verily we hold with you and at them we only mock.' God shall mock at them."⁵²

God says further: "And they (the Jews) plotted, and God plotted: but of those who plot, God is the best."⁵³ He also says: "And the heaven - with our

hands have We built it up.”⁵⁴ In spite of all that, says Ibn Hazm, we cannot call God the mocker, plotter, or builder, simply because He did not call Himself by these name. Moreover, we do not interpret His names to know how or why He is called thus: He called Himself, for instance, the hearer, the One who sees, but we cannot say that He has the sense of hearing or of sight.

Furthermore, God speaks in the Qur'an of His (one) hand, of His two hands, -and of His hands; so we may ascribe to Him one hand, two hands, or many hands. In the Qur'an He speaks also of His eye and of His eyes, but not of two eyes of His. According to Ibn Hazm, we may ascribe to God either one eye or ascribe to Him eyes, but not two eyes. When we speak of God's eye, hand, or face, we do not mean, at any rate, that He has members similar to ours. On the contrary, the words: face, eye, and hand are used as free meta-phors to mean simply God.

And though God is incorporeal, Ibn Hazm asserts that the Muslims would see Him on the Day of Judgment.⁵⁵ They cannot see Him, for certain, with the power of sight in their eyes but perhaps with the power which is called by some thinkers “the sixth sense.”

Regarding our knowledge of God, Ibn Hazm says, we do not maintain that we come to know Him by primary reason, for we do not want to run the risk of being refuted by somebody asserting that his primary reason does not lead him to the knowledge of God. Nor may we allow that the knowledge of God can be acquired by the art of reasoning, by argumentation or proof; since the masses are not capable of such dialecticism.

Failing to attain knowledge of God through these channels, some come to the conclusion that He does not exist. Nor may we allow authority or hearsay to be the criteria of the knowledge of God, because these cannot lead to real conviction. We know God only through revelation to the Prophet who is trustworthy and whose word should be accepted on its face value.

Ibn Hazm does not believe in the absolute free-will of man. Predestination, according to him, is nothing but the command of God that a thing should follow a definite course. Allah has created in man aptitudes, and every man behaves in compliance with his aptitudes. Accordingly, we may say that all actions of men, good and bad, are ultimately created by God.

Ibn Hazm was a polemicist by nature, and often right in his contentions. As Hitti says, “In this work [Al-Milal wa'l-Nihal] he pointed out difficulties in the biblical narratives which disturbed no other minds till the rise of higher criticism in the sixteenth century.” Yet he is to blame for the harsh language he used in his attacks on all religions and sects indiscriminately. On some occasions he attacked even some of those who shared with him the same doctrine.

Faith and Islam, says Ibn Hazm, are one and the same thing. Islam had abrogated all anterior religions. Therefore, no religion precedent to Islam should be followed, because every religion except Islam is obsolete and, consequently, annulled. Muhammad is the Prophet to all nations; he

preached religion according to the prescription of God to him; and when he died revelation ceased. Islam was made complete; it is impossible either to add anything to it, or deduct anything from it, or make any change in it in any way.

The best people are the messengers of God; next are the prophets not entrusted with any mission to any people. After them are the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad. These last differ in their prestige in accordance with their efforts in the service of Islam and their personal character and behaviour, determined by the truth and ideals established by the Qur'an and the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad.

Zahirism after Ibn Hazm

For a certain period Zahirism constituted in the East a school of jurisprudence, but in Muslim Spain it never grew beyond a persecuted philosophy. Even as a philosophy it began to decline there after the death of Ibn Hazm. It is true that Ibn Hazm built a Zahirite system of dogma and revised Muslim law from that standpoint, but his views enjoyed only a restricted acceptance in the Muslim West. In the East they found practically no echo. This is due to the uncompromising attitude he had taken in all matters of creed, worship, and legal transactions as well as to the harsh language he used while speaking of all those who did not share with him the views he entertained.

The Zahirites in the East, and the Hanbalites too, have always preferred to follow Dawud ibn 'Ali, though very little Fiqh has reached us from him. The few attempts to introduce Zahirism into North Africa were due largely to political considerations. On the Andalusian soil Zahirism found support or acceptance with individuals here and there. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (368-463/978-1071), the famous traditionist and biographer, had some leaning towards it.

A young contemporary of Ibn Hazm and of Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Humaidi was a historian and biographer of established fame. He was a declared Zahirite. When the persecution of the followers of the Zahirite school reached a high pitch in Muslim Spain, he left his native land, went to the East, and settled down in Baghdad where he died forty years later. Al-Humaidi was the first man to introduce Ibn Hazm's works into the East, but there they made no impression.

One would expect, despite all persecution, that Zahirism should have had numerous followers for a certain period at least, as has been the case with most other movements. Ibn al-Athir says:⁵⁶

There was in the Muslim West a multitude of them (of the Zahirites) called the Hazmiyyah or followers of Ibn Hazm." Asin Palacios tried to draw a complete list of them.⁵⁷ Some of these were, to be sure, Zahirites or with Zahirite leanings. But a number of those who were considered by him to be such were certainly not. That al-Ghazali was antagonistic to the Batinites⁵⁸ and was one who advocated a strict religious behaviour and showed a dislike for all innovations, as we see clearly in all his works, does not make him a Zahirite, and less so a follower of Ibn Hazm, as Asin Palacios tried to show.⁵⁹

Nor can we agree with Asin Palacios that Ibn Rushd (Averroes) was a Zahirite on the mere fact that he quoted Ibn Hazm three times⁶⁰ in his *Tahafut al-Tahafut*. Ibn Rushd mentioned also the Zahirites once with disdain⁶¹ and twice with indifference.⁶²

Moreover, his theme in his two small but worthy epistles, *Fasl al-Maqal* and *Manahij al-Adillah*, is that the masses cannot rise or be raised above the literal meaning of the Law, while the thinkers are called upon to ponder on the intentions of religion.

With the advance of the sixth/twelfth century, Zahirism became a problem in the Muslim West, in Spain, and in North Africa: while the masses behaved on the narrowest Zahirite lines, Zahirism itself was being fought on every side. Philosophy was equally combated. The rationalist thinker Ibn Tufail⁶³ furnishes us with a very clear picture of the situation there; a few enlightened individuals were living in the midst of a multitude of common people unwilling and incapable of thinking for themselves.

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Notes

1. Shahrastani, vol. II, p. 29; cf. p. 5.
2. Ibid., p. 29, cf. pp. 31 f.
3. Ibid., pp. 29f.
4. Farq, pp. 14, 142; cf. pp. 152, 169, 177, 182, 216; cf. Shahrastani, vol. II, pp. 31 f.
5. Nubadh, Introd., p. 4.
6. GAL, I, p. 194; Suppl., I, p. 312.
7. Sam'ani, p. 226.
8. His full name was Abu Sulaiman Dawud ibn 'Ali ibn Khalaf.
9. Sam'ani, pp. 224, 255ff.
10. Goldziher, p. 28 n.
11. Tarikh Baghdad, vol. VIII, p. 369.
12. Fihrist, p. 216; Subki, vol. II, pp. 46; cf. p. 44.

13. Fihrist, p. 216; Subki, vol. II, pp. 42; 44, 46.
14. Subki, vol. II, pp. 43 f.
15. Fihrist, pp. 38, 216f.
16. A folio comprises about twenty lines (cf. Fihrist, p. 159).
17. Fihrist, pp. 216, 217; Sub ki, vol. II, p. 46.
18. Risalah fi Masa'il al-Imam Dawud al-Zahiri, an epistle containing the questions decided by Dawud the Zahirite (publ. Damascus 1330/1912), erroneously thought by Brockelmann (GAL, Suppl., I, p. 312) to be by Dawud ibn 'Ali himself. He states the date of its publication as 1930 which is also a mistake, perhaps a misprint for 1330 A.H.
 19. Subki, vol. II, p. 46, line 1; vgl. Goldziher, p. 36.
 20. Subki, vol. II, p. 46, line 7.
 21. Al-Ihkam, vol. IV, p. 147.
 22. Al-Milal, vol. II, p. 140.
 23. Qur'an, ii, 184, 185.
24. Muslims perform five prayers per day: one of two rak'ahs (units of movements), one of three rak'ahs and three of four rak'ahs each. To cut, a prayer short is to reduce a prayer of four rak'ahs to only two.
 25. Cf. Malik, pp. 146-48, etc.
 26. Mafatih, vol. III, p. 444, quoted by Goldziher, p. 47; cf. Shatti, p. 12.
 27. Qur'an, iv, 101.
 28. Cf. Malik, p. 294 (No. 22).
 29. Shatti, p. 13 bottom.
 30. Qur'an, ii, 275, 276, 278; iii, 130; iv, 159; xxx, 39.
 31. Sahih Muslim, Cairo, 1331;1912, vol. V, p. 44, lines 8ff., cf. 44ff.
 32. Subki, vol. II, pp. 43, 46.
 33. Ibid., cf. p. 43. Cf. ibn Khallikan, Cairo, Bulaq, 1299 A.H., vol. I, p. 4; GAL, Suppl., I, 66f; Nubadh, Introd., p. 4.
 34. Fihrist, p. 172.
 35. Sam'ani, pp. 224-26.
 36. Fihrist, p. 216.
 37. Kitab al-Zahrah (The Book of the Flower), the first half (published by the University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois), printed at the Catholic Press, Beirut, 1932.
 38. An Arabist Orientalist, born in Bohemia 13133/1885 whose academic activities since 1340/1921 belong to his sojourn in the United States. He is versed in very many languages, old and new, eastern and western. He is the representative of the Arabic theory in the rise of troubadour poetry in southern France.
 39. Ibn Khallikan, vol. II, pp. 140-41.
 40. Fihrist, p. 234.
 41. Sam'ani, p. 227.
 42. Nubadh, loc. Cit.
 43. Fihrist, p. 217.
 44. Goldziher, pp. 194-96.
 45. Al-Mansur ibn Abi `Amir was Prime Minister to Hisham II who was a weakling. He usurped the power and ruled Muslim Spain virtually for fifty years- and as Prime Minister for twenty-six years. He died in 392/1002.
 46. See Al-Milal, vol. V, p. 58; cf. Ueberweg, vol. I, p. 68 line 34
 47. Al-Muhalla, vol. I, p. 52; Ihkam, vol. IV, p. 107, of.. pp. 59ff.; Nubadh, p. 28.
 48. Al-Ihkam, vol. IV, p. 147
 49. Qur'an, vii, 53; x, 3; xiii, 2; xxv, 59; xxxii, 4; lvii, 4.
 50. Ibid., xli, 11.
 51. Ibid., vii, 180
 52. Ibid., ii, 15.
 53. Ibid., iii, 54.
 54. Ibid., li, 47.
 55. Ibid., lxxv, 23
 56. Ibn al-Athir, vol. XII, p. 61; cf. Taj, vol. VIII, p. 245: cf. Asin. p. 280.
 57. Asin, pp. 280-329.

58. Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal, Damascus. Ist ed., 1352/1934, pp. 5, 16, 44-47.
59. Asin, p. 299; cf. pp. 297-300.
60. Ibid., pp. 208, 542, 580.
61. Tahafut al-Tahafut, pp. 3111 f.
62. Ibid., pp. 12, 429.
63. Ibn Tufail, .pp. 126f., 136ff. (second ed., pp. 178f., 188ff.) Translation by Ockley, pp. 101 (157f.), 116-19 (171-76). See also Ibn Tufail and His Philo-sophical Romance (1st ed.), pp. 58f., 77-83 (second ed.), pp. 37f., 57-61.

Chapter 15: Ikhwan al-Safa

Ikhwan al-Safa by Omar A. Farrukh, Ph.D, Member of the Arab Academy, Damascus (Syria)

Introduction

The name Ikhwan al-Safa was assumed by a group of libres penseum who cultivated science and philosophy not for the sake of science and philosophy, but in the hope of forming a kind of an ethico-spiritual community in which the elites of the heterogeneous Muslim Empire could find a refuge from the struggle that was raging among religious congregations, national societies, and Muslim sects themselves.

External evidence concerning the Ikhwan al-Safa is so scanty that no clear historical picture of them is in any way possible. Were it not for Abu Hayyan al-Tauhidi (d. after 400/1009), a famous author and a friend of some members of the group, no facts about them would have come down to us.

The group of the Ikhwan al-Safa originated in Basrah. In about 373/983, the group was already famous and its “Epistles,” which contain its spiritual doctrines and philosophical system, were in wide circulation.¹

The complete name of the group was Ikhwan al-Safa wa Khullan al-Wafa wa Ahl al-Hamd wa Abna' al-Majd² a name which was suggested to them by the chapter of the “Ring-Necked Dove” in Kalilah wa Dimnah, a book which they very highly esteemed.³

The Ikhwan al-Safa succeeded in keeping complete secrecy about their names. But when Abu Hayyan was asked in about 373/983, about them, he named, perhaps at random, five of them: Abu Sulaiman Muhammad b. Ma'shar ad-Busti, known as al-Muqaddisi, Abu al-Hasan 'Ali b. Harun al-Zanjani, Abu Ahmad Muhammad al-Mihrajani, a certain al-'Aufi, and the famous Zaid b. Rifa'ah.⁴

The Ikhwan al-Safa produced numerous works the most famous and im-portant of which is the encyclopedic compilation entitled Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa (Epistles of the Ikhwan al-Safa), which will henceforth be referred to as Rasa'il or “Epistles.” These “Epistles” are definitely the result of a collaboration of various writers many of whom may not have been members of the group.

The compilation must have dragged over a long period, but by 373/983 the “Epistles” must have been already complete in the first recension at least. It is, moreover, practically certain that the Ikhwan al-Safa embarked upon the compilation of the “Epistles” with the number fifty in their mind. The current edition, however, has fifty-three epistles.

Closely connected with the “Epistles” is al-Risalat al-Jami'ah (the Com-prehensive Epistle) which was a summarium and summa of the original “Epis-tles.” It was also intended for private circulation among the more advanced members of the group. The Jami'ah discards much of the scientific information originally the backbone of the “Epistles,” and

expounds more fully and frankly the ideas which the Ikhwan al-Safa intended to inoculate into their followers.⁵

The Jami'ah was further summarized in Risalat al-Jami'at al-Jami'ah au al-Zubdah min Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa (the Condensation of the Comprehensive Epistle or the Cream of the Epistles of Ikhwan al-Safa), called also al-Risalat al-Jami'ah.⁶ The scientific information as well as chapters of the "Epistles" are eliminated, while the symbolic and esoteric interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an are brought out vigorously.

The Ikhwan al-Safa made arrangements for holding meetings everywhere they had followers. In these meetings, which were held once every twelve days and were restricted to the members and followers of the group, subjects of metaphysical and esoteric nature were discussed.⁷ There were also occasional meetings for the initiation of young people.⁸

Apparently, some of the followers were given, during these meetings, to singing, drinking, and other indulgences for which the Ikhwan al-Safa rebuked them indirectly.⁹

The Ikhwan al-Safa were a secret group. They were recruited through personal and confidential contacts. The emissaries were advised to work among the youth, as old people are usually rigid and unfit for any movement.¹⁰

The group had four grades in which its members were placed generally according to their age. The first and most inferior grade was that of those who had attained their fifteenth year; the second of those between thirty and forty years of age; the third of those between forty and fifty. The fourth, last and highest grade, was that of those who were already fifty years of age.¹¹

The Ikhwan al-Safa were Muslims. But they had a special interpretation of religion in general, and of Islam in particular. The Shi'ite colouring, which is very conspicuous in their missionary work, is only dramatic because it helped them to play cleverly upon the emotions of the masses.

In the strict historical sense, the Ikhwan al-Safa did not belong to any sect. In fact, they sought, with the aid of Islam and Greek philosophy, to work out a spiritual doctrine which would take the place of the historical religions and which would, at the same time, suit everyone and insult nobody.

As far as we can gather from the "Epistles," the Ikhwan al-Safa had no political programme. It seems, however, that some of their followers had pressed for political action to take the reins of government into their hands. The Ikhwan al-Safa themselves, the magnates among them, were not of this opinion; they reiterated in this connection that their sole aim was to uphold the faith and attain the bliss in the hereafter. In the meantime they tried to acquire knowledge and be versed in theoretical sciences.¹² They declared, further, that they intended to build up a spiritual city, a Utopia, which was not of this world, neither on the continent; nor on the high seas, nor in the air.¹³

The sections, in the "Epistles," referring to daulatu ahl al-khairi and daulatu ahl al-sharri (literally, the State of the people of good and the State

of the people of evil) contain only a brief and general discussion on, the terms of governments or dynasties and on their succession.¹⁴ The Ikhwan al-Safa referred once¹⁵ to the coming of daulat al-khairi; but they meant simply “the time when the adherents to their group would form the bulk of the nation.”

System and Theories

1. Classification of the Sciences

Sciences may be classified in different ways. The Ikhwan al-Safa mentioned a few classifications and adopted that which divided all branches of knowledge roughly into three major classes:¹⁶ mathematics, physics, and metaphysics, a classification which was current since Aristotle's days. Mathematics included, in the “Epistle,” the theory of numbers, geometry, astronomy, geography, music, theoretical and practical arts, ethics, and logic.¹⁷ Physics included matter, form, motion, time, space, the sky, generation, corruption, minerals, the essence of nature, plants, animals, the human body, the senses, life and death, microcosm, pleasure, pain, and language.¹⁸

Metaphysics was subdivided, as should be expected, into psycho-rationalism and theology. The first sub-division included psychics, rationalistics, being, macrocosm, mind, great years, love, resurrection, and causality.¹⁹ Theology included the beliefs of the Ikhwan al-Safa, friendship, faith, divine Law, prophethood, call unto God, the in-corporeals, politics, the structure of the world, and magic.²⁰

2. Theory of Knowledge

The Ikhwan al-Safa were very much interested in epistemology or the theory of knowledge. General knowledge, they said; may be acquired in three ways:²¹

(1) The way of the five senses is the natural and the most common way of acquiring knowledge. But through our senses we acquire only the material changes immediately apprehended by us and occurring in space and time.²²

(2) Man acquires knowledge also by means of primary reason, by pure or mere thinking. But reason, if unaided by sound senses, cannot acquire knowledge. Moreover, concepts having no connection with our senses, like those of God and the First Matter, cannot be acquired thus.²³ Akin to the two previous ways is the way of proof,²⁴ the way of the trained dialecticians.

(3) The way of acquiring knowledge which agrees best with the esoteric doctrine of the Ikhwan al-Safa is the way of initiation and authority, i.e., re-receiving knowledge personally from an authorized elder, a teacher in the broadest and deepest sense. This teacher receives his knowledge from the Imam (religious leader) who, in turn, receives it, through other Imams, from the Prophet whose ultimate source of knowledge is God.²⁵

Philosophy, wisdom or philosophical wisdom, according to the Ikhwan al-Safa, is to behave Godlike as best as a human being can.²⁶ A more detailed definition would be “love for science added to knowledge of the essence of

all beings, gained” as best as one can, together with profession and public behaviour in harmony with that.”²⁷

In the “Epistles” of the Ikhwan al-Safa metaphysics proper is quite meagre.

3. Metaphysics

If metaphysics did not include theology, it would have interested them very little.

Form and Matter

The views of the Ikhwan al-Safa regarding form and matter are Aristotelian: every body consists of matter and form which are inseparable, since pure forms are only concepts like the soul and the intel-lect.²⁸ Matter and form are both simple essences. The form is more important, since bodies are different because of their forms, their matter being in many cases the same; but matter is theoretically older.²⁹ In keeping with their dis-position towards compilation, they show some leaning to Plato when they say³⁰ that the images, figures, frames, and characteristics which we see in the world of (sublunary) bodies and in the essences of the heavenly bodies are examples, likenesses, and colourings of those forms which are in the world of spirits.

Space and Time

As regards space and time, their view was that both are not realities; space is more objective, since it is related to bodies which have dimensions: it is the vessel which holds the contained.³¹

Time has no independent existence. It cannot be conceived of except in connection with moving bodies. Note, if space is the outer surface of the world and time is the reckoning of the rotations of the spheres, space and time would be unthinkable prior to the spheres themselves.³² These views led some to think that they believed in the eternity of the world. They were aware of this accusation and tried to defend themselves against it.³³

Motion

There are six general kinds of motion grouped in three pairs: generation and corruption, increase and decrease, change and displacement. The particular kinds are numerous. The continuous and perfect motion is spherical; the straight motion is also continuous but not perfect. The arrow when passing through the air forms, from the bowstring to its falling place, one continuous course.³⁴ Here they disagree, in the example of the arrow, with Zeno of Elea (d. 430 B.C.) who argued that if a line was made up of points, there must be always space among these points. And so, an arrow in any given moment of its flight must be at rest in some particular point.³⁵

Causality

In the field of causality the Ikhwan al-Safa depended on Aristotle. `Ilal (pl. of `illah, fem.) or major causes are four:³⁶ the hayulaniyyah (material, the matter or substance of which a thing is made), suriyyah (formal, the form which is given to a certain substance to produce that thing), fa'iliyyah (active, the agent which gives that substance its form) and tamamiy-yah (fulfilling, the end which that produced thing serves).

The answer to a question concerning any of the causes, and especially the fourth cause, is always difficult because it is a question about the essence of things. These four causes should act together, otherwise the intended thing would not come into existence, and they should hold on, so that the produced thing might persist. It is needless to say that God is the ultimate cause of all beings.³⁷

Number

Numbers are the vehicle of the doctrine of the Ikhwan al-Safa. The Pythagorean theory of numbers (their properties: proportion, progression, etc.) and their linking mystically to the life and after-life of man captured their imagination.

The Ikhwan al-Safa divided the numbers into two classes: a factor which is the “one” and a “series from two ad infinitum.” The one is an absolute unity, indivisible, undiminshable, and unincreasable. All the numbers originate from the one: the two by the repetition of the “one” twice; the other numbers by adding the “one”; whence its character as a factor to every subsequent number.³⁸ This dexterous acrobaticism was necessary to arrive at the following, half-theological and half-metaphysical statement: Just as “the one is of a different nature from the numbers which originate from it, so the One (God) is unlike all the beings emanating from Him.”³⁹

Being and Emanation

This leads us to Being and Emanation, the coming of the universe into existence, or its creation.

The universe is not eternal but created by God through emanation. Ema-nation was a compromise between the strict religious notion of creation and the Aristotelian view of the eternity of the world. Theoretically, creation was accomplished in two steps: first, God willed, in one thought, that the universe should come into existence ex nihilo; then, immediately emanation began and proceeded gradually, until the universe took its present shape.

The order and character of emanation were as follows:⁴⁰

(i) Al-Bari (The Maker, Creator, or God). Al-Bari is the First and only Eternal Being, the One, Unique, and One in every respect. He has no partner and no peer. No anthropomorphic attribute or action should be ascribed to Him. Only the will to create pertains to Him.⁴¹

(ii) Al-`Aql (Intellect or Gr. Nous). Al-`aql was the first being to emanate from al-Bari. God created it directly, necessarily, without break, and with no need for movement or effort. From God's eternity it acquires its own eternity; and through His perpetuance it receives its continuity and perfection. It is one in number as God Himself is One. But since God does not condescend to deal with material bodies, He created in the intellect all the forms of subsequent beings and instituted in it the office of re-emanation: from it emanated the world-soul and the first matter. It is clear, then, that the office attributed usually to God belongs, in the opinion of the Ikhwan al-Safa, to the intellect, a counterpart, duplicate, or image of God.⁴²

(iii) Al-Nafs al-Kulliyah (The Absolute Soul, the World-Soul) - The world-soul is the soul of the whole universe, a simple essence which emanated from the intellect. It receives its energy from the intellect. It manifests itself in the sun through which it animates the whole sublunary (material) world. What we call creation, in our world, pertains actually to the world-soul.⁴³

(iv) Al-Hayula (Arabicized from Gr. hyle: substance, matter, stuff), First Matter - First matter is a simple and spiritual essence already substance with-out bulk, and yet without conceivable dimensions. Because the first matter was passive, having no proper energy; it could not emanate by itself. It was caused by the intellect to proceed from the world-soul which had to exert effort and show great care to facilitate for it to gush forth and become subsequently susceptible to accepting different forms.”⁴⁴

(v) Al-Tabi'ah (Nature) - Nature is one of the powers of the world-soul, the energy diffused throughout the sublunary world and effecting all bodies therein, organic and inorganic. It is the cause of motion, life, and change. It works wisely and uniformly. In this sense, it is the philosophical term for the religious concepts of divine will and Providence.”⁴⁵

Here, with nature, ceases the influence of the intellect, since all subsequent emanations will tend to be more and more material, defective, and, conse-quentially, unworthy of its care.⁴⁶

(vi) Al-Jism al-Mutlaq (The Absolute Body) - When the world-soul began, with the help of the intellect, to move the first matter in three directions, the first matter acquired the three dimensions (length, width, and depth) and became the absolute body or second matter. The second matter is no more a concept, an essence, or a quality denoting pure existence, as was the first matter, but a quantum, spherical in shape. This absolute body, or second matter, is the substance of which our world, as such, is made⁴⁷

(vii) The Spheres or the World of the Spheres - In the seventh stage of emanation appeared the spheres which are not imaginary but spiritual, spheri-cal, hollow, transparent, and concentric bodies. These spheres, which are eleven in number, vary in the thickness of their shells, in proportion to the magnitude of the planets with which they are inset. These spheres are: the spheres of the fixed stars, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon. All the heavenly bodies are made up of a fifth element, ether,⁴⁸ and are not liable to generation and corruption.⁴⁹

(viii) The Four Elements - With the emanation of the four elements: fire, air, water, and earth, we come to the beings immediately under the sphere of the moon (within its orbit), to the sublunary world where the process of generation and corruption begins to take place.

Fire, air, water, and earth - supposed to be elements by the Ikhwan al-Safa like many Greek thinkers - exist, free in nature, in minor spheres about the centre of the earth. Further, they espoused the view of the Ionians, and Thales (d. c. 545 B.C.) in particular, as against the Eleatics, that the four “elements” change into one another, water becomes air and fire; fire becomes air, water, earth, etc.⁵⁰

(ix) The Three Kingdoms - In the closing stage of emanation appeared the three kingdoms: mineral, plant, and animal, which originated from the absolute interchange and proportional intermixture of the four elements.⁵¹

Macrocosm and Microcosm

The early Greek thinkers conceived of the universe as one living being in which the phenomena and powers are correlated and governed hierarchically by a single general law. Democritus of Abdera (d. c. 370 B.C.) developed from that concept the Theory of Macrocosm and Microcosm which treated of man as a reduced model of the universe, and of the universe as the enlarged copy of man.⁵² His theory was accepted by the Ikhwan al-Safa.

The Individual Soul (al-Nafs al-Juz'iyah) and Its Fall

As soon as the world-soul was called upon to care for individual beings, beginning with the spheres, its innumerable powers became distinct and independent but not detached, since detachability is a property of matter. In this sense individual souls, representing the infinite powers of the world-soul, began to form. During a very long time these souls filled the world of the spheres and constituted the angels who animated the heavenly bodies.

At first, they were aware of the grace which is bestowed by the intellect upon the world-soul, of which they are the powers. They contemplated the intellect and performed the wor-ship due to God. By and by, some of these individual souls began to forget much about their origin and office.

This sin caused them to get farther and farther (though not in the sense of space and time) from God. The punishment was the fall of the sinful souls to our earth, to be tied to individual bodies in order to atone, by undergoing hardships, pain, and sorrow, for the sin they had committed in their heavenly abode. This was the metaphysical origin of life on earth.⁵³

The fall was described and explained symbolically by the Ikhwan al-Safa. When God created the universe, He peopled it with spiritual incorporeal beings whose office was to praise and glorify God. These were cognitive beings; they could witness fully the corporeal and the absolute and could conceive of every form and thought anywhere in the universe. The period during which this condition prevailed, since the creation, was called daur al-kashfi or the period of exposition, as every being was exposed to every other being in every respect.⁵⁴

Towards the end of this period, God willed that daur al-sitri, the period of concealment, should succeed and that the Absolute be hidden in a corporeal body which the faculties of the spiritual beings cannot penetrate. So, He created Adam in His own image and breathed in him the world-soul and settled him in His paradise. Then God enjoined that all the spiritual beings, save a few archangels, should prostrate before him, worship him, and be at his com-mand in the management of the world.⁵⁵

At the same time God warned Adam against eating from a certain tree. On the other hand, Satan (Iblis), one of the lesser leaders of the jinn who had aspired to be in place of Adam, was vexed by the honour bestowed on Adam. He refused to prostrate before Adam and be subordinate to him.⁵⁶

Then he accosted God with the pretension: "I am better than he. Thou didst create me from fire and him from clay."⁵⁷ Afterwards he turned to Adam to avenge himself on him.

Knowing Adam's reality and frailty, Iblis could convince him that eating from the forbidden tree would disclose to him the names and grades of the archangels who were exempted from prostrating before him, would give him knowledge of the hereafter, and would render him immortal.⁵⁸

When Adam realized what he had become, he was filled with boastfulness. At times he overshot himself and disclosed a part of the secret with him to some of those who were around him but were unworthy of this secret before the time assigned for such disclosure. This was Adam's crime - curiosity and lust for power.⁵⁹

Now, it was no more possible for Adam to stay with the angels who disavowed him because he showed a knowledge inconsistent with his physical appearance and which was even new and startling to them who, as spiritual beings, were supposed to know more than he. Even the animals and the other inhabitants of paradise were scared by his behaviour and abhorred him. Therefore, he was caused to fall to earth to lead on it the life of flesh, deprived of all the supernatural faculties accorded to him in the heavenly abode. With him also fell his wife and Iblis, so that the struggle may continue and be decided openly, and in a fair manner.⁶⁰

The fall of Adam represents, in the metaphysical system of the Ikhwan al - Safa, the union of the individual souls with sublunary bodies. When an individual soul is caused to fall, it may be lucky enough to realize its mistake and repent readily. In this case its downward journey is interrupted and it is caused to turn back and regain its former place.⁶¹

The unlucky souls continue their fall towards the centre of the earth to be tied to an inorganic body, plant, beast, or man. We are concerned with the soul assigned to a man which is the least unlucky of all the falling souls.

When a soul falls, it enters the ovum which happens to be impregnated at the time of its fall. This soul in the ovum comes soon under the regimen of the planets. All planets, beginning with the farthest one, Saturn, influence the incubation of the soul turn by turn for a whole lunar month. After the completion of the third month the foetus comes under the influence of the sun, the king, of the planets, and life is breathed into it. The period of pregnancy is accepted by the Ikhwan al-Safa to be (at least) seven complete lunar months, the number of the spheres of the then known planets.⁶²

The soul is prepared in this world through the medium of the body for the hereafter. Life in this world is only a means to an end: here the soul is enabled to attain perfection in order to be allowed to regain its former celestial life. The body is only the workshop of the soul, a temporary house, a shell, a mount necessary for a journey. Once the body is forsaken by the soul it becomes again a heap of solid matter akin to the constituent elements of the earth. But the body is as necessary for the soul as is the womb for the development of the foetus.⁶³

Death is welcome to the purified soul, since death means to it nothing more than that it has stopped using the body. With the death of the body the real life of the soul begins. Moreover, the soul cannot benefit by the

knowledge acquired during its terrestrial life except after the death of the body.⁶⁴

Lesser and Greater Resurrections, Paradise and Hell

With the death of the body occurs the first or lesser resurrection of the soul. All human souls are immortal: those which have attained perfection during their earthly life would be able to enjoy again the absolute being and happiness; those which have remained imperfect would be barred from entering heaven and remain sus-pended between heaven and earth with the devils dragging them on every side until they are forced back to the hollows of gloomy-bodies and the bounds of physical nature.⁶⁵

In leaving the body, the soul leaves simultaneously the lesser hell which is the transient life on earth subject to generation and corruption, change and putrefaction. Greater hell is the eternal condemnation of the wretched soul to roam in the underworld, burdened with the accumulated ignorance and fettered with depression and pain. Paradise, on the other hand, is the vast space of heaven, where the righteous souls float in an infinite spread of light in perpetuance and immortality, in a state of happiness and grace.⁶⁶

When all the individual souls have left their bodies and are reunited with the world-soul, the world-soul would lose the reason for its independent existence: so it would return to God. The universe would cease, and there would remain one being: God. This is the greater resurrection: the closing of a manifestation of God.⁶⁷

4. Nature and the Sciences

The Ikhwan al-Safa happened to compile in their “Epistles” the scientific materials available to them and, at the same time, support their esoteric doc-trine. They tried to arrange these materials, the scientific legacy of Greece since the earliest Ionian thinker, Thales of Miletus, in independent chapters.

The picture which resulted was that of accumulation rather than of exposition, and never that of exhaustiveness and systematization. We do not know, however, what additions they made; but we are sure that they did give us a general account of the scientific life of the Muslims in the Middle Ages, with its bright and dark sides. Further, the “Epistles” supply us with a picture, though imperfect, of the ancient world of science.

(1) In arithmetic, the Ikhwan al-Safa depended in the main, as they say,⁶⁸ on Pythagoras and Nicomachus. “Pythagoras” must mean the Pythagorean school; Nicomachus was a late neo-Pythagorean of Gerasa (present Jarash in Jordan) who flourished about the middle of the second Christian century.⁶⁹

He elaborated the Pythagorean mathematics and wrote a book entitled *Arithmatike eisagoge* or “Introduction to Arithmetic,” in which he maintained that “numbers had a pre-existence in the spirit of the Creator before the forma-tion of the universe. He wrote another book which the Ikhwan al-Safa must have known and used: *Arithmatika theologoumena* or “Theology of Numbers,”⁷⁰ They also knew a book by Euclid on arithmetic called *al-Usul*.⁷¹

(2) Geometry has for its aim the training of the soul, by which it realizes promotion in knowledge from perception to conception, from the physical to the spiritual and from the concrete to the abstract. Geometry (Ar. handasah) is of two kinds: hissiyyah, tangible, sensible, or common plane and solid geometry which helps man to acquire skill in crafts; and `aqliyyah, intellectual or rational, namely: analytic and descriptive, which enables man to be versed in theoretical sciences.⁷² The Ikhwan al-Safa knew Euclid and other writers on geometry⁷³ from whom they drew their information on the subject.

To geometry belong the mysterious or magical figures, the smallest of which is composed of nine squares in three rows. In these squares are inserted the numbers 1 to 9 in a manner that any row, horizontal, perpendicular, or diagonal, must give the uniform sum of 15.⁷⁴

(3) The aim of the "Epistle" on music is to stimulate the souls, already instructed in mathematics, physics, psychics, and theology, to join the im-mortals in the vast space of heaven. Music itself is a spiritual art founded by wise men. It has a strong and varied effect on all souls. It is either soothing or exciting, gratifying or grieving. On this account, music is played to calm the sick and insane, to tranquillize a weeping child or to lull him to sleep. Even animals are subject to the effect of music. Music is also played in temples because of the touch of awe it possesses.⁷⁵

Pythagoras was said to have heard the sound of the moving spheres and planets. Since the motions of these spheres have regularity and ratios to one another, their sounds must have tunes which are of highest perfection and harmony. These tunes are intended for the inhabitants of the heaven. Pytha-goras discovered the scale and essentials of music as a result of hearing the sounds of the heavenly bodies.⁷⁶

(4) The universe, say the Ikhwan al-Safa, is made up of all the bodies in existence. It is finite and spherical in shape. Being is one solid body; it stuffs the whole space: it is the universe. Outside the universe there is neither Being nor Non-Being, neither emptiness (vacuum) nor fullness, since the universe has no outside.⁷⁷

On this they agree with the Eleatic Parmenides and his disciple Zeno;⁷⁸ but they disagree with them fully on the question of motion. Parmenides and Zeno presumed that since the universe is completely replete, the movement of individual bodies is impossible. The view of the Ikhwan al-Safa was: since the mass of the universe is not of the same density, the more dense may move through the less dense, as the fish swim in water and the birds fly in air.⁷⁹

The earth stands in the centre of the world; then come seven concentric spheres in which revolve the planets: the moon, Mercury, Venus, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. Finally comes the sphere of the fixed stars. The number of the stars which were determined by astronomical observation, including the seven planets, was one thousand and twenty-nine. All the stars are luminous except the moon which receives its light from the sun.⁸⁰

The movement of the planets was explained by the rotation of the outer sphere clockwise: from east to west above the earth, and from west to east under the earth, once every day. The outer sphere carries the other spheres

along with it. From this it follows that these spheres with their planets too should complete a revolution around the earth in one day.⁸¹

But the ancients noted that the planets have complicated movements: sometimes they appear to overtake the sun and continue their courses ahead of it; and sometimes the sun appears to overtake them. With the planets nearer the earth - -the moon, Mercury, and Venus - this phenomenon was more conspicuous and gave rise to the theory of epicycles. This means that the orbits within the outer sphere are not homocentric with it, concentric or having one common centre, but eccentric, i. e., having independent centres.

Aristotle was in favour of homocentricity; Claudius Ptolemy (d. 168 A.D), the Alexandrian astronomer, upheld the theory of epicycles. Unfortunately, the Ikhwan al-Safa sided with Ptolemy and rejected, at the same time, the view that the heavenly bodies revolve from west to east,⁸² a view which seems to have had some upholders among the Pythagoreans.⁸³

Regarding the magnitudes of the stars, they showed some boldness. The earth, they said, is but a point in a large circle. The smallest planet has a size eighteen times that of the earth; the largest is one hundred and seven times.⁸⁴

They maintained, further, that the celestial bodies are neither heavy nor light. If any body, they argue, is in its specially assigned place in the spheres, it does not exert weight. It acquires weight, on the contrary, when it comes into the neighbourhood of other strange bodies, not of the same material (water in water or air in air, for example, has no weight). Weight, they say, is nothing but the mutual attraction and mutual repulsion in the face of resistance.⁸⁵

We are reminded in this case of the artificial satellites and of the fact that they lose all weight as soon as they leave the zone of the gravity of the earth. In the same spirit, they declared also that the sun and the stars are neither hot nor cold.⁸⁶

The Ikhwan al-Safa accepted the solar year to be of 365 1/4 days. On this basis they computed the revolutions of the planets around the earth: Saturn completes a revolution of its orbits in 29 years, 5 months and 6 days; Jupiter in 11 years, 10 months and 26 days; Mars in about 23 months; Venus in 584 days, and Mercury in 124 days only.⁸⁷

The Ikhwan al-Safa supplied us with data which enable us to construct formulae for the extension of the universe and for its volume which may be computed roughly at: 1,300,000,000 and 150,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 km., respectively or 13×10^8 and 15×10^{25} . This is nothing to be compared with the real measurements, but it serves to give us an idea of the boldness of the Ikhwan al-Safa in their age.

(5) The earth, say the Ikhwan al-Safa is a sphere. Their proof is that any line on the surface of the earth or on the face of a river is an arch, and any portion of the sea is a part of the shell of a spherical body.⁸⁸ George Sarton, the historian of science, holds that the idea of the sphericity of the earth is as old as Pythagoras; but he wonders how Pythagoras could arrive at a proof. He declares that Pythagoras must have postulated the sphericity of the earth out of wild boldness.⁸⁹

They believe also that the earth stands in the centre of the universe, suspended in the midst of the air, because it is in its special place within a space free from the attraction and repulsion of every other heavenly body.⁹⁰ Although the Ikhwan al-Safa were essentially Pythagorean, they rejected the Pythagorean view that the earth has two motions: a revolution around a central fire and a rotation on its axis.⁹¹ They believed, however, that it had a sway (forwards and backwards) on its axis, and that when it was created it was in motion; but afterwards it came to a standstill.⁹² It seems that they followed, in this view, Democritus who held that the earth had in the beginning a motion, but afterwards it came gradually to a standstill.⁹³

The earth is not solid or massive, but it is full of cavities. The solid parts of its interior are also of different densities.⁹⁴

Further, it has no bottom, in the common meaning of the word; its bottom is its centre. So, wherever a man stands on the earth, his head is always towards the sky (above the earth) and his feet are always towards the bottom or centre of the earth.⁹⁵ In spite of all this genial explanation, they believed that we live on one side of the earth only.⁹⁶

(6) In the two chapters on geography and meteorology, based principally on *Meteorologica*⁹⁷ and other Greek works, the Ikhwan al-Safa speak of the equator, of the polar zones where the winter is a night of six continuous months and the summer is a day of six continuous months, of the four seasons of longitude and time, of the mountains and their nature as reservoirs of water, and cognate topics.⁹⁸ Their explanation of the eclipses is noteworthy,⁹⁹ but their interpretation of the ebb and flow of tides is false: they believed that the rays of the moon heat the waters of the sea and cause their rise.¹⁰⁰

(7) In physics and chemistry the Ikhwan al-Safa held, with Aristotle, the Theory of the Four Elements and rejected the atomic theory.¹⁰¹ They maintained also with the Ionian physicists that the so-called four elements: fire, air, water, and earth, change into one another.

Furthermore, when those four elements undergo intense heat and strong pressure inside the earth, they change into mercury and sulphur. If aerial moisture mixes with earth, it becomes mercury, a masculine element; if oily moisture mixes with earth, it changes into sulphur, a feminine element. From the further intermixture of sulphur and mercury, in different proportions, are formed all the mineral bodies: clay, glass, iron, copper, ruby, silver, gold, etc.

(8) The natural world is made up of three kingdoms: the mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms. Evolution rests on the view that every kingdom constitute the primary matter and nourishing material for the next higher kingdom. Accordingly, the mineral kingdom must have come into existence long before that of plants. The plants came into existence before the animals; sea animals before the animals on land; the less developed before the more developed; and all animals were in existence ages before man.¹⁰² At the top of the animal kingdom appeared the qird (monkey, or ape) which bears so much resemblance to man in shape and behaviour.¹⁰³

There is also a spiritual evolution by which the human soul evolves from the soul of a child to that of an angel. At the age of fifty, the wise and

cultivated man may attain the degree which enables him to receive inspiration, to become a messenger between the Intellect and his fellow-men, to found doctrines, and to make laws. At this stage, he is a proxy of God on earth; he attains divinity and so worship is due to him.¹⁰⁴

5. Psychology

(1) The Soul -The soul has three major faculties or powers, every one of which is called equally a soul.

(i) The vegetative or nutritive soul common to all living beings: plants, beast, and man alike. It is subdivided into three powers: that of nutritive proper, that of growth, and that of reproduction.¹⁰⁵

(ii) The animal, beastly, or sensitive soul belongs to beasts and men only. It is subdivided into two powers: locomotion and sensation. Sensation falls in turn in two categories: perception (sight, touch, etc.) and emotion. Emotion is either primitive (laughter, anger, etc.) or evolved (good food, social and political prestige, etc.).¹⁰⁶

(iii) The human (rational, thinking, or talkative) soul is restricted to man.

These three faculties, together with their powers, work together and are united in man and likened to a tree with three boughs, every bough of which has several branches, and every branch many-leaves and fruit. Comparison may also be made with a person who is a blacksmith, carpenter, and builder or who can read, write, and teach:¹⁰⁷ he is one man with three faculties.

(2) The Brain, and the Heart - The prevailing belief in ancient times was that the heart constituted the most important organ of the body: the centre of sensation, the seat of intelligence, and the house of life. Aristotle was also of this opinion. The Ikhwan al-Safa decided in favour of the brain and held that it is the brain where the processes of perception, emotion, and conception develop.¹⁰⁸

(3) The Process of Thinking - It begins in the five senses and continues in the brain. Fine nerves extend from the sense-organs to different parts of the mass of the brain, where they form a net similar to a spider's web. Whenever the senses come in touch with sensible bodies, their temperament undergoes a change which is communicated soon, together with the abstract forms of those sensible bodies, to the imaginative zone in the front part of the brain. Next, the imaginative faculty passes the traces which the abstract forms have left on it to the reflective faculty, in the middle part of the brain, to ponder upon them and verify their indications; then, the indications are transmitted in turn to the retentive faculty (or memory) in the back part of the brain to be stored there until a recollection of them is needed. At the right time the rele-vant data are referred to the expressive or talkative faculty by which they are abstracted, generalized, and given the form expressible by the tongue to be received intelligibly by the ear.¹⁰⁹

6. Politics

(1) The Ikhwan al-Safa had no interest in the theory of State or in the forms of government. Nor could they be influenced, in this respect, by Greek writers. The two worlds were totally different: Plato and Aristotle lived in City-States; the Ikhwan al-Safa lived in the great cities of an

empire. At any rate, the Ikhwan al-Safa believed that the State rests on two foundations: religion and kingship. A king is indispensable, though he may be a tyrant, if the State is to lead a secure and prosperous life. A group of wise men, however may do without a king.¹¹⁰

(2) The indifference of the Ikhwan al-Safa about the State was counter-balanced by their keen interest in al-siyasat al-madaniyyah, a blend of civics and domestic economy, which bears more on the personal and communal behaviour of man.

As a rule, the Ikhwan al-Safa preferred that their followers should practise celibacy. But since that was impracticable, marriage was enjoined to serve two purposes: first, that the race may continue - a reason which was given by Aristotle too; and second, because there are people who cannot remain celibate.¹¹¹

A man of standing should be a kind of a ruler in his community. He should first exercise self-control in the different situations through which he passes, because he who can control himself may be able to control others.¹¹² Regarding his children and brothers, he should give them a fair, uniform but firm treatment from which he should allow no deviation except in circumstances not under his control.

People are governed easier and better if they have been accustomed to a certain way of government. As for other relatives of his servants, and dependants, he should be bounteous in their maintenance and meek in their treatment. But it is of no use to disclose to them any trouble or want of his. This would impair his authority in their eyes without helping him in the least. If he was ever short of means, and consequently obliged to lay a restriction on his favours to them, he should try, to make them believe that he has done so on purpose and not because he has yielded to a certain pressure.¹¹³

A man should choose his friends carefully and treat them with tact: know them well and betray none of his secrets to them. Further, he should appear always, before them, consistent in his opinion and behaviour, because they are expected to share with him his doctrines and way of life (the ultimate aim of the Ikhwan al-Safa in making friends is to propagate their doctrines among these friends). It is very important that the relatives of a leading personality should follow his doctrines and adopt his views, otherwise his friends would lose their enthusiasm for him. He should disclaim publicly any relative who proves to be at variance with him in the matter of doctrine.¹¹⁴

7. Ethics

Muslims have always been more interested in morals and matters of conduct than in ethical theories, because Islam insists on good or righteous deeds as well as on good intentions. The Ikhwan al-Safa's interest in ethics was confined to its bearing on their doctrine: acquiring theoretical knowledge and doing good in this life so that their souls may enjoy eternity and happiness in the hereafter.

They start from the assertion that characters are either in-born or acquired. Inborn characters begin with the formation of the foetus in the

womb, and they develop therein gradually under the influence of the planets. Innate characters, or virtues, are specialized aptitudes assigned to different organs. They enable the soul to act through every organ and produce the sensation, action, or craft particular to that organ without need for deliberation or choice.

At one place the Ikhwan al-Safa assume that inborn characters are uniformly good.¹¹⁵ At another, they maintain that they are bad, and, consequently, all religions were revealed to resist the innate characters of man and to reform them if possible.¹¹⁶

After birth man begins to acquire virtues. He continues to do so until his death. There is in man an aptitude to do good, and with the same aptitude he can do evil. Character and behaviour are teachable.¹¹⁷

Anything which should be done, if done as it should, to the extent to which it should, in the place where it should, at the time when it should, and in view of the end for which it should, is called good. And he who does that thin deliberately and with choice is called a wise man, a philosopher, and a perfect man. Good, for the masses, is that which religion has enjoined, and evil, that which religion has prohibited.¹¹⁸

Acquired characters are determined and modified by the disposition of the body, climate of the land, and the contact of the children with their parents, tutors, comrades, and with the people in prominence. The different circum-stances through which man usually passes are important factors in making people change from one character into another.¹¹⁹

The Ikhwan al-Safa urge their followers to be idealistic in their behaviour. The good they seek should be final and self-sufficient. One should do good not because one expects from doing it, or for doing it, a benefit, nor because one expects to avoid some loss.¹²⁰

8. Education

As soon as a child is born, he comes under the influence of social factors for four complete years, during which he reaches a certain stage of intelligence and comprehension. After the fourth year the child begins to acquire his habits, knowledge, doctrines, crafts, and hobbies by imitation, as a result of his contact with those who happen to be around him. The masses copy the external behaviour of the dominant class.¹²¹

Children are apt to use an analogy characteristic of them. They believe that their parents are perfect and that the conditions prevailing in their own homes are models for all the conditions elsewhere. On the practical side, children are more apt to master the arts, sciences, and crafts of their parents than those of strangers.¹²²

Knowledge is the abstraction of the knowable in the soul of the knower through the aid of a teacher. The aptitude to learn belongs to the soul alone. The end of teaching is to purify the souls of the taught and give them correct behaviour in order to prepare them for immortality and happiness in the hereafter. A science which does not lead to happiness in the hereafter is useless.¹²³

Every soul is potentially learned; the parents and tutors polish its aptitude and help it to become learned in action. A teacher is absolutely necessary, especially to common people.¹²⁴

The brain is able to store simultaneously all kinds of information, however diverse and contradictory they may be, since it stores their abstractions only. And in spite of the fact that the data stored in the brain fade gradually, and that some of them are sometimes totally forgotten, they do not annul one another.¹²⁵

Essentially, knowledge is never spontaneous; it must be taught and learnt. A teacher is simply a guide for the soul to knowledge. Knowledge is handed down traditionally through religious leaders, the Imams, whose ultimate source of knowledge is the Prophet, who acquires his knowledge from God by in-spiration.¹²⁶

The Ikhwan al-Safa touch at a thorny problem in education. They believe that neither the pupil may benefit from the tutor, nor the tutor may benefit from the pupil, unless there is a kind of intimacy between them. We know for certain that some kind of a reserved friendship is very useful in this respect. But the Ikhwan al-Safa overshoot themselves and speak frankly of “the desire of grown-up men for boys” as an incentive for effecting real education. Further-more, they mention explicitly that such manners belong only to nations which esteem science, art, literature, and mathematics, like the Persians, the peoples of Mesopotamia and Syria as well as the Greeks. Nomads, who as a rule have no interest in science, art, etc., lack this desire.¹²⁷

The idea of Platonic love contaminated the Ikhwan al-Safa as a result of their readings in Greek history in general and in the philosophy of Plato in particular. Plato advocated it especially in his Symposium. Sarton blames Plato and says of him: “Platonic love for him was the sublimation of paederasty; true love is called in the Symposium¹²⁸ the right method of boy--loving”.¹²⁹ The Ikhwan al-Safa condemn this desire, however, in all fields other than education.¹³⁰ Plato too seems to have condemned it in a later work of his, Nomoi (The Laws), at least twice.¹³¹

9. Religion

On the practical side of belief, the Ikhwan al-Safa speak of religion and laws. The word for religion in Arabic is din, i. e., custom or obedience to one acknowledged head.¹³² Religion is a necessity as a social sanction for the government of the masses, for the purification of the soul, and also because all people are predisposed to religiousness and piety. In this sense, religion is one for all people and for all nations.¹³³

By Law (Ar. Shari'ah or namus, from the Greek word: nomos, law) the Ikhwan al-Safa meant what we mean today by religion. Laws (religious) are different to suit different communities, groups, and even individuals. These laws are dictated by the wise men of every people for the benefit of their respective nations.¹³⁴

On this basis the Ikhwan al-Safa declare that all metaphysical themes in the sacred books such as creation, Adam, Satan, the tree of knowledge, resurrection, the Day of Judgment, hell, and paradise should be taken as

symbols and understood allegorically. Only the masses, who cannot think adequately for themselves, understand these themes in their literal and physical sense. Themes of a lesser magnitude, as “He sendeth down water from the sky,”¹³⁵ should also be treated symbolically: water in this context being the Qur'an!¹³⁶

The Ikhwan al-Safa were not satisfied with any of the existing religions; they, nevertheless, urged everybody to select one of them. To have a defective religion is better than to be a disbeliever, since there is an element of truth in every religion. Everybody should be left free to embrace the religion he chooses; he may also change his religion, perhaps often too, though he is expected to look for the best religion in his time. He should refrain, however, from contradictory opinions and false doctrines: a wise man does not embrace two contradictory religions at the same time.¹³⁷

There should be no compulsion in religion;¹³⁸ compulsion should be affected only through the laws. This is so because religion is a self-conviction felt in the heart. The laws of religions, on the contrary, are social orders, to abide by which is necessary for the maintenance of security and welfare of the community.¹³⁹

The Ikhwan al-Safa formulated a definite attitude towards all existing religions, sects, and schools of theology.¹⁴⁰ We shall content ourselves with their attitude towards Islam.

Islam is considered by them to be the religion par excellence: the best and most perfect of all religions. The Qur'an overruled all earlier revealed books. It, being the last, confirmed in them that which resembled its contents and abrogated that which was contrary to its precepts. Muhammad, peace be upon him, is the head of all the prophets and the last of them. He is the governor of all governors; in him has God united the elements of kingship and prophethood, so that his followers may enjoy the worldly as well as the spiritual glories.¹⁴¹

Final Note

The numbering of the verses of the Qur'an followed in this chapter is according to Tafsir al-Jalalain, Cairo, 1346/1927. There is sometimes in the long Surahs a slight difference in the numbering of verses (resulting from the division of a few long verses). In Rodwell (q.v.) this difference, when it occurs, varies from three to six; in Muhammad 'Ali and Pickthall (q.v.) the difference is only that of one.

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Notes

1. Imta, ii, pp. 4ff
2. The true friends, the faithful comrades, the people deserving praise, and the sons of glory (cf. Jami'ah, i, p. 141).
3. Cf. Rasa'il, i, p. 310;. ii, pp. 166, 193, 207, etc.; iii, pp. 173-78; iv, pp. 87, 203; Jami'ah, i, pp. 128 ff.
4. Imta', ii, pp. 4ff.
5. Rasa'il, iv, p. 490; also of. p. 278;
6. Jami'ah, i, pp. 169f.; ii, pp. 36, 47.
7. Jami'at al-Jami'ah, Sec. vii. Rasa'il, iv, pp. 105, 237.
8. Ibid., iv; pp. 338f,
9. Ibid., iii, pp. 33f; cf. iv, pp. 138 f.
10. Ibid., iv, p. 114.
11. Ibid., pp. 119f.
12. Ibid., ii, p. 19; iv, pp. 235, 241 f.
13. Ibid., ii, p. 19; iv, pp. 215, 220-24; Jami'ah, i, pp. 160f., 162, 165, 166, 323f.
14. Rasa'il, i, p. 130f.; iv, pp. 198ff., pp. 234f.
15. Ibid., i, pp. 130f.; iv, pp. 234f,
16. Ibid., i, pp. 23, 49, 202ff.; Jami'ah, i, pp. 219f.
17. Rasa'il. i, pp. 23-362.
18. Ibid., ii, pp. 3-388; iii, pp. 3-181.
19. Ibid., iii, pp. 182-371.
20. Ibid.; iii, pp. 373-432; iv, 3-478.
21. Ibid., iii, p. 228; cf. ii, p. 351.
22. Ibid.. i, pp. 106, 211;.ii, pp. 334, 335-51; iii, pp. 38, 228, 384; cf. pp. 241, 292ff.
23. Ibid., iii, pp. 41f.
24. Ibid., i, p. 211; cf. .p. 106.; ii, p. 334; cf. p. 228.
25. Ibid., iii, pp. 42, 322.
26. Ibid., iii, pp. 48, 58, 152; Jami'ah, i, pp. 107, 123, 189, 288.
27. Rasa'il, i, p: 23; cf. Jami'ah, i, pp. 99, 107; cf. further pp. 10, 99-107; ii, pp 275f., 277f., 280.
28. Rasa'il, i, p. 326; ii, pp. 4, 325; iii, p. 186; cf. Jami'ah, i, p. 298; ii, p. 74.
29. Rasa'il, p. 322; ii, pp. 4, 5f.; iii, pp. 186, 360.
30. Ibid., ii, p. 232.
31. Ibid., ii, pp. 9, 10, 336; iii, p. 361.
32. Ibid., ii, pp. 10, 13; iii, pp. 334f., 361.
33. Ibid., iii, p. 336.
34. Ibid., ii, pp. 10, 11, 13, 238-47; iii, p. 306; Jami'ah, ii, p. 237.
35. Ueberweg, Vol. I, p. 87; Sarton, History p. 276.
36. Rasa'il i, p. 201; ii, pp. 78, 132f.; iii, p. 233; Jami'ah, ii, p. 79; cf. Aristotle, pp. 122ff., 132f., 249ff
37. Rasa'il, i, pp. 201, 354; iii, pp. 185, 233, 325, 327; iv, pp. 8f., 178; Jami'ah, ii, pp. 79, 278.
38. Sarton, History, p. 217.
39. Rasa'il, i, pp. 24f., 28f., 31f.; cf. Jami'ah i, p. 43.
40. Rasa'il, i, pp. 28f.; iii, pp. 184f., 200ff.; Jami'ah, i, pp. 27ff.; ii, pp. 284ff.
41. Rasa'il, i, p. 189; ii, pp. 107, 108ff.; Jami'ah, i, p. 593; ii, p. 83.
42. Rasa'il, ii, pp. 4, 9, 83, 244, 293, 392; iii, pp. 187, 189, 197, 228f., 328, 332, 260f.; Jami'ah, ii, pp. 33, 36.
43. Rasa'il, p. 28; ii, pp. 55f., 112ff.; iii, pp. 19, 191, 192, 193, 203, 214f., 235, 361; Jami'ah, i, p. 529.
44. Rasa'il, iii, pp. 5, 187ff., 230; iv, pp. 4ff.; Jami'ah, ii, pp. 4ff., 37.
45. Rasa'il, i, p. 331; ii, pp. 55f., 112f.; iii, pp. 124ff.; Jami'ah, i, pp. 331ff.; ii, p. 36.
46. Rasa'il, ii, p. 36; iii, p. 198.
47. Ibid., ii, pp. 4, 5; iii, pp. 8, 189, 198, 203, 204; iv, p. 4; Jami'ah., i, p. 276; n, pp. 6,

48. Cf. *infra* viii.
49. *Rasa'il*, ii, pp. 2, 3, 22, 25ff., 29ff., 39-42, 123; iii, pp. 190, 219, 221, 361; *Jami'ah*, i, p. 306.
50. *Rasa'il*, ii, pp. 5, 22, 45-50, 77, 78, 200, 337, 403; iii, pp. 79, 183, 190; *Jami'ah*, i, pp. 306, 311; ii, 37, 362; iv, pp. 268ff., 313.
51. *Rasa'il*, i, pp. 311, 315, 331, 350f.; ii, pp. 45-50ff.; *Jami'ah*, ii, p. 37.
52. *Rasa'il*, i, p. 17; ii, pp. 20f., 25f., 243ff., 318, 320f.; iii, pp. 3ff. 9f., 12ff., 211-14; iv, p. 277; *Jami'ah*, i, pp. 240, 563-68, 581-95, 635; ii, pp. 24-38, 123; cf. Ueberweg, Vol. I, pp. 51, 110; Sarton, History, pp. 177, 216, 421.
53. *Rasa'il*, i pp. 96, 98; ii, pp. 111-288; iii, pp. 25, 26, 28, 59, 102, 279, 332, 362; iv, pp. 29, 230, 231, 238; *Jami'ah*, i, pp. 383, 514, 515; ii, 28, 247, 298.
54. *Rasa'il*, i, pp. 155f. The definitions of the periods of "Exposition and Conceal-ment" as used in the "Epistles" are different from those accepted by the Druzes and the Isma'ilis.
55. *Rasa'il*, ii, p. 227; *Jami'ah*, i, pp. 114, 145ff., 156f.; ii, p. 143.
56. *Rasa'il*, i, pp. 114ff., 145ff., 157f.
57. Qur'an, vii, 11; xxxviii; 76 cf. *Jami'ah*, i, p. 126.
58. *Jami'ah*, i, pp. 113ff., 124-28, 146; ii, p. 144.
59. *Ibid.*, i, pp. 111, 112, 115f., 155, 158, 163; ii, p. 144.
60. *Rasa'il*, i, p. 62; ii, p. 17; iii, p. 216; iv, p. 138; *Jami'ah*, i, pp. 116f., 129, 164, 295, 437, 439ff.; ii, pp. 145, 247, 298.
61. *Rasa'il*, iv, p. 232; *Jami'ah*, i, p. 382; ii, p. 298.
62. *Rasa'il*, i, pp. 169, 241; ii, pp. 250ff., 357ff.; iv, p. 413; *Jami'ah*, i, pp. 513f., 554, 559.
63. *Rasa'il*, i, p. 62; ii, pp. 17, 145, 247, 298, 323ff.; iii, pp. 25ff., 29, 51, 62, 73, 116; iv, p. 138; *Jami'ah*, i, pp. 116ff., 129, 164, 295, 437, 439ff., 498.
64. *Rasa'il*, i, pp. 169, 226, 255, 277, 337; ii, pp. 43, 277; iii, pp. 51, 56f., 59f.; iv, p. 82; *Jami'ah*, i, pp. 509, 663, 667; ii, pp. 28, 87.
65. *Rasa'il*, i, p. 260; iii, pp. 26f., 29, 36, 93f., 105f., 279-289.
66. *Ibid.*, ii, p. 52; iii, pp. 64, 189, 279, 282, 284, 240, 243, 344, 346; iv, p. 82.
67. *Ibid.*, iii, pp. 315f., 320.
68. *Ibid.*, i, p. 35.
69. Ueberweg, Vol. I, p. 513. Sarton (History, pp. 205, 214, n.15) sets his flourishing in the second half of the first Christian century.
70. Ueberweg, Vol. I, pp. 514, 519; Sarton, Introduction to the History of Science, Vol. III, p. 1511; History, p. 214, n. 32.
71. "Principles" or "Essentials" (*Rasa'il*, i, pp. 44f.). Certainly, this is not the book of Euclid on geometry which was later called the Elements (*Ibid.*, p. 280; cf. also pp. 171, 442).
72. *Rasa'il*, i, pp. 50ff., 63ff., 68-71; *Jami'ah*, i, pp. 175f.
73. *Rasa'il*, i, p. 68; cf. pp. 103.
74. *Ibid.*, i, pp. 71 f.; cf. p. 69.
75. *Ibid.*, i, pp. 132ff., 134, 136, 154, 158, 175, 179f.; *Jami'ah*, pp. 185-88, 190ff
76. *Rasa'il*, i, pp. 152f., 158M, 168.
77. *Rasa'il*, ii, pp. 10, 24, 25; iii, pp. 374; *Jami'ah*, ii, p. 24.
78. Cf. Ueberweg, Vol. II, pp. 80 ff., 87, 38.
79. *Rasa'il*, ii, p.24.
80. *Ibid.*, i, pp. 73ff., 86, 88; ii, pp. 21, 22, 25, 26f., 28, 37; iii, pp. 189f.; iv, p. 321.
81. *Ibid.*, i, pp. 100, 244; ii, pp. 21, 74f.; iii, p. 314.
82. *Ibid.*, ii, pp. 32ff.
83. *Ibid.*, ii, p. 33, cf. pp. 29-37, 86ff.; cf. Sarton, History, p. 289, lines 30ff.
84. *Rasa'il*, i, p. 117; cf. pp. 27f.
85. *Ibid.*, ii, pp. 40ff.
86. *Ibid.*, ii, p. 42.
87. *Ibid.*, i, pp. 84, 86-88; ii, p. 31; iii, pp. 255-57.
88. *Ibid.*, i, p. 111; ii, pp. 22, 49, 57, 219; iii, pp. 210, 219, 310; iv, p. 312; *Jami'ah*, i, p. 149.
89. Sarton, History, p. 212, cf. p. 287.

90. Rasa'il, i, pp. 111, 113; ii, pp. 22, 40, 49, 79, 118, 307, 310; Jami'ah, i, pp. 149f.
91. Ueberweg, Vol. I, p. 68 unten.
92. Rasa'il, iii, pp. 309f.
93. Ueberweg, Vol. I, p. 108.
94. Rasa'il, iii, pp. 309, 310.
95. Ibid., i, p. 112.
96. Ibid., iv, p. 436.
97. Ascribed to Aristotle; cf. Sarton, History, p. 517.
98. Rasa'il, i, pp. 110-31, cf. pp. 84ff.; pp. 54-75.
99. Ibid., i, pp. 79f., 88f.; -ii, p. 21.
100. Ibid., ii, p. 83.
101. Ibid., ii, p. 10; iv, p. 7.
102. Ibid., ii, pp. 123, 141ff., 152, 154f., 221f., 223, 318; iii, pp. 64, 138.
103. Rasa'il, iv, p. 317.
104. Ibid., I, pp. 224ff.; ii, p. 287 ; iii, p. 44; iv, pp. 101, 118, 143, 176, 178; Jami'ah, 344, 701.
105. Rasa'il, i, pp. 241f.; ii, pp. 325ff.; Jami'ah, ii, p. 164.
106. Rasa'il, i, pp. 241f.; ii, pp. 325ff.; Jami'ah, ii, pp. 164f.; cf. pp. 168-86.
107. Rasa'il, ii, pp. 325f., 347.
108. Ibid., ii, p. 162; iii, p. 23 bottom.
109. Ibid., ii, pp. 324, 328, 341, 347; ii., pp. 17f., 29, 376ff., 386, 388, 392; Jami'ah, i, pp. 507, 602f., 60,5.
110. Rasa'il, ii, p. 308; iv, pp. 32f., 189.
111. Ibid., iii, p. 424.
112. Ibid., iv, p. 68.
113. Ibid., iv, pp. 297ff.
114. Ibid., iv, pp. 299ff.
115. Ibid., iv, p. 372.
116. Ibid., i, pp. 259, 260; of. iv, p. 144.
117. Ibid., iii, pp. 421 f.
118. Ibid., i, p. 247, of iv, p. 18 , Jami'ah, i, p. 94-96, 98.
119. Rasa'il, i, pp. 229-38, 246; ii, p. 372; iii, pp. 268L, 395; iv, pp. 109, 111, 141, 342; Jami'ah, i, p. 237.
120. Rasa'il, iv, pp. 118, 141 f., 297 f.
121. Ibid., i, pp. 153, 360f.; ii, pp. 129, 379ff.; iii, pp. 147f.
122. Ibid., i, pp. 153, 213, 225, 229, 360; iii, pp. 106, 107f.
123. Ibid., i, pp. 195, 198, 211, 225, 271, 273, 317; iii, p. 33.
124. Ibid., i, pp. 198, 211, 225, 317; ii, p. 352; iii, pp. 90, 426; iv, pp. 18, 127.
125. Ibid., iii, pp. 236ff.; iv, p. 114.
126. Ibid., i, pp. 211, 225, 317; iv, p. 18; Jami'ah, i, p. 413.
127. Rasa'il, iii, pp. 267ff.
128. 211B, quoted by Sarton, History, p. 425.
129. Ibid., p. 425; cf. pp. 423ff.
130. Rasa'il, iv, pp. 170ff.
131. 636c, 836c, cited in Sarton, History, p. 425.
132. Rasa'il, iii, p. 424; iv, p. 24.
133. Ibid., iv, pp. 24, 25f.
134. Ibid., i, pp. 135, 247; iii, pp. 48, 49, 241, 374; iv, pp. 24, 25f., 100, 138, 168, 186ff.
135. Qur'an, xiii, 19 (cf. Muhammad 'Ali, p. 487; Pickthall, p. 250; Rodwell, p. 235).
136. Rasa'il, iv, p. 137.
137. Ibid., iii, pp. 86-90; iv, pp. 22, 37, 54-65; Farrukh, Ikhwan al Safa, pp. 108-13.
138. Rasa'il, iv, p. 476, in ref. to Qur'an, ii, 256 (Muhammad 'Ali, p. 111, Pickthall, p. 59, Rodwell, p. 367).
139. Rasa'il, iv, p. 476.
140. Farrukh, op. cit., pp. 108-13.
141. Rasa'il, ii, p. 201; iii, pp. 92, 353; iv, pp. 33, 59, 172, 242; Jami'ah, ii, p. 365.

Part 2: The Sufis

1

Chapter 16: Early Sufis Doctrine

Chapter 17: Early Sufis (Continued)

Chapter 18: 'Abd Al-Qadir Jilani and Shihab Al-Din Suhrawardi

Chapter 19: Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi Maqtul

Chapter 20: Ibn `Arabi

Chapter 16: Early Sufis Doctrine

Chapter 16: Early Sufis Doctrine (by M. Hamiduddin)

A

Sufism like many other institutions became, early in its history, a fertile ground for imitators, impostors, and charlatans. The corrupting influence of these charlatans was regarded as a source of great confusion to all those who either wanted to follow the Path of Sufism; or wanted honestly to understand it, one reason why this was so was that Sufism by its very nature was a discipline meant not for the average but for those who always felt ambitious for something above the average.

Besides these charlatans and impostors who put on the garb of Sufism and exploited the credulous and the unwary, there was another group of men who unwillingly became the source of corruption and confusion. Since a Sufi more often than not was a man significantly different from the average, it was but natural that some among the Sufis went so far away from the norms of their societies and communities that they created doubts in the minds of their followers regarding the legitimacy of the commonly accepted norms.

Such doubts, if not properly tackled, could lead to the corruption of vast segments of the communities concerned, an inevitable result of which would have been either a widespread scepticism regarding the erstwhile universally accepted norms, or a universal condemnation of that which such exceptions among the Sufis stood for. Neither of these two courses was considered to be healthy, for, whereas the first would have resulted in the complete demoralization of all Muslim communities, the latter could have resulted in the condemnation not only of the exceptional Sufis, but of all Sufis without exception, as deviants from the accepted norms.

Most of the early treatises on Sufism, like the one that will be referred to in this chapter, were written with two main aims in view: (1) to point out to all those who cared to read these works what Sufism really meant; and (2) to raise as strong a note of protest as possible against the current malpractices of the charlatans and impostors so that even those who may not have the time and the will to follow the path of true Sufism may at least escape the clutches of these charlatans.

The extent to which this two-fold desire of the early writers shaped their works is worth noting, because it is a measure of the dependability of these works. This is how the author of *Kitab al-Luma'*, one of the earliest, if not the earliest, Sufi texts now available, Sarraj (d. 456/1063), felt: "It is necessary for the intelligent among us that they understand something of the principles, aims, and ways of those who are the people of rectitude and eminence among this group (Sufis) so that we can distinguish them (genuine Sufis) from those who just imitate them, put on their garb, and advertise themselves as Sufis."²

"There are to be found (in our days)," he adds, "many of those who just parade as Sufis, point to themselves as genuine Sufis, and set themselves to the job of answering all sorts of questions and queries regarding Sufism. Everyone of these impostors claims to have written a book or two on Sufism which in reality he has filled with nothing but utter trash and absurdly

non-sensical material in answer to equally meaningless and silly questions. Such impostors do not realize that it is not only not good but is a positive evil to do all this....

The early masters discussed the Sufistic problems honestly and earnestly only to point out through their wise word the true answers to them. They turned to handle them only when they had severed their connection with the materialistic world, had chastened themselves through long and austere prayers, practices, and discipline, and had arrived at the clearest knowledge of reality, which knowledge found its full and necessary expression in their honest, sincere, and truthful actions. Such early masters used to be models of men who having burnt their boats of worldly affairs lived in constant contact with the Almighty.”³

In his Kitab al-Ta`arruf, another very early work, Kalabadhi (d. 378/988) wrote: “Finally the meaning departed and the name remained, the substance vanished and the shadow took its place: realization became an ornament, and verification a decoration. He who knew not (the truth) pretended to possess it, he who had never so much as described it, adorned himself with it; he who had it much upon his tongue, denied it by his acts, and he who displayed it in his exposition, concealed it by his actual conduct.”⁴

In his Risalah, al-Qushairi (d.465/1072) too talks in the same vein: “There set in decadence in this Path (Sufism) to such an extent that both reality and the path were lost to men. Neither were the old teachers to be found who could guide the young seekers of the true path, nor were the young stalwarts to be seen anywhere whose life one could take as a model. Piety left us bag and baggage. Greed and avarice became the rule of the day. And all hearts lost genuine respect for the Shari'ah.”⁵

Later on, the author of Kashf al-Mahjub, 'Ali Hujwiri (d. c. 456/1063), came out even in stronger terms against what was prevalent in his days : “God has created us among men who give the name of Shari`ah to all that their base selves crave for, and who give the name of honour and science to all those tricks with which they seek worldly power and glory, and who call double-dealing the fear of God, and who label the art of concealing hatred of men in their hearts the virtue of tolerance.”⁶

`Attar, who came much later, is perhaps, just because of that, more explicit than his predecessors: “Ours is the period in which this mode of talking (the truth) has taken on the veil of complete concealment. It has become fashionable with the charlatans to parade as the wise and the virtuous, and the genuine men of love and insight have become rare like any-thing. We are living in such times that the evil-doers have pushed the good and the virtuous into complete oblivion.”⁷

The great concern for truth that all those writers felt comes out indirectly also in the special mode of recording and reporting statements from great Sufis which all of them generally (and al-Qushairi especially) adopt. Practically every point that al-Qushairi makes, regarding every feature, major or minor, of Sufi way of life, is supported by him with three types of evidence. (1) Some statement from the Qur'an, better than which there is no basis for any prin-ciple governing the life of the faithful. (2) Some hadith or

some incident in the life of the Holy Prophet. (3) Some comment or some incident in the life of a great Sufi.

So far as the first of these is concerned, we know, the matter is very simple. Nobody can afford to misquote the Qur'an, for the danger of discovery is always there. As to the second and third types of evidence, the risks of mis-quoting are always there. It was to avoid these risks that scholars of Hadith had devised the special techniques which came later on to be known as tech-niques of *isnad* (the method of basing traditions on the authority of narrators), and *Asma' al-Rijal* (the chain of narrators supporting a tradition). The care that the Hadith-writers took regarding their *isnad* and its various links was so great that it became the model of authentic reporting in all historical writings. Al-Qushairi follows this technique of Hadith-writing in practically everything he reports and every point regarding the practices of the Sufis he makes, to such an extent that nearly half of his long treatise consists of nothing but the *isnad*.

B

Although none of our sources goes beyond the fifth/eleventh century, we have evidence, in these very sources, that people had started taking interest in Sufism, and in using the words *al-tasawwuf* and *sufi*.

Sarraj starts by repudiating the view that the word *sufi* is of recent (relative to Sarraj's days) origin and that the people of Baghdad were the first to use it. He thinks, on the other hand, that the word was current in the days of the *Tabi`in* (the Successors of the Companions of the Prophet) as well as the *Tab' Tabi`in* (the Successors of these Successors). By implication, he would say, although he does not verbalize it, that the word was current even in the days of the Prophet and his Companions, because, as he states explicitly, it was current in pre-Islamic days.

To show that the word *sufi* was current in the days of *Tab' Tabi`in*, Sarraj quotes a comment from Sufyan of Thaur: "If it were not for Abu Hashim the Sufi I would not have understood the true meaning of ..."⁸

It is easy to identify Sufyan of Thaur's period if one were to recall the well-known story of Qadi Shuraib's appointment as the Qadi of Baghdad by the Caliph Abu Ja'far Mansur. Sufyan, according to Hujwiri, was one of the original four great saints and scholars of the day whom the Caliph had called up to select from among them the one who was really fit to administer justice to the people of his vast empires.⁹

To show that the word *sufi* was current in the days of *Tabi`in*, Sarraj quotes a comment from Hasan of Basrah: "I saw a Sufi going round the Ka'bah; I offered him something, but he did not accept it saying..."¹⁰

That Hasan of Basrah belonged to the period of *Tabi`in* is borne out by Hujwiri who includes him among the eminent Sufis of this period.¹¹ The exact part of this period to which Hasan of Basrah belonged is brought out by 'Attar who mentions that Hasan was a child when the Prophet was still alive, and on growing he took 'Ali bin abi Talib or his son Hasan as his preceptor. Hasan had met, according to 'Attar, a hundred and thirty Companions of the Prophet of whom seventy had fought at Badr. Hasan died in 110/728.¹²

Sarraaj anticipates the question why none of the Companions of the Holy Prophet was ever called a Sufi if this word was current during his time. He answers this question by emphasizing that since the honour of having the Prophet as one's preceptor in person and. having worked with the Prophet for the glory of God was in the eyes of every true believer the highest honour, nobody ever thought of calling the Companions of the Prophet by any other name. It was for this reason that he whom God gave this distinction was considered to be the embodiment of all that was the noblest in a Sufi without his being called so.¹³

To show that the word Sufi was current in the pre-Islamic days Sarraj quotes from the "History of Mecca" by Muhammad bin Ishaq bin Yasar, and from others, that there was a period in the history of Mecca when everybody had gone away from Mecca so that nobody was left there to pay homage to the Ka'bah and to go round it. During these days a Sufi used to come from a distant place in order to go round the Ka'bah in the prescribed manner. If this story is true, Sarraj points out, then it is evident that the word sufi was current in the pre-Islamic days, and was used for men of excellence and virtue.¹⁴

Having brought out that the word sufi was current even in pre-Islamic days, Sarraj argues that it is derived from suf which stands for coarse woolen clothes which had come to be accepted as the conventional dress of the pious, even of the prophets, among the Semitic people. And to show that it was an established custom among the Arabs to refer to men by their specific con-ventional garb rather than by their specific attributes and traits, Sarraj quotes from the Qur'an: wa qal al-hawariyyun, emphasizing that the Companions of Jesus Christ were referred to by their white garb rather than their virtuous traits.¹⁵

The two comments from Sufyan of Thaur and Hasan of Basrah quoted by Sarraj as evidence of the fact that the word sufi was used by Tab' Tabi'in as well as Tabi'in, have been quoted by several later authors too. Dr. Zaki Mubarak, author of al-Tasawwuf al-Islami fi al-Adab wa'l-Akhlaq (second edition, 1954), quotes the comment attributed to Hasan of Basrah from 'Afif al-Din 'Abd Allah bin Asad of Yafa'i's book Nashr al-Mahasin al-Ghaliyah fi Fadl al-Aslah al-Maqamat al-'Aliyyah, and the comment attributed to Sufyan of Thaur from Zahr al -Adab of Abu Ishaq al-Husri (who must not be confused with Abu al-Hasan 'Ali son of Ibrahim al-Husri al-Basri, a pupil of Shibli, who died in the year 371/981 and from whom Sarraj himself quotes quite a few comments). Even if these later authors had ultimately taken these com-ments from Sarraj, which is not improbable, their quoting them at least points to the fact that they did not regard Sarraj's point of view altogether un-acceptable."¹⁶

Sarraaj's view that the word sufi was current in pre-Islamic days is supported similarly by Abi al-Farab ibn al-Jauzi, Zamakhshari, and Firuzabadi. Dr. Zaki Mubarak quotes the following extract from ibn al-Jauzi's book Talbis Iblis: "Mubammad ibn Nasir related to us from Abi Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Said al--Hibal who said: 'Abu Muhammad 'Abd al-Ghani ibn Said al-Hafiz said: I asked Walid ibn al-Qasim: What is it on account of which a person is called a Sufi? And he answered: There were a people in

the pre-Islamic days known as al-Sufiyyah; they had given up every worldly thing for the sake of God Almighty, and had made Ka'bah their permanent abode, and place of wor-ship.' Those who lived like them came to be known as al-Sufiyyah."¹⁷

Kalabadhi mentions that there had been seventeen Sufi writers before him who had published the sciences of allusion in books and treatises, and eleven Sufis who had written on conduct.

Al-Qushairi states explicitly in one place that the word tasawwuf had been used by people before the second/eighth century: "Those among the Sunnites who took extreme care in keeping their contact with God alive and saving themselves from the paths of negligence came to be known by the special name of ahl al-tasawwuf. And this name for these leaders of the pious became well known among people before 200/815."¹⁸

Men who followed the Path of Sufism had started using the word sufi as part of their titles and names long before Risalat al-Qushairiyyah was com-posed.

Hujwiri traces back the use of the word sufi even to the Holy Prophet; for example he remarks in one place: "And the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him, said, 'He who hears the voice of the people of tasawwuf and yet does not take their words to heart is listed in the eyes of God as one of the negligent ones.'"¹⁹

C

Sufism went through considerable development and modification as the Muslims came into contact with peoples of other races and cultures in the course of their history. Consequently, what came to be known as Sufism later on must be distinguished from what Sufism was in its early days. For, in spite of a great deal of what in later Sufism may be recognized as nothing but an elaboration of what was there earlier, it would be instructive to find out at least what the earlier form was. The ideal thing from this point of view would be to go back to the writers of the first and second/seventh and eighth centuries. But unfortunately the sources available to us do not go so far back. We will have, therefore, to be content with whatever can be culled from the sources available.

Qushairi makes a large number of statements about the characteristics of a true Sufi of his own days or of two or three generations earlier. Hujwiri holds practically the same view; only his account is more detailed.

One of the first things that Qushairi emphasizes regarding a Sufi is that he is absolutely convinced that of all the paths of life open to a man his path is the best. This is how Qushairi expresses it: "And the grounds on which their path was built were stronger than the grounds on which the paths of others were established, be they men of tradition and culture, or men of thought and intellect "²⁰

Having felt convinced that Sufism is the best of all the paths, the Sufi has to take a few decisions regarding his relation to God, man, and the world. For it is in the light of these relations that he can be distinguished from others. In a way these relations constitute the criteria on the basis of which a genuine Sufi could be distinguished from those who just pretended to be so.

Out of these three types of relations the Sufi's relation to God is the most important, because the other two, strictly speaking, are derived from and based on it. Qushairi makes the following significant statements in connection with the Sufi's relation to God.

1. The first and foremost thing is that one's belief in God should contain no element of doubt. It should not be contaminated with new-fangled notions and misleading concepts, and should be firmly rooted in self-evident facts.²¹

Doubt in this context means vagueness about the attributes of God and scepticism regarding His existence. Obviously for the Sufi to avoid this vagueness and scepticism is possible only if he relies on whatever has come down to him by way of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. That this is so is pointed out by the warning against "new-fangled" notions and "misguiding concepts." What these notions and concepts were, one can easily find out from what both Qushairi and Hujwiri bring under the heading of Malahidah and Qaramitah, etc. But what is most remarkable in this connection is the emphasis the Sufi lays on factual evidence, for he believes that the purely conceptual is not the only relation man can have with God; this relation can be experiential too.

2. A person's relation to God should be so thorough, comprehensive, and intimate that it would lead him to feel as if he lives and does everything not because he is doing it all, but because God is doing it all. In identifying him-self with God he would go through the double process of losing his mortal self in Him and experiencing Him in every act of his own self. As a consequence of this the Sufi, from the very beginning, endeavours to have a life about which it may be truly said that it is a life with and in Him.²²

3. Another way of putting the point stressed above is that the Sufi not only stops referring all his acts to his mortal self, but he builds up the positive attitude that it is the divine will which must be accepted by the Sufi as supreme, not on this or that occasion, nor in such and such particular situation, but always, and in every situation of which his life is composed.²³

4. The Sufi's relation to God is a pure relation in the sense that it is a relation just between him and his God without any material link.²⁴

5. This relation rids man of all occupation with affairs worldly and mundane.²⁵

6. The Sufi must regard himself as having been created for nobody and nothing except God.²⁶

Regarding their relations to their fellow-beings and the world at large, the early Sufis were quite explicit in emphasizing that the Shari'ah is the frame-work within which these relations have to be built and maintained. With this in view they enjoined on every Sufi to pursue all the sciences on which the Shari'ah is based;²⁷ it was enjoined especially that he should seek enlighten-ment about the way the Holy Prophet lived his life so that the Sunnah might become the guiding light for him in everything he does and every relationship he builds.²⁸

While the different schools of Sufis had each its own unique pattern of Sufi techniques, they were all agreed on one common framework of ultimate reference, and that was the framework of the Shari`ah.²⁹

Apart from emphasizing that for a Sufi it is necessary at every stage to keep the Shari`ah in view as the ultimate criterion, the early Sufis seldom missed to point out that those who did not care much for the Shari'ah got themselves involved in confusion and contradiction. The early Sufis were always anxious that their fundamental position must be clearly distinguished from that of the orthodox scholars and the theologians, as well as the innovators and the sophists.

The distinction between the Sufi's position and that of the orthodox theologian lies in the fact that the theologian regards the Law (Shari'ah) and Reality (Haqiqah) as one and the same, while the Sufi maintains that the two are so different from each other that unless one explicitly recognizes the difference, one is apt to commit a fundamental error.³⁰ Reality from this point of view is a special aspect of God, such that man can never completely comprehend it, whereas the Shari'ah is a code of human conduct which man can and must aspire to understand and act upon as completely as possible.

The identity of reality and the Shari'ah which the Sufi attributes to the theologian does not appear to be easy to understand. Going by what one finds in the writings of the leaders of the four schools of Fiqh, one would say that the theologian is very logical and cautious in his views regarding the attributes of God. He would be the last person to identify the Shari'ah and the Haqiqah, for whereas the understanding of Shari'ah requires no special faculty other than the one which an average mortal requires for solving the problems of his daily life, the understanding of Haqiqah requires a special capacity with which the prophets alone are endowed.

Regarding the distinction between the Sufis and the innovators and sophists, it is pointed out that while the Sufis hold that the Shari'ah and Haqiqah, in spite of their theoretical distinction, always operate in intimate relation, the innovators maintain that the Shari'ah is operative only so long as a man has not established contact with reality; for whenever he does establish this contact, the Shari'ah stops being operative and becomes altogether useless and futile.³¹

The broad significance of this distinction is that the early Sufi never re-garded himself as completely free from the bonds of the Shari'ah. He never dared claim himself, as some of Carmathians and others did, as law unto himself, or as a lawgiver to others.

Apart from these distinctions between the position taken up by the Sufis on the one hand and theologians, Carmathians, etc., on the other, the early Sufi felt the need of another distinction; and that was the distinction between his attitude towards the Shari'ah and that of the average Muslim.

He held that, while for the average man of religion a large number of conveniences and concessions are permissible within the framework of the Shari`ah, there are no such concessions and conveniences for the Sufi. The latter does not believe in sparing himself so far as the rules and regulations of the Shari'ah are concerned. For him there is no "take it easy" in the Shari'ah. The early Sufi believed in an extremely high level of conformity with the Law. As there is no transgression for the Sufi, there is no relaxation for him. Even the relaxation permissible to others is a threat to him.³²

This unsparing attitude of the Sufi is not the result of his belief in asceticism per se. It is rather the logical result of his basic attitude towards God which is his starting point, and by virtue of which alone he is justified in calling himself a Sufi. The concessions given by the Shari'ah to an average Muslim are determined by his station in life in so far as he accepts the rights and obligations conferred or enjoined on him by the various groups of which he willingly accepts the membership. For the Sufi there is no such membership of social groups, to begin with; and, therefore, he can claim no special rights and obligations for the fulfilment of which concessions and conveniences within the Shari'ah may be necessary.

This point becomes clear when one compares the attitude of the Sufi with that of the ascetic. Whereas the ascetic believes in the strategy of now sacrificing this asset or resource, now that in his search for goodness, the Sufi believes in an all-out bid to reach God. There is nothing too precious, too dear, or too delicate to be spent and expended in the Sufi's endeavour at reaching the fountain which alone can quench his thirst.³³

It would be easier to understand this attitude still further if we bear in mind why the early Sufi regarded the jihad with the self as the bigger and the more difficult and worthwhile form of jihad than the jihad against the political enemy with the help of the sword. For the Sufi engaged in the jihad against himself, all actions stemming from his narrow personal considerations lead to evil directly or indirectly.

This belief, that everything that is narrowly selfish and personal must directly or indirectly lead to evil, is closely related, in the mind of the early Sufi, to his attitude towards God as the only reality, which in technical lan-guage is known as tawhid. It is the Sufi's acceptance of tawhid as basic and fundamental that helps him build the right type of relation with God without which there is nothing in his life because of which he may be called a Sufi. It would be necessary, therefore, to state clearly what tawhid meant to the early Sufis.

A Sufi like Junaid of Baghdad believed that tawhid means that a man has the knowledge, as sure as any scientific knowledge today would be, that God is unique in His timelessness, and that there is none like Him, and, further, that nothing and nobody can carry out the actions which He, and He alone, is capable of carrying out.³⁴ On another occasion Junaid puts his ideas about tawhid thus: It is the maximum of certainty with which you believe that all motion as well as lack of motion of things created is the act of God.³⁵

Ja`far al-Sadiq explained tawhid by saying: He who thinks that Allah is in some- thing, or of something, or on something, commits the sin of making things other than God His equals, because if God be on something it would mean He is being supported or carried by that something, and if God be in some- thing it would mean that He is encircled by that something, and if He is of something it means that He is in time and in space.³⁶

Abu 'Ali Rudhbari expressed what tawhid meant to him by saying: God is other than that which man's thinking and imagining makes Him out to be, because He Himself says in the Qur'an, "There is nothing like Him and He hears all and sees all."³⁷

Abu `Ali al-Daqqaq, the teacher of Qushairi, puts his ideas about tawhid in one pithy comment: Somebody asked a Sufi where is God, and he replied, "Woe be to you, you wish to see with your physical eyes where God is."³⁸

Husain ibn Mansur thought the first step in tawhid means denying the possi-bility of there being an equal of God as completely as possible.³⁹ Husri re-garded that tawhid is based on five principles: (1) absolute negation of God's temporality, (2) complete assertion of the eternity of God, (3) relinquishing of lands and abodes, (4) separation from brethren, and (5) complete disregard of that which one knows and that which one does not know.

Explaining the third principle, Hujwiri says: It means the forsaking by the disciple of the established ways of seeking comfort and convenience for one's own self.

While explaining the last one of the principles, he says: Man's know-ledge of things is built upon the answers to his own hows and whys provided by his own intellect, imagination, or observation; all that such man-made knowledge asserts about tawhid is contradicted by the true notion of tawhid, and that which man's ignorance regards as tawhid is contradicted by man--made knowledge itself. Hence tawhid is neither encompassed by that which man knows, nor by that which man does not know.⁴⁰

Offering a positive com-ment of his own, this is how Hujwiri expresses what tawhid means: It is the sifting and absolute distinguishing of the eternal from that which is in time, in the sense that you must not regard the eternal as subject to the laws which govern that which is in time. You must not regard being in time as in any way similar to not being in time. You must accept God to be eternal and yourself to be in time. Nothing that is yours, or is like you, can be attributed to Him, and nothing which is an attribute of His can qualify you, because there is no mixing of the eternal and that which is in time; the eternal was there even before the birth of the possibility of the becoming of that which is in time.⁴¹

Keeping in mind the simple, almost naive, formulations of tawhid in the comments given above, one cannot help thinking that the men responsible for these formulations were not so much experts in philosophical polemics, as they were practical men concerned primarily with the guidance of their dis-ciples. None of these formulations can stand the rigour of logical analysis, and yet every one of the formulations can provide a framework of practical con-duct.

It is in view of this that, in spite of discerning traces of syllogistic pattern here and there, one must regard the efforts of the early Sufis as primarily the result of their training in the traditions of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, rather than the influences, Greek or Manichaeian, of philosophical thought, to which men like Qushairi and Hujwiri, and their predecessors like Junaid, must have been exposed. It took several centuries more for these philosophical influences to become practically the core of Sufi thinking. But during the period with which we are concerned Sufi thinking was mostly free of such influences.

The early Sufi believed that once he had set the pattern of his life in the mould of the attitudes and relations, described somewhat in detail above, he

was ready to make a start in realizing his ultimate ambition, namely, the ambition of experiencing God in such a way that he might be able to say, like every Sufi: "What for others is just a matter of conjecture and vague hypothesis is for him there like the most certain entity, and what for others is a matter of conceptual understanding of God is for him something to be experienced as an existent about the reality of which there can be no possible doubt, so that he can sing with the poet:

"My night is aglow with the beauteous grandeur of the face,
While the darkness of night envelops everyone else,
While others are enshrouded in the pitch darkness of night,
I am experiencing the brilliant light of the day."⁴²

But how he should make a start, and what exactly he should do after having made a start, are matters of controversy among the Sufis. These controversies are more keen and intense among the later Sufis than among the early ones. The intensity of these controversies among the later Sufis can be judged from the simple fact that, as we come out of the period of early Sufism and get into the later period we find no Sufi who is not anxious to link himself to one of the orders like Qadriyyah, Chishtiyyah, Naqshbandiyyah, Qalandriyyah, Shattariyyah, Uwaisiyyah, Suhrawardiyyah, Malamtiyyah, etc.

Among the early Sufis, on the other hand, we find practically no trace of such anxiety. For example, one finds little mention of such orders in Qushairi, though Hujwiri, who came after Qushairi, shows a good deal of order-consciousness. This order-consciousness of Hujwiri, which most probably reflects the order-consciousness of his contemporary Sufis, finds expression in a discussion of such orders as: al-Muhasibiyyah, al-Taifuriyyah, al-Junaidiyyah, al-Qassariyyah, al-Saiyariyyah, al-Suhailiyyah, al-Kharraziyyah, al-Nuriyyah, etc.

Without going into a detailed discussion of what among the early as well as the later Sufis constituted the basis of inter-order distinctions, one can safely say that at least one basis of such distinctions was just this matter of how one should make a start, and what one should do after having made a start. It seems every one of these orders, more the later ones than the earlier, had its own prescribed technique.

That in Kalabadhi and Qushairi there is little mention of Sufi orders - and Hujwiri discusses them with a good deal of keenness - indicates only that whereas the specific techniques of the respective orders might have been introduced in their rudimentary form in the days of the masters after whom the orders came to be known, it took several generations of followers and practitioners to recognize the merits of these techniques and give them their adequate and more or less perfected forms.

If one could, therefore, overlook the rudiments of techniques which some of the early Sufis might have introduced for the benefit of their respective groups of disciples, one could discover a large body of precepts which constituted the universally accepted techniques which all early Sufis regarded as indispensable. It is such techniques that Qushairi emphasizes in his chapter: "The Last Words to the Disciples," and it is to some of these that we must now turn.

The first step which is regarded absolutely necessary by Qushairi in this connection is that the disciple should seek a preceptor and put himself entirely under his guidance. For, if the disciple does not do that and relies entirely on his own initiative and efforts, he is never going to succeed.⁴³

The disciple who has no preceptor finds Satan himself acting as one.⁴⁴ Without a preceptor no disciple can achieve more than the mastering of industrious techniques of piety which by themselves never lead to his seeing the light and achieving an experiential contact with the Creator.⁴⁵

The early Sufis regarded reliance on just one's own initiative as misleading, perhaps because they considered the experiences of a beginner to be mostly theoretical, for when he thinks he is in contact with reality, he may actually be just imagining things; or he may be a victim of illusions and hallucinations. If it is just the disciple's own insight, limited as it is in the beginning, and nothing else, on which he has to depend, he will find it almost impossible to distinguish between the genuine Sufi experiences and what he is at the time experiencing.

If, on the other hand, he is under the guidance of an established master and preceptor and observes the discipline, he is in no danger of falling a victim to illusions and hallucinations; and in case he does fall victim to such confusions, he has, in his preceptor, one who can bring him back to the right path. The preceptor can do it because he is in actual living contact with reality, and his first-hand experience of reality can help the disciple verify whether his own experiences are genuine or otherwise.

This prerequisite, that every disciple must take a preceptor or else he is doomed, raises several issues which were discussed in detail by most of the early Sufis. One of these issues was: Is not the Shari'ah enough for a Muslim? Must the disciple accept the position that the framework of the Shari'ah is of necessity inadequate?

The most popular answer to such a question among the early Sufis was that in the Shari'ah there is room for the average, below average, as well as the above average. That which is for the above average in it is rooted in that segment of the Shari'ah which the Holy Prophet bequeathed only to the chosen few of his Companions, for it was meant only for them, and not for the com-mon man.

What distinguished this segment of the Shari`ah from the other segments was that an average man's code of conduct could be complete with-out it, and yet it did not clash with it. To the average man it was something within the Shari`ah and, at the same time, over and above the Shari'ah, in so far as he needed it.

The discussion of who the chosen few were, for whom this segment of the Shari'ah was meant, and what their distinguishing character-istics were, will be too detailed for us to enter into here. Suffice it to say that they were the ones who, on the one hand, had the laudable ambition of shaping their whole lives, and not just parts of it, on the model of the Holy Prophet, and who, on the other hand, were regarded by the Prophet as adequate and competent personalities for carrying the extra load of intimate insight into the nature of Reality, that is, God.

It was from this point of view that the early Sufis regarded the Shari`ah of the average Muslim as just not enough for him. And it was to make up for the deficiencies of the average man's Shari`ah that he sought the help, guidance, and discipline of a preceptor, belonging to a line of preceptors ultimately ending up with the Holy Prophet from whom the first man in the line got his unique insight.

One additional reason which is sometimes offered by some early Sufis as an explanation for the necessity of a preceptor is that every genuine insight into God's being is an experience of a magnitude altogether beyond the capacity of an average mortal. The collapsing of the Prophet Moses at getting just a glimpse of His being is cited by them as an extreme example of it. If a disciple is lucky enough, through just his own endeavours, to get such an intimate insight into the being of God, then left just to his own personal resources he may collapse and find further progress altogether impossible.

The early Sufis' insistence on every disciple taking a preceptor raises some other issues altogether different from the ones we have discussed so far. The pre-Islamic Arab tribes insisted on certain groups of their members specializing in their genealogical trees, customs, war-records, naturally under some teachers. Likewise the early Islamic period saw schools of Tafsir, Fiqh, etc., coming into existence.

The pattern of pupil-teacher relationship was, therefore, not altogether unknown to the early Sufis. But what the pupil in all these fields learnt from the teacher fell under the heading of knowledge in the usual sense of the term. He who had more knowledge and information could impart it to him who was prepared to sweat for it. The question arises: Was this type of pupil-teacher relationship the model of the disciple-preceptor relationship in the Sufis' special field?

There is no simple answer to this question. That the Arabs were familiar with the possibility of one's having knowledge of the phenomena other than the natural ones goes without saying. That the Jews and the Christians among them were familiar with the knowledge of the divine, distinct from the mun-dane, is also well known. But what is not clear is whether in the days im-mediately preceding Islam the disciple-preceptor type of relation was developed and cultivated in an institutionalized form or not.

For, on the one hand, we have the Semitic institution of the Prophet who by virtue, not of any ascetic practices of his own, but by virtue merely of divine blessing, is chosen to have living contact with the Almighty and, thus, become His agent for leading the Semitic people to the righteous path; and, on the other, we have the insti-tutions of the Rabbi and the Rahib, who by virtue of the ascetic practices to which they devote their entire lives can acquire some sort of contact with the Almighty which puts them above the average mortal. The Rabbi and the Rahib in this sense are in the same category as the Kahins of the pagan Arabs, i.e. men who through the practices they learnt from their masters were thought to have achieved a contact with reality which could not have been achieved by those who did not have the benefit of those practices. Of course, the reality with which the

Rabbi and the Rahib establish contact must be distinguished from the reality with which the pagan Kahin established contact.

If one looks at the disciple-preceptor relation of the early Sufi against this cultural background of the Semitic peoples, it is easy to see how much of it is influenced by the Jewish and Christian practices. But that is not tantamount to calling Sufism un-Islamic. Strictly speaking, the Sufi disciple-preceptor relationship is as different from its Jewish and Christian models as Islam is different from Judaism and Christianity, for the roots of such models of relations go into the over-all systems from which they spring.

The Sufi disciple-preceptor relation would be un-Islamic if it could be demonstrated that the features which distinguish it from its Jewish and Christian models are not derived from Islam but are, rather, derived from sources other than Islamic. One could say, without going into further discussion; that these extra-Jewish and extra-Christian elements in the systems of the early Sufis were not derived from sources other than the Qur'an and the Sunnah. And one could cite, in support, cases like that of Shibli, the preceptor, and Husri, the disciple. Shibli told Husri in the very beginning of their relationship that if between one Friday and the next, when he had to come to Shibli, i, e., for one whole week, any thought of anything, or any being other than God entered his mind, his coming to Shibli was altogether forbidden.⁴⁶

The case of Shibli and Husri is instructive from another point too. It illustrates in a simple and concrete form what exactly the Sufi preceptor does for his disciple. To think of nothing and to live a life involved in nothing but God, not only for one whole week, but week after week, is the least that is expected of a beginner. Such a way of life is easier described than actually lived. Life as an average mortal lives presents no parallel to this kind of involvement.

For the Sufi, especially the beginner, in spite of his having selected the Path of Sufism, is still a member of a living society which does not stop making demands on him; and he needs attending to so many other things just to survive and remain strong enough to carry out the task that the Shari`ah prescribes for him even in the context in which he has put himself. To carry out adequately all this and yet let no thought other than that of God enter his mind even for the fraction of a moment seems, at the face of it, quite an impossibility.

The only parallel one finds in ordinary life is that of a lover. The lover is seldom forgetful of his love in spite of all his activities of daily life; rather, he does everything ultimately for the sake of his beloved. Even so the Sufi does everything for the sake of his beloved, God. Once this becomes possible, acts not only like those of the prescribed five prayers a day, but even those remotely connected with praying, become acts carried out by him with God constituting the constant frame of reference.

The case of an ordinary lover is easier to understand for the simple reason that, as we all know, there is a lot within us which can never find expression or satisfaction without one's being in love. The person with whom one is in love offers a living answer to so many of the problems of

the lover's personality that, without being in love with just such and such a person, the lover might have remained incomplete himself.

In so far as there is this personal, specific, and concrete element in every lover-beloved relation, it falls below the Sufi-God relation. But in so far as every genuine lover-beloved relation means the living by the lover a life which, even when it does not appear to be lived for the sake of the beloved, is actually coloured by the tender thoughts of the beloved deep in the heart of the lover, the lover-beloved relation offers the only parallel in ordinary life for the Sufi-God relation of the type Shibli de-manded of Husri.

How the Sufi comes to fall in love with God, the unseen, is one of the greatest mysteries of Sufism. One may, however, safely infer that unless there is a preceptor this would be impossible for a beginner. The conceptual unseen somehow must be made experiential, for otherwise the Sufi can never have a more personalized and intimate understanding of Him than just an intellectual grasp of that which His logically defined nature can provide.

One may say that the preceptor helps his disciple fall in love with God first by turning the intellectual acceptance of God by him into an emotional acceptance. Once the disciple has worked through this stage, and succeeded in converting his own intellectual acceptance of his Creator into an emotional acceptance, he is ready for the next stage, the stage of finding this emotional acceptance of the Creator so overwhelming that every other reality, social, biological, etc., is completely subordinated to it. And if one were to go into it one may find that these are just the first stages in the Sufi's long, life-long, career in God.

Since our purpose at present is not so much the detailed description of the various stages in the Sufi's development as the finding out of how the preceptor helps his disciple in falling in love with God, we will stop at this point. But before we pass on to the next point we must stress one thing: it is all very well to try to explain the preceptor-disciple relation in terms of modern psychology, but we must not overlook the fact that this in itself is no more than a conjecture.

Instead of relying on such explanations the best thing would be to go back to the accounts of the Sufis themselves with an open mind. If and when they open their lips to describe how they came to fall in love with God and what happened to them from that point on, we must lend credence to their word, for otherwise we shall be left with no data on which to build our own explanations. Unfortunately, there is very little in the literature concerning the early Sufis which could throw light on the actual experiences of the disciple in his progress and development, and we have, consequently, to be content with just the hints we find here and there.

Even the most intimate emotional involvement of the Sufi with the Creator does not result in his losing the perspective of his material surroundings. Account after account of a genuine Sufi's life will convince even the most sceptical that, if at all, the over-all perspective of a Sufi is more realistic than the perspective of even the most realistic of the ordinary mortals among whom he has to live. Keeping this in mind it would not be very difficult for any student of Sufism to reject the charge usually levelled against the Sufis that they are mostly unrealistic persons wrapped up most

of the time in the pseudo--universe of which God, a distorted father image, is the centre.

For the early Sufi, who was lucky to have met many of those who had the privilege of seeing the Holy Prophet and learning the Islamic way of life through their personal contact with him, God was the Being not of mere conceptual nature, but rather a Being who was responsible for the Heavenly Journey of the Prophet; the Being to whom in their hour of distress they could turn and call aloud: "When is Allah going to help us!" and the Being from whom they expected to get the response in concrete terms which their anguished hearts desired. For such early Sufis God was not a pseudo-father image;. He was rather the most real and living Being, and the ultimate refuge of those lost in delusions and hal-lucinations.

But when all is said and done we must admit that the techniques the pre-ceptor employs to emotionalize the disciple's intellectual grasp of God are mystery to all save those who are lucky enough to enter into such a relation with a preceptor. All that we can do by way of making an effort at an in-tellectual and theoretical understanding of these techniques is to describe and discuss briefly such of the hints as Qushairi gives in the chapter mentioned above.

One of the first things which the disciple learns to do in order to establish his relation on a firm and operative footing is to put himself completely into the preceptor's hands. This attitude of complete faith in and reliance on the preceptor may lead the disciple sometimes into actions which, to all intents and purposes, go against the most explicit injunctions of the Shari'ah. But the disciple, in spite of his awareness of what the Shari'ah demands of him, must obey the preceptor. This aspect of the preceptor-disciple relations has been emphasized by the early Sufis as much as by the later ones. And it came in for very strong criticism from the orthodox theologians.

But, in spite of the emphasis the early Sufis laid on the role of the Shari'ah in their lives, they justified this attitude of blind obedience of the preceptor, on the ground that it was just a passing phase in the development of the beginner, and a necessary phase because, without it, it was impossible for the beginner to get out of the personal and self-centred frame of reference which throughout his life up to the point he took a preceptor had been his only operative frame of reference. The way Qushairi puts the whole idea is: when the disciple has rid himself completely of the influence of his worldly position, status, and wealth, it be-comes incumbent on him to set right his relation with God by deciding never to say no to his Shaikh.⁴⁷

Once the disciple has put himself completely in the hands of his preceptor, the chances are that he will soon start having experiences of reality which till then were altogether unknown to him. This first contact with reality might not always be conducive to happy results. Sometimes the novice feels the urge of communicating these novel and marvellous experiences of his to any-body and everybody just to test whether he still is in possession of his senses; sometimes he communicates with others to share his delight as well as his agony with them and seek strength from such a sharing of experiences; and sometimes he communicates with others because of some other emotional urges. All this is forbidden. He should

keep his experiences of reality as his most precious personal secrets to himself and divulge them to nobody except his preceptor.⁴⁸

Although the early Sufi writers have given no explicit reason for this in-junction, their general tone suggests that the first experiences of reality of a Sufi are based on such a delicate relation between him and his Creator that unless extreme care is taken the Sufi runs the risk of losing all capacity for such experiences. It was felt that until the newly developed relationship between the beginner's personality and his Creator is properly stabilized he should be as watchful and jealous of this unique achievement as possible. And there is no way of doing that better than sharing all such experiences with the pre-ceptor, for he can, through his identification with the disciple, lend him his own strength and stability.

Having worked with the disciple through these early experiences, the Shaikh finds out the strength as well the weaknesses of the disciple. In the light of this understanding the preceptor then selects one of the various names of the Almighty and takes him through an involvement with it in such a way that, by the time he finishes this period of training, he is completely influenced by it in everything he does.

There are several stages in this which the disciple must pass through under the watchful supervision of the Shaikh. He first repeats this name of the Almighty with just his tongue. Then he puts his heart and soul into it to such an extent that it is not just the tongue which utters the name of the Almighty, but even his heart and soul utter nothing but this name. Then the disciple is told to keep engaged in the uttering of the name all the time and continue thus till he feels actually as if he is with his heart and soul occupied with and engaged in nothing but his Creator.⁴⁹

It is at this last stage that the disciple achieves for the first time that involvement with the Almighty which alone makes it possible for him to go on in his endeavour to achieve an infinitely progressive type of involvement with Him.

The beginner's ability to achieve a view of the universe around him as nothing but that aspect of Being which is signified by the particular name of the Almighty, on which the master trained him, depends a great deal on the influence exerted on him by the master's personality. But apart from this there is a considerable amount of hard work which has to be done by the beginner himself by way of long prayers, series of night-long vigils, self-denial in food, sleep, rest, etc. This hard work which is planned and prescribed by the master has to be carried out by the disciple, however arduous and inconvenient it may be. To this hard work the early Sufis gave the name of mujahadah.

The true significance of mujahadah is realized only when one finds in the accounts of the early Sufis how much of the first experiencing of reality depends on it. Hujwiri holds, for example, that mushahadah (i, e., the first seeing of the Almighty with the mind's eye) can never occur without mujahadah.⁵⁰

One explanation of the significance of the beginner's hard work (mujahadah), in so far as it is a necessary condition for his first contact with reality (mushahadah), is that it is a process of disciplined prayers and ascetic

practices which ultimately results in such a refinement of the Sufi's personality as to rid it of all that is base and low in it. This disciplined and refined personality is more ready to receive the first vision of reality than the original personality of the beginner which basically is self-centred and crude.

But even the most stringent discipline of this type (mujahadah) is not considered by the early Sufis to be the sole and necessary means for the first contact with reality (mushahadah). As Hujwiri puts it, all such discipline is the Sufi's own work, but this work brings the proper reward in its wake only when the Creator wills it.⁵¹

Why the early Sufis, in spite of rating the Sufi's labour so high, did not recognize it as the necessary means for the first contact with reality, was perhaps due to the fact that they had at the back of their minds the possibility that this very hard labour could produce in the Sufis a sense of self-righteousness verging on conceit. And this conceit was the one thing which, they thought, had been the cause of Satan's downfall, about whom the Qur'an is very explicit: he refused and felt conceited.⁵² It was with this in mind that the early Sufis regarded the first contact with reality always a matter of grace rather than something earned by the Sufi just because of his having worked so hard.

The first contact with reality is regarded by the Sufis as just the beginning to which there is no end, because reality is infinite. But the beginning has a unique importance. Without it there would be, as one might say, no series of contacts to follow. Although there is not much explicit mention of it in the accounts of early Sufis, scores of accounts of later Sufis bear out the fact that sometimes a beginner may toil year after year in fruitless vigils and fasts and may find his labours completely unrewarded.

There is a kind of a barrier be-tween the mortal self of the Sufi, on the one hand, and the glorious Being of the Creator, on the other, which must be broken for the infinite series of ever-more-intimate contacts between the two to follow. It is the first crack in this barrier, which, in spite of its being just a crack, gives it its unique significance. For without it there is no possibility of the more adequate removal of the barrier which has yet to come.

What happens after the first contact between the beginner and his Creator is a secret which nobody has ever completely revealed, for the simple reason, among others, that the experiences of the Sufi from this point on are on a plane altogether different from the plane of the average mortal. Communication between the Sufi and the average mortal is consequently extremely hazardous, if not altogether impossible. If the Sufi uses the language of the average mortal, he may mean one thing and actually say another; and if he uses the language he creates in order to give expression to his unique experiences, he may not be understood at all.

All that we are in possession of, therefore, in the writings of the early Sufis regarding the states and relations through which they pass after the first crack in the barrier between them and their Creator, is a collection of carefully coined and scrupulously selected terms which some of them employ to convey something at least of what they see in the course of their journey into the Infinite.

Two such terms are station (maqam) and state (hal). Each one stands for a specific type of development the Sufi goes through. The basis of distinction between them is the same as the one between mujahadah and mushahadah. Station is the general term which covers all those stages which after the initial contact with reality are considered achievable through the Sufi's own toil and labour. State, on the other hand, covers all those states which are the result of the ceaseless flow of grace of which the Sufi remains the recipient as long as he does not falter and remains steadfast in his pursuit of reality. This is expressed by Hujwiri in the following words: Maqam is consequent upon one's own actions, hal is one of the blessings; maqam is one of the rewards which are earned by the Sufi, while hal is one of the blessings conferred on him independently of his actual actions.⁵³

That of the almost infinite series of stations a perfect Sufi may achieve only a few, is explicitly mentioned by the early Sufis. But we know which the first is and which the last, for Hujwiri sums up the whole thing in two sentences:

(1) Tawbah (renunciation of all that had been evil in the Sufi's life up-to-date) is the beginning of the series of maqamat;⁵⁴ (2) rida' (absolute satisfaction with the state in which God keeps the Sufi) is the last of the series.⁵⁵

Hujwiri indicates what he believes to be the true relation between maqam and hal by adding: Rida' is the last of the series of maqamat but the first of the series of ahwal. This shows that in spite of the earlier impression that the two lines which intersect at many points, the correct theoretical position is that ahwal begin where maqamat end. This is in keeping with the basic attitude of the Sufi that in whatever he achieves he is in the last resort indebted more to his Creator than to his own personal endeavours. This point of view looks more logical too.

If maqamat are achieved by the Sufi through his personal endeavour, the series cannot be infinite merely because his personal endeavour must have a limit. Ahwal, on the other hand, since they are based on acts of the grace of the Infinite, must of necessity be infinite as a series. The two series could not run parallel; and if one has to end before the other begins, it must be the finite, for the infinite will never come to an end.

The discussion of the maqamat being a finite series of states, and ahwal being an infinite series of states, through which a Sufi may travel, raises an interesting issue. Are we really justified in believing that the Sufi's ahwal constitute an infinite series of states of development to which there is no end? Whatever else one might say in answer to the question, within the frame-work of the Shari'ah, the answer in the affirmative is completely ruled out. There must be a point at which the development of the Sufi must stop in order to remain short of the status of a nabi or a rasul (a prophet without a book, or the one with a book).

Another interesting point that comes out of the discussion of the early Sufi's concept of maqam and hal is related to his attitude towards the problem of free-will. One can infer from the early Sufi's attitude, regarding maqam and hal, that with regard to the former he believes in individual freedom and initiative as well as responsibility, and regarding the latter he

believes that individual freedom and initiative can take him only up to a point and no further.

Another pair of terms that was common among the early Sufis was that of knowledge ('ilm) and gnosis (ma'rifah). The difference between the two is brought out first by pointing out that, whereas the theologians ('ulama') make no distinction between them, the Sufis believe that the one must never be confused with the other. For the theologian all sure and certain knowledge is 'ilm; therefore, ma'rifah, in the sense in which the Sufis use it, is also 'ilm and nothing else. They consequently think that "the possessor of knowledge" ('alim) and "the possessor of gnosis" ('arif) mean one and the same thing. But, as Hujwiri points out, the theologians contradict themselves when they assert that whereas 'alim is a descriptive term and can be used for God, the term arif cannot be used thus.⁵⁶

The Sufis think that between knowledge and gnosis there is a basic distinction which should never be lost sight of. Knowledge, in their eyes, is that which in the last resort, when analysed, never takes us beyond empty verbal form; gnosis, on the other hand, is that awareness which when analysed ends up in direct experience of concrete facts, processes, and things. Knowledge, therefore, seldom influences one's real conduct, while gnosis can seldom remain without influencing it. From their point of view, knowledge is a rudimentary form of gnosis. Consequently, the possessor of knowledge may not at the same time possess gnosis, whereas the possessor of gnosis must have at one stage possessed knowledge.⁵⁷

Apart from this way of distinguishing gnosis from knowledge, the early Sufis tried to bring out the distinction in yet another way. This they did by emphasizing that, whereas in the case of one's knowledge regarding something communication is both possible and desirable, in the case of one's gnosis it is neither possible, nor desirable. In order fully to appreciate this distinction between the two modes of knowledge which the early Sufis regarded basic and fundamental one must keep in mind the fact that in their eyes it is only the knowledge of the ultimately Real which can develop from knowledge into gnosis; apprehension of other facts, things, or processes can never develop beyond knowledge and, therefore, must remain short of gnosis.

Theoretically, this implies the impossibility of gnosis and the possibility only of knowledge of one's own self.⁵⁸ From this point of view, the attitude of the early Sufi so far as knowledge of reality is concerned is as different from that of the positivist as of any traditional metaphysician.

Another way in which Hujwiri tries to bring out the distinction between knowledge and gnosis is that knowledge can be acquired, while gnosis is a gift of God;⁵⁹ therefore, it can never be a substitute for gnosis.

All these distinctions between knowledge and gnosis are summed up by Qushairi in what he relates from his preceptor, Abu 'Ali al-Daqqaq: Gnosis is achieved by one who has knowledge of the Real in all the various aspects and then carries out his dealings with everybody within the constant framework of reference to God, gets rid of his own base features ... and does not permit even a single thought to enter his mind which attracts him to anything but God ... he who has achieved all this is known as a gnostic and

his state is known as that of gnosis. Such a person achieves gnosis of his Creator in proportion to his estrangement from his own self.⁶⁰

Keeping this statement in mind, one could say that the involvement of the gnostic with his Creator is an involvement as concrete and actual as one can think of; it is not mere conceiving of this or that virtue and just imposing on oneself the intellectual framework thus evolved.

Another pair of terms popular among the early Sufis is that of fana' and baqa'. As to the definition of these terms there is considerable agreement between the early Sufis. But when they come to interpret these definitions in detail, differences crop up. This is illustrated even in the attitudes of Qushairi and Hujwiri. Qushairi maintains, he whom the glory of reality overwhelms to such an extent that he observes neither in itself, nor in its effects, nor in the form of its traces and tracks, anything other than reality, is described as one who has achieved fana', in respect of things created, and baqa' in respect of the Creator.⁶¹

Hujwiri, on the other hand, maintains: Fana' is the complete loss by the mortal self of the conditions of his being, and baqa' is his being lost in the vision of the Real. He achieves fana' through the vision of his own actions and baqa' through the vision of the acts of God. His dealings with others are coloured by reference to Him and not to his own mortal self. Hence, he who loses all that is mortal and finite in his mortal self achieves permanence proportionately in the vision of divineness of the Real.⁶²

This withdrawing from one's own self, and everything else, into the Creator is easier to understand if we take into consideration an explanatory comment of Qushairi: So far as his evil actions and conditions are concerned, fana' of the mortal self means his getting rid of all traces of these as completely as possible; while in respect of his own self and other persons and things, fana' means just the loss by him of his consciousness of his own self and that of other persons and things as the frame of reference for his actions ... for when he is said to have achieved fana' with regard to his self and other persons and things, it is still recognized that his self exists and other persons and things exist too; only he has lost consciousness of his self, on the one hand, and of other persons and things, on the other.⁶³

Summing up all this one could say fana' means the complete disappearance of three things: (1) the bad actions, tendencies, and conduct, (2) the low and base self, and (3) the world at large. So far as the first form of fana' is concerned, the disappearance means their disappearing altogether from existence; so far as the second and third forms of fana' are concerned it means that, in spite of the self and others still being in existence, the Sufi has become oblivious of their existence.

Hujwiri interprets fana' and baqa' still in another way by connecting the two with the unity of God (tawhid). Both fana' and baqa' are rooted in one's being sincere in accepting unity, for, when one accepts unity one must also accept as being completely in the hands of God. One who is, thus, in the hands of Another has the status of one who has achieved fana'. Such a person must accept his complete helplessness.

For him there is no other status than that of a person who has been made what he is by the Lord. So he must build up the permanent attitude of total

submission (rida') towards his Creator. Any-body who interprets fana' and baqa' in any other way than this, i, e., regards fana' as the actual disappearing of the mortal self, and baqa' as the actual per-manence in the Real, is no other than a sophist.⁶⁴

That which distinguishes this comment of Hujwiri's from Qushairi's comments in general, and the one that follows in particular, is the consciousness of the corrupting influences that the Carmathians, Malahad, etc., had started exercising in his days. He wished to keep the definitions of fana' and baqa' as precise as possible, lest they should become tools in the hands of those who were interested in getting Sufism rid of its roots in the Shari'ah and Tawhid.

This is how Qushairi describes fana' and baqa' in the comment particularly pointed out above: "When a person has achieved fana' of his self, as described so far, he goes from the vision of his fana' into the higher stage of his actual fana'.... The first stage in this ascent is the fana' of his self and all its attributes through his permanence in the attributes of the Real. Then comes the second stage of his losing his status in the attributes of the Real and achieving a vision of God Himself. And last of all he loses his status in the vision of the reality by merging himself completely in the being of the Real."⁶⁵

One thing that, in all fairness to Qushairi, must be pointed out regarding this last comment of his is that in spite of his mode of expression being very much like that of the Malahad, the Carmathians, etc., against whom Hujwiri wishes to warn his readers, Qushairi does not mean to maintain that fana' is the actual fana' of the mortal self and baqa' is its actual baqa' in the Real as the Carmathians, etc., maintained. Qushairi, on the other hand, maintains, as would be clear from the comments from him quoted earlier, what in substance is maintained by Hujwiri himself.

Although there are scores of such pairs and groups of terms as have been discussed above, what has been said so far should be enough to give us some idea at least of what type of men the early Sufis were, and what went into making them what they were. If, on the other hand, we were to go into a detailed study of their mode of life we will not be able to do justice to it with-out taking into consideration not only their basic attitudes, as has been done so far, but even the specific applications of these to each and every little detail of their daily lives.

The early Sufi was involved in his Creator in a relationship, an extremely pale example of which is the relation of the maddest love between two human beings. As the lover thinks of nothing, dreams of nothing, sees nothing, and feels nothing but his beloved and of his beloved all the time, a Sufi thinks of nothing, dreams of nothing, sees nothing, and feels nothing but his beloved and of his beloved, that is, his Creator.

The result is that when one studies the lives of these Sufis, one finds that they take not even a single step in their lives without feeling sure within themselves that this and nothing else will please Him. How they should walk when they tread the earth, how they should talk when they mix with their fellow-men, how they should dress, what they should eat, what they should drink, what they should do when they get up in the morning if they

go to sleep at all -- each and every little detail of everything relating to these matters is prescribed for them. And the basic principle underlying all such prescriptions is that even the maximum of obedience, service, sacrifice, devotion, and love is not enough; so they should always regard the maximum as the minimum, and constantly strive for a devotion more thorough and a love more intense.

It is this burning desire to lose oneself in the Creator on an ever-increasing scale in everything, major or minor, over the whole period of one's life, which distinguishes the early Sufi from everybody else.

Notes

1. This chapter is based mainly on the following source books : (i) Abu Nasr 'Abd Allah b. 'Ali al-Sarraj al-Tusi, al-Kitab al-Luma' fi al-Tasawwuf; (ii) Khwajah Farid al-Din 'Attar, Tadhkirat al-Auliya'; (iii) Makhdum 'Ali Hujwiri, Kashf al-Mahjub; (iv) Abu Bakr al-Kalabadhi i, Kitab al-Ta'arruf li Madhhab Ahl at-Tasaw-wuf translated from Arabic by A. J. Arberry: The Doctrine of the Sufis, Cambridge University Press, London 1935 (v) Abu al-Qasim al-Qushairi, al-Risalat al-Qushairiyyah, Dar al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah al-Kubra, Misr, 1330 A.H.

The Kitab al-Luma' is regarded as one of the oldest, if not the oldest, Sufi texts available. Its author is 'Abd Allah ibn 'Ali ibn Muhanunad ibn Yahya Abu Nasr al-Sarraj al-Tusi who died in 378/988. He is quoted by Abu 'Abd al-Rahman al--Sulami (d. 412/1021), the author of Tabaqat al-Sufiyyah (itself one of the oldest texts), Abu al-Qasim al-Qushairi, Makhdum 'Ali Hujwiri, Farid al Din 'Attar, al-Ghazali, and scores of early as well as later writers on Sufism. He is considered to have written several books, but Kitab al-Luma' is the only one which has come down to us.

According to Nicholson, Sarraj quotes from such well-known Sufis and scholars as Abu Dawud Sijistani, Abu Said al-Kharraz, Abu Said al-'Arabi, Ibrahim al-Khawwas, Amr bin 'Uthman al-Makki, Junaid, and through him Abu Yazid al-Bistami.

2. Abu Nasr 'Abd Allah bin 'Ali al-Sarraj al-Tusi, Kitab al-Luma' fi al-Tasawwuf, ed. R. A. Nicholson, Luzac & Co., London, 1914, p. 2.

3. Ibid. pp. 3-4.

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Chapter 17: Early Sufis (Continued)

Although space does not allow us to go into the detailed study of the lives of the early Sufis we may yet give a brief biographical account of some of them who made a definite contribution towards the general doctrine which we have described in the preceding chapter.

Sufis Before Al Hallaj

By B.A. Dar

1. Hasan of Basrah (21/⁶⁴²-110/728)

Hasan of Basrah belonged to the class of those who did not see the Prophet but his Companions (Sahabah) and the Companions of his Companions (Tabi'in). Although he took no active part in politics, yet in his fight against the Umayyads, he was sympathetic towards Imam Husain.

Hasan represented a tendency towards otherworldliness, piety, and asceticism in which the element of fear of God predominated. In a letter to 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz, the Umayyad Caliph, he said, "Beware of this world, for it is like a snake, smooth to the touch, but its venom is deadly Beware of this world, for its hopes are lies, its expectations false." Later on, in the same letter, he praised hunger and poverty as symbols of the righteous and looked upon wealth as an evil which distracts people from their rightful goal.¹

He regarded piety as the quintessence of true religion.² According to him, it has three grades. The first is that a man should speak the truth even though he is excited through anger. The second grade of piety demands that he should control his bodily organs and refrain from things which God has forbidden. The third and last stage of piety is that he should desire only those things which lead to God's pleasure (rida'). A little of piety is better than prayer and fasting of a thousand years.³ It is the lust for this world and avarice that destroy piety.⁴

Hasan was so much overpowered by fear and was seldom seen laughing that when he sat he appeared as if he were sitting before an executioner.⁵ He was ever conscious of his sins and the fear of hell. He thought he would consider himself fortunate if he would be delivered from hell after tribulations of a thousand years.⁶ Somebody asked him how he felt himself in this world. He replied: Imagine a people in a boat which has capsized and everybody is trying save himself by clinging to broken pieces of wood. Such is the real position of man in this world.⁷

2. Abu Hashim of Kufah (d. 160/776)

Abu Hashim belonged to Kufah. There were people before Abu Hashim who were famous for their asceticism (zuhd), piety (war`), engagement in the science of practical religion, trust in God, and love; but it was Abu Hashim who first of all came to be called by the name of Sufi. The first monastery where the Sufis began to gather for exchange of ideas, and mutual discussion about their mystic experiences was established by some wealthy Christian in Ramlah in Syria where he had observed some Muslim saints engaged in mystic exercises in the open.

According to Sufyan Thauri, Abu Hashim knew the subtlety of riya' (showing off) more than anybody else. Abu Hashim once said that it was far

easier to pull down a mountain with the help of a needle than to remove vanity and arrogance from one's heart. On seeing a judge coming out of the house of a minister, he remarked: May God protect people from knowledge that does not lead to the benefit of the heart.⁸

All these incidents point to the fact that, according to Abu Hashim, inner transformation of the heart was the essence of Sufism.

3. Ibrahim b. Adham (d. 160/777)

Ibrahim b. Adham, whom Junaid of Baghdad called the key to Sufism, also advocated asceticism which, according to him, involved otherworldliness, celibacy, and poverty. For him a true saint is one who covets nothing of this world, nothing of the next, and devotes himself exclusively to God.⁹ In the same strain he told a questioner who had asked him about his occupation that he had left the world to the seekers of the world and the hereafter to the seekers of the hereafter, and had chosen for himself the remembrance of God in this world and the beatific vision in the next.¹⁰ He advocated celibacy and poverty as the prerequisites of true asceticism.

According to him, he who adopts poverty cannot think of marriage, for it becomes impossible for him to fulfil the needs of his wife. When a Sufi marries, he enters, so to say, a boat, but when he gets a child, his boat sinks and his asceticism disappears.¹¹ A certain man was bewailing of his poverty. Ibrahim b. Adham remarked that he had paid nothing for this poverty of his. The man was surprised and asked: Is poverty a thing to be bought? Ibrahim said: Yes, I chose it of my own free-will and bought it at the price of worldly sovereignty and I am ready to exchange one instant of it with a hundred worlds.¹²

In Ibrahim b. Adham we meet with the practice of courting blame (malamah) for the purpose of self-discipline. Once he was asked if he was ever happy in his life by attaining his heart's desire. He replied: Yes, twice. He related two different events when people not knowing him mocked and jested at his cost.¹³

He referred to the principle of tawakkul (trust in God), but in his case it was a moral principle as enunciated in the Qur'an, which does not exclude earning one's livelihood by one's own efforts.

4. Shaqiq of Balkh (d. 194/810)

Shaqiq of Balkh was a pupil of Abu bin Adham. He developed and perfected the doctrine of tawakkul.¹⁴ The story of his conversion to Sufism is revealing. Once in the course of his trade he went to Turkestan and visited a temple of idol-worshippers. Shaqiq told the people there that their Creator is omnipotent and omniscient and they should, therefore, be ashamed of worshipping idols which are powerless in providing them anything. The idol-worshippers told him: If your Creator is omnipotent and all-knowing, why have you come into this distant land for seeking livelihood? Can He not provide you in your own town? On hearing this Shaqiq gave up the world, went to Khurasan and be-came an ascetic.¹⁵

Shaqiq interpreted tawakkul as negation of earning one's living. He once remarked that the efforts put in by man in seeking livelihood are the result

of his ignorance of God's ways of dealing with men and, therefore, to work hard in order to win bread is unlawful (haram).¹⁶

5. Harith Muhasibi (165/781-243/857)

Harith Muhasibi started his life as a theologian and belonged to the school of Shafi'i. He advocated the use of reason and employed the technique of the Mu'tazilites in controversies with them and was thus a precursor of the Ash'arites. His career resembled that of Ghazali's in some respects. Both had a complete theological education, were well versed in philosophical and religious problems of their day, and were later on converted to the Sufistic Path, partly under the stress of circumstances and partly as a result of their inner moral strain.

Muhasibi's book *Wasaya* which again served as a prototype for Ghazali's *Munqidh*, relates the events which revolutionized his life. The first thing that struck him was the division of the Muslim community into numerous sects and sub-sects each claiming the monopoly of salvation. He devoted a great part of his life to discovering the clear way and the true path amid these divergences. He met all kinds of people who claimed to know and follow the truth, but in almost every case he failed to be convinced; most of them were busy in worldly gains.

"I looked to knowledge for guidance, thinking deeply and considering long. Then it was made clear to me, from God's Book and the Prophet's practice and the consensus of believers, that the pursuit of desire blinds a man and so prevents him from seeking the right path, and leads him astray from truth." This conviction led him to self-examination (muhasibah, which brought him the title Muhasibi),¹⁷ self-discipline, and moral transformation.

He realized that the path of salvation consists in the fear of God, compliance with His ordinances, sincere obedience to Him, and the imitation of His Prophet. When he tried to search for the ordinances in the life and conduct of the saints, he was again struck by differences. Of this much, however, he was assured that only those people can be sure guides who, knowing God, labour to win His pleasure. But at first it proved almost impossible for him to find such men and yet he continued his quest, for it was a matter of life and death for him:

Finally, through God's grace he was successful in his search and came across people who were models of piety: God opened unto me a knowledge in which proof was clear and decision shone, and I had hopes that whoever should draw near to this knowledge and make it his own would be saved. When this enlightenment dawned upon him, the course of future action was clear. "I believed in it in my heart and embraced it in my mind and made it the foundation of my faith."¹⁸

In spite of his conversion, his attitude towards mysticism was marked by his intellectual approach. His famous disciple Junaid of Baghdad relates how he used to discourse with him on different topics of mysticism. Muhasibi would come to Junaid's house and ask him to come out with him. Junaid would protest at being dragged from solitude into the world of allurements. But Muhasibi would press him to ask whatever question came to his mind. This questioning and answering proved very stimulating to him and when he re-turned home he would put the entire discussion in a

notebook.¹⁹ Here we see the picture of a great Sufi teacher who approached his subject in the intellectual spirit of a great scholar.

An important contribution of Muhasibi to the science of mysticism is his definitions of station (maqam) and state (hal) and his inclusion of satisfaction (rida') among the states. Station, according to him, is the particular position which a seeker attains after making necessary efforts to reach it; it involves all the obligations pertaining to the stage. State (hal), on the other hand, is something that man receives through God's grace without involving any effort on his part. In short, station belongs to the category of acts, while state belongs to the category of gifts,²⁰ as stated in the preceding chapter.

Satisfaction (rida') is an attitude of mind which also, according to Muhasibi, a man is able to attain through divine grace and not through his own efforts. He says, "Satisfaction is the quintessence of the heart under the events which flow from the divine decree."²¹

With regard to the problem whether an attitude of poverty (faqr) or wealth (ghina) is preferable for a mystic, Muhasibi holds that the latter attitude is better. He argues that wealth is an attribute of God, whereas poverty cannot be ascribed to Him and, therefore, an attribute common to God and man is superior to an attribute that is not applicable to God.²²

Similarly, his attitude in the controversy as to whether presence (hudur) or absence (ghaibah) is preferable for the mystic, is that presence is superior to absence, because all excellences are bound up with presence. He says that absence from one's self is a preliminary stage on the mystic Path which gradually leads to presence before God, and the Path becomes for him an imperfection after he has arrived at the goal.²³

6. Rabi`ah al-`Adawiyah of Basrah (95 or 99/713 or 717-185/801)

Rabi`ah al-`Adawiyah of Basrah was a famous woman mystic, well known for her advocacy of disinterested love for God. She was born into a poor home, stolen as a child, and sold into slavery. But her devotion to a life of piety and prayer enabled her to win her freedom. She decided to adopt a life of celibacy in spite of many offers of marriage by renowned mystics of her time. Once her companion suggested to her in the spring season to come out of the house to behold the works and beauties of God. She replied: Come you inside that you may behold their Maker. Contemplation of the Maker has turned me away from the contemplation of what He has made.²⁴

Rabi'ah's main contribution to mysticism was her doctrine of disinterested love of God which served both as a motive and a goal for her. With most of her contemporary mystics the guiding motive for asceticism and otherworldli-ness was the fear of hell or the reward of paradise. Rabi`ah, on the other hand, tried to emphasize that a man who claims to attain union with God should be oblivious of both.

`Attar relates that once some mystics came to Rabi`ah. She asked: Why do you worship God? One said: There are seven stages in hell, and everybody has to pass through them; therefore, in fear and dread of them I worship. Another replied: The eight stages of paradise are places of great delight and a worshipper is promised complete rest there. Rabi`ah replied: He is a bad servant who worships God for fear of punishment or desire of

reward. They asked her: Why do you worship if you have no desire for paradise? She replied: I prefer the Neighbour to the neighbour's house (i.e. paradise). She added that God is worthy of worship even if there is no motive of fear or reward.²⁵

It is related that one day Rabi'ah was running with fire in one hand and water in the other. People asked her the meaning of her action. She replied: I am going to light fire in paradise and to pour water on hell so that both veils may completely disappear from the pilgrims and their purpose may be sure, and the servants of God may see Him without any object of hope or motive of fear.²⁶ In the following verses, she distinguishes the two kinds of love, selfish and disinterested:

In two ways have I loved Thee: selfishly,
And with a love that worthy is of Thee.
In selfish love my joy in Thee I find,
While to all else, and others, I am blind.
But in that love which seeks Thee worthily,
The veil is raised that I may look an Thee.
Yet is the praise in that or this not mine,
In this and that the praise is wholly Thine.²⁷

The object of this disinterested love, according to Rabi`ah, was union with God. She says: My hope is for union with Thee, for that is the goal of my desire.

7. Dhu al-Nun Misri (180/706-245/859)

Dhu al-Nun Misri is regarded by most biographers as a renowned mystic. He was the first to give expression publicly to his mystic experiences.²⁸ Like other early mystics, he practised asceticism of extreme type,²⁹ regarded the temptations of self as the greatest veil,³⁰ and looked upon seclusion as indispensable for the promotion of sincerity in a Sufi.³¹ According to him, there are two different paths for the mystic to follow. The first path, lesser in degree, is to avoid sin, to leave the world, and to control passion; the second path, higher in degree, is to leave all besides God and to empty the heart of every- thing.³²

Dhu al-Nun interprets tawakkul (trust in God) as opposed to reliance on intermediate causes and the use of planning.³³ It demands solitude and complete break with the world and its people, and total and full reliance on God.³⁴ Repentance, according to him, is essential for everybody; the common people repent of their sins, while the elect repent of their heedlessness. Repentance is of two kinds: repentance of return (inabah) and repentance of shame (istihya'). The former is repentance through fear of divine punishment; the latter is repentance through shame of divine clemency.³⁵

Dhu al-Nun distinguishes knowledge from certitude (yaqin). Knowledge is the result of sensory perception, i, e., what we receive through bodily organs, while certitude is, the result of what we see through intuition.³⁶

In another context he says that knowledge is of three kinds: first, knowledge of the unity of God and this is common to all believers; second, knowledge gained by proof and demonstration and this belongs to the wise, the eloquent and the learned; the third, knowledge of the attributes of Unity

and this belongs to the saints, those who contemplate the face of God within their hearts, so that God reveals Himself to them in a way in which He is not, revealed to anyone else in the world.³⁷ It is this knowledge which is called gnosis (ma'rifah), the idea of which, it is claimed, was first introduced into Sufism by Dhu al-Nun.

The core of gnosis, according to him, is God's providential communication of the spiritual light to one's heart.³⁸ The gnostics see with direct knowledge, without sight, without information received, without observation, without description, without veiling, and without veils. They are not in themselves; but in so far as they exist at all, they exist in God. Their movements are caused by God and their words are the words of God which are uttered by their tongues, and their sight is the sight of God which has entered into their eyes.³⁹

Thus, with Dhu al-Nun the highest achievement of the mystic is to get super-intel-lectual knowledge known as gnosis which involves complete unconsciousness on the part of man. In one of his statements quoted by `Attar, he says, that "the more a man knows God, the more is he lost in Him." It appears that he had in his mind the mystic state which his contemporary, Bayazid of Bistam, designated as fana'.

8. Bayazid Bistami (d. 260/874)

Bayazid Bistami was a Persian Muslim whose ancestors were Zoroastrians.⁴⁰ In his early life he was a jurist and was reckoned among *ashab al-ra'i*, the followers of Abu Hanifah, but later on he turned to Sufism.⁴¹ His teacher in mysticism was a Kurd. It is related that he associated with a mystic Abu `Ali of Sind, who taught him the doctrine of annihilation in unity (*fana' fi al-tawhid*) and in return Abu Yazid taught him the doctrine of monotheism as embodied in the Qur'anic chapters, *Fatihah* and *Ikhlas*.⁴² He was familiar with the Indian practice of "watching the breaths" which he described as the gnostic's worship of God.⁴³

For thirty years Bayazid wandered in the deserts of Syria, leading a life of extreme asceticism-with scanty sleep, food, and drink. He once said that a mystic can reach his goal only through blindness, deafness, and dumbness.⁴⁴ He seemed to be very scrupulous in the observation of Islamic injunctions and would not tolerate any deviation, however small or insignificant it might be.⁴⁵

In Bayazid's utterances we notice a distinct tendency towards monism. He tries to reach the divine unity by the process of abstraction (*tajrid*) till he is devoid of all personal attributes and feels himself as well as others submerged in the One. In this state of unity he gave expression to his experiences which remind one of the *ana al-Haq*, of Hallaj. "I went from God to God, until He cried from me in me, `O thou I.'" "Glory to me! How great is my majesty." "When I came out of my 'self,' I found the lover and the beloved as one, for in the world of thought, all is one."⁴⁶

"For twelve years I treated the self (*nafs*) in me as a smith does with his material, heating and beating alternately in the fire of penance and with the hammer of blame (*malamah*) till it became a mirror. For five years I was busy in polishing this mirror with different kinds of religious practices. For one year I looked within myself, and discovered a girdle of infidelity

(zunnar) round my waist. For another five years I tried to remove that girdle till I recovered my true faith. Then I found everything dead before my eyes and God alone living.”⁴⁷

“What is arsh? It is I. What is Chair (kursi)? It is I. What is the Tablet or the Pen? It is I. What are prophets like Abraham, Moses and Muhammad? They are I.” Explaining it further, he remarked that whoever becomes annihilated in God finds that whatever is, is God.⁴⁸ His negativism (tajrid) is illustrated by the following quotation: “Nothing is better for man than to be without aught: having no asceticism, no theory, no practice. When he is without all, he is with all.”⁴⁹

A mystic should be in a domain where neither good nor evil exists; both good and evil belong to the phenomenal world; in the presence of unity there is neither command (amr) nor prohibition (nahi).⁵⁰

Bayazid is the first Sufi who gives a detailed description of his mystic experience and calls it by the name of ascension (mi`raj), a practice which was later followed by Ibn 'Arabi and others. We give below a few passages from the account as given by 'Attar in his Tadhkirah:⁵¹

“When I attained the stage of indifference (istighna) towards the things of this world and was lighted up by the light of God, several mysteries were revealed to me. I looked from God towards myself and found that my light was utter darkness in comparison with God's light, my loftiness was utter lowliness; it was all purity there and all darkness here. But when again I looked, I found my light in His light, my loftiness in His loftiness, and that whatever I did I did through His power.

His light shone in my heart and I discovered that in truth all worship was from God and not from me, though all the time I had thought that it was I who worshipped. I felt perplexed and received the explanation: All that is, is I and not not-I... I looked from God towards God and saw Him as the only reality. I remained in this stage for long, left all efforts and all acquired knowledge. Grace from God began to flow and I got eternal (azali) knowledge. I saw that all things abide in God.

“Then I was given wings, and I began to fly in the air and saw strange and wonderful things. When He noticed my weakness, He strengthened me by His strength and put the crown of honour on my head. He opened the gate of the avenue of divine unity (tawhid) before me. Then I stayed in the stage of malakut till the apparent and hidden aspects of I-ness vanished. A door was opened into the darkness of my heart and I got an eloquent tongue to express tawhid and tajrid (abstract unity).

Now, my tongue came from God, my heart felt the effulgence of His light, and my eyes reflected His creativity. I spoke through Him and talked through His power. As I lived through Him I became eternal and immortal. When I reached this stage, my gestures and my worship became eternal; my tongue became the tongue of unity (tawhid) and my soul the soul of abstraction (tajrid). It is He who moves my tongue and my role is only that of an interpreter: talker in reality is He, and not I.

“My soul passed through all the world of the unseen. Paradise and hell were shown to it but it paid no attention to them. It traversed the different spheres where it met the souls of prophets. When it reached the sphere of

the soul of Muhammad, it saw millions of rivers of fire without end and a thousand veils of light. If I had put my foot into them, I would have been burnt. I lost my senses through awe and fear. I tried hard to see the ropes of Muhammad's tent, but could not till I reached God. Everybody can reach God according to his light, for God is with all; but Muhammad occupies a prominent position, and so unless one traverses the valley of tawhid, one cannot reach the valley of Muhammad, though as a matter of fact both valleys are one.”

9. Junaid of Baghdad (d. 298/910)

Junaid of Baghdad was well versed in theology, jurisprudence, and ethics and was acclaimed as a leader in the science of Sufism by the Sufis of all schools.⁵² He was perhaps the first mystic who explicitly expressed his indebtedness to `Ali for his mystic knowledge, for `Ali, according to him, possessed an abundance of both exoteric and esoteric knowledge (ilm and hikmah).⁵³ He studied law under Abu Thaur and associated with Harith Muhasibi and discussed different problems of Sufism during walks with him.⁵⁴

Junaid advocated the principle of sobriety (sabr) as opposed to that of intoxication (sukr).⁵⁵ According to him, intoxication is an evil, because it disturbs the normal state of a mystic and leads to the loss of sanity and self-control.⁵⁶ In this connection, the conversation between Junaid and Hallaj, when the latter after leaving the society of `All b. `Uthman al-Makki came to Junaid seeking his company, is illuminating.

Junaid refused to accept him as his disciple because, as he said, association demands sanity which was lacking in him. Hallaj replied: O Shaikh, sobriety and intoxication are two attributes of man, and man is veiled from his Lord until his attributes are annihilated. Junaid replied: You are in error. Sobriety denotes soundness of one's spiritual state in relation to God, while intoxication denotes excess of longing and extreme of love, and neither of them can be acquired by human effort.⁵⁷

This advocacy of the doctrine of sobriety made Junaid a model Sufi who was acceptable both to the mystics and the theologians, and it is for this reason that we find in him an advocate of religious Law. Nobody could raise any objection against him with regard to his apparent behaviour (zahir) which was in perfect consonance with the Shari'ah, or with regard to his inner state (batin) which was in perfect harmony with the principles of mysticism.⁵⁸

According to him, only he can truly traverse the Path (tariqah) who walks with the Book of God (al-Qur'an) in his right hand and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet in his left hand.⁵⁹ He preferred to wear the dress of the `ulama' rather than mystics and in spite of constant requests by his disciples and others he would not like to change it for the woollen garb (khirqah) of the mystics.⁶⁰

According to him, the only safe path open to the people is the path laid down by Muhammad, for true and sure knowledge is the knowledge revealed by God in the Qur'an and enunciated by the Holy Prophet, as embodied in the Sunnah.⁶¹

Tawhid, according to Junaid, is the separation of the eternal from that which was originated in time,⁶² for, as he puts it, God cannot be comprehended by any of the categories of our phenomenal existence.⁶³

Explaining it further, he says that true belief in unification is “that one should be a figure in the hands of God, a figure over which His decrees pass according as His omni-potence determines, and that one should be sunk in the sea of His unity, self--annihilated and dead alike to the call of mankind to him and his response to them, absorbed by the reality of the divine unity in true proximity, and lost to sense and action, because God fulfils in him what He has willed of him, namely, that his state should be as it was before he existed.”⁶⁴

According to Junaid, the efforts of man in search of truth throughout human history have been directed towards fulfilment of the covenant entered by man in the pre-sence of God⁶⁵ and to return to the state in which he was before he was born.⁶⁶

Most of the pantheistic Sufis look upon Iblis as their teacher in unification and regard his refusal to bow down before Adam as a testimony of his strict unitarianism. In his conversation with Iblis, Junaid asked him the reason for his refusal and received the same reply. But Junaid does not become an “advocate of the devil” like other pantheistic mystics, and points out his (the devil's) mistake in taking cover under God's will (mashiyyah) in order to violate his command (amr).

Junaid said, “You lie. Had you been an obedient servant, you would not have transgressed His command”, thus stressing the strictly monotheistic position that moral behaviour is the sine qua non of a truly religious life which consists in total obedience to God's command (‘ubudiyyah). He defines ‘ubudiyyah as the state in which a man realizes that all things belong to God, that He is the cause of their being and existence, and to Him alone they will all return.⁶⁷

Trust in God (tawakkul), according to Junaid, is to maintain your relation with God now, as you had before you came into existence; it consists neither in acquisition (kasb) nor in non-acquisition, but in putting your heart in tune with God's promise.⁶⁸ Repentance involves three stages: first, the expression of regret at the wrong done; secondly, the resolve to avoid doing that wrong for ever; and, thirdly, to purify oneself of all dross, evils, and impurities.⁶⁹

Al-Hallaj

By Louis Massignon

Al-Hallaj (Abu al-Mughith al-Husain bin Mansur bin Mahamma al-Baidawi, in Persian and Turkish literature abridged as Mansur) was a Muslim mystic and thinker who taught in Arabic. He was born in Persia, at al-Tur,' near Baida to the north-east of Shiraz in 244/857. Baida was deeply arabicized; the great grammarian Sibawaihi was born there, among Harithiyyah Yamani clients.

Hallaj's father, a wool-carder by profession, took the boy, a wool--carder by name (for in Arabic word hallaj means a wool-carder), with him to Wasit, an Arab city of the Hanbalites with a minority of the Shi`ahs. Wasit

had a good school in which teaching of the Qur'an was undertaken. At this school, al-Hallaj became a hafiz, trying to "interiorize" his recitation of the Qur'an, so that his "bismillah" could become his "kun", i. e., his invocation of the name of God might unite him with God's creative will. So did he begin the mystic quest.

He became a disciple of Sahl bin 'Abd Allah of Tustar (the founder of the Salamiyyah school) whom he left in order to settle down in Basrah, where he received the Sufi gown (khirqah) from 'Amr bin 'Uthman Makki's hands. He was married to Umm al-Husain. It was a monogamic wedding, unshaken during his whole life. From her he had three sons. She already had a daughter from another Sufi, Abu Ya'qub Aqta' Karnaba'i. The Karnaba'iyyah, Banu al-'Amm of Nahr Tirah, were clients of the Banu Mujashi (Tamim clan) and political supporters of the rebellion of the Zanj, which raised the slaves of Basrah against the 'Abbasid Caliphate under a supposed 'Alid (Zaidi) leader.

Such was the beginning of al-Hallaj's contacts with the revolutionary Shi'ahs, contacts perceptible in the technical terms of his apologetics. Al-Hallaj, in fact, remained always a Sunni, with a strong leaning to-wards hard asceticism in observing the Ramadan fasts and, when in Mecca, in performing 'umrah,⁷⁰ in complete silence (cf. Qur'an xix, 27) so as to listen to God from inside.

When he came back to Tustar, he threw off the khirqah to deliver God's message to laymen, scribes, and publicans, most of them case-hardened and sceptical. Some of them, of vizierial families, listened to him, becoming his friends (Sunnis: Qunna'iyah: Ibn Wahab and Ibn Jarrah), or his enemies (Imamis: Ibn al-Furat and Ibn Naubakht), denouncing him either as a miracle-worker or as a trickster. Friends from Basrah induced him to carry on his apologetical mission among the Arabs colonizing Khurasan, and among the ribat of the mujahidin.

After five years al-Hallaj came back to Tustar and, with the help of Hamd Qunna'i, settled among workers of the imperial Dar al-Tiraz (fashion-house) of Tustar (for the kiswah [covering] of the Ka'bah) in a suburb of Baghdad. Then took place a second hajj, and a second mission to Khurasan and Turkestan (as far as Masin-Turfan), with a kind of apocalyptic goal (seeking the hiding-place of the Talaqaniyyin, the future Ansar al-Mahdi). Then he performed his last hajj; on the Yaum 'Arafat, he dedicated himself, at the Waqfah, as a substitute for the dhabihah (just as some Shi'ahs think of the Martyr of Karbala as dhabiah 'azim).'

Back in Baghdad, he began an extraordinary, way of talking in the streets, about his desire of dying as sacri-ficed by the Law for the sake of the Law (kunu antum mujahidun, wa ana shahid). It was in the last days of Mu'tadid's Caliphate that a decree (fatwa) was given against al-Hallaj for his queer way of proving his love for God by offering his life, by a Zahiri lawyer Ibn Dawud (d. 297/909), the author of a charming anthology about pure love (Kitab al-Zahrah). But another lawyer, Ibn Suraij, a Shafi'i, saved him by pleading that mystical utterances were not to be judged on juridical grounds.

It is said that one day al-Hallaj uttered the famous words *ana al-Haqq* (I am the Creative Truth), a kind of eschatological cry (named *siyah bi al-Haqq*) in the Holy Qur'an. "Blasphemy," said the lawyers. Al-Hallaj himself explained it in verses: "Oh! the secret of my heart is so fine that it is hidden from all living beings..." Involved in the Sunni plot of the Caliph *ibn al-Mu'tazz*, al-Hallaj was prosecuted; he remained hidden in Susa near the tomb of Prophet Daniel, the "announcer of the Last Day," but was arrested in 301/913.

The first trial under 'All bin 'Isa, the "good vizier," was suspended through the influence of Ibn Suraij, and al-Hallaj was merely kept as a prisoner in the royal palace for nearly eight years and eight months. Afraid of Hallaj's influence on the Court of the Caliph Muqtadir, two Shi'ah leaders, the wakil Ibn Rauh Naubakhti and his rival Shalmaghani, succeeded in persuading the vizier Ahmed bin al-'Abbas, through his Shi'ah financial supporters, to reopen the trial on two charges.

The first of these charges was that he was a Qarmatian agent of the Fatimids. It is true that al-Hallaj on grounds not political but spiritual did share with the Fatimids belief in the apocalyptic significance of the year 290 of the Hijrah, for in the esoteric alphabet 290 means "Maryam" or "Fatir." The second charge was that with the Qarmatian rebels he advocated the destruction of the Ka'bah and Mecca. It is also a fact that, while in Mecca, Hallaj did write to his disciple Shakir, "Destroy your Ka'bah," meaning in esoteric language "Do sacrifice your life for the sake of Islam as I do."

The Qadi Abu 'Umar Hammadi, a Maliki, insisted on taking this allegorical letter in an unjustifiable literal sense. And al-Hallaj was condemned to death, and "crucified" (*maslub*, cf. Qur'an, vii, 124) on 24th of Dhu al-Qa'dah 309/26th of March 922. Curiously enough, this year 309 is the Qur'anic year of the "Awakening of the Seven Sleepers" (Qur'an, xviii, 25), celebrated by the Isma'elite Fatimid propagandists as the year of the coming out of the Mahdi from the cave of concealment (but al-Hallaj's disciples explain-ed it mystically).

Al-Hallaj's crucifixion has been looked at by the Sunni Sufis as the height (*mi'raj*) of saintship; and many beautiful utterances are ascribed to al-Hallaj while on the stake. Nasr Qushuri, the high chamberlain, put on mourning clothes publicly with the approval of the Queen-Mother, Shaghab. And some Sufi witnesses, Qannad and Shibli, acknowledged his death as the seal of a most saintly vocation.

Though it was proclaimed after the year 309/922 that al-Hallaj had been executed in compliance with the unanimity (*ijma'*) of the jurists (*fuqaha'*), yet a respected lawyer, his friend Ibn `Ata, had objected to this verdict and was killed for that. Ibn `Ata's death nullifies this so-called *ijma'*. The memory of al-Hallaj slowly spread aflame with beauty. Among the Shafi'iyah, Ibn al-Muslimah, the very day he was appointed as vizier (437/I045), was seen coming to al-Hallaj's place of crucifixion (*maslib al-Hallaj*) and praying - a silent act of rehabilitation.

Sufis have kept his creed (*aqidah*); as a motto in their exoterical books (e.g., Kalabadhi, and Qushairi); and they have his name "understood" in

their esoterical isnad (with his friends Shibli and Nasr-abadhi). Farid al-Din `Attar celebrated al-Hallaj's martyrdom as the "apex" of Sufism, and the great painter Behzad painted it for Baiqara in Herat.. Independent Muslim philosophers, Balkhi, Mantiqi, Abu Hayyan Tauhidi, and Abu al-Hasan Dailami, set off the metaphysical originality of al-Hallaj'a spiritual experiences.

In spite of his adversaries classifying him among the adepts of existential unity (wahdat al-wujud), al-Hallaj has been proved to be a vindicator of cognitive unity (wahdat al-shuhud). 'Abd al-Qadir Jilani, Ruzbehan Baqili, and Fakhr al-Din Farisi have given convincing explanations of and commentaries on the doctrine of Unity, in spite of the subtleties of Ibn 'Arabi's school. Ja'Al al-Din Rumi, and after him the great mystics of India, Semnani, 'Ali Hamadani, Makhdum-i Jahaniyan, Gisudaraz, Ahmad Sirhindi, and Bedil have considered al-Hallaj to be a believer in cognitive unity (shuhudi). In his Javid Nameh, the great poet-philosopher of Pakistan, Iqbal, stated that al-Hallaj was a kind of "Promethean" person-ality. L. Massignon also heard him say this when Iqbal gave him the privilege of a visit to him in Paris in 1351/1932.

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A “ta`ziyeh” in Persian on al-Hallaj and Shams Tabriz has been found in Resht (cf. Rev. Etud. Isl., 1955, pp. 69-91).

'Abd al-Ghafur Farhadi published an extensive notice on al-Hallaj in Kabul in 1951.

The theological condemnations of al-Hallaj by fuqaha' are to be found among Ibn Taimiyyah's decrees (fatawa). See notes in the Akhbar above quoted, in ibn Dihyah Nibras edited in Baghdad by 'Abbas `Azzawi, and in the early Imami writings (Ibn Babawaih, Mufid, A. J. Tusi).

Later on, the great Nasir al-Din Tusi included al-Hallaj among the celebrities in his Ausaf al;Ashraf.

On his metaphysical tenets, see R. A. Nicholson, “Hallaj” in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, and L. Massignon, La Passion d'al-Hallaj, martyr mystique de l'Islam, Paris, Vol. II.

Notes

1. A.J. Arberry, Sufism, pp.33-34.
2. 'Attar, Tadhkirah, p.19.
3. Ibid., p.26.
4. Ibid., p.19
5. Ibid., p.21.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid. p.28.
8. Jami', Nafahat al-Uns, pp.31-32.
9. Ali Hujwiri, Kashf al-Mahjub, English translation by R.A. Nicholson, p.217; 'Attar, op.cit., p.63.
10. 'Attar, op.cit., p.65.
11. Ibid., p.62.
12. M. Smith, Readings from the Mystics of Islam, pp.19-21.
13. Hujwiri, op.cit., p.68; see also 'Attar, op.cit., pp.65-66. The events related in the two books are the same but they lead to the same conclusion.
14. 'Attar, op.cit., pp.127-129.
15. Ibid., p.127.
16. Ibid., p.129.
17. Ibid., p.146.
18. A.J. Arberry, op.cit., pp.47-50.
19. Ibid., pp.46-47.
20. Hujwiri, op.cit., p.181.
21. Ibid., pp. 179, 180; see also 'Attar, op.cit., p.145.
22. Hujwiri, op.cit., p.21.
23. Ibid., p.249.
24. 'Attar, op.cit., p.46.
25. Ibid., p.47.
26. Aflaki, Manaqib al-'Arifin, as quoted in the Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, p.463a.
27. M. Smith, Rabi'ah the Mystic, pp.102-104. Commenting on these verses, al-Ghazali says: “She meant by selfish love, the love of God for the bestowal of His favours and grace and for temporary happiness, and by the love worthy of Him, the love of His beauty which was awarded to her, and this is the higher of the two loves and the finer of them.” (Ihya') See also Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, p.463a.
28. Attar, op.cit., pp. 76, 80.
29. Ibid., p.78.
30. Ibid., p.83; Hujwiri, op.cit., p.200.
31. Attar, op.cit., p.84.
32. Ibid., p.79.

33. Ibid., p.86.
34. Ibid., p.88.
35. Hujwiri, op.cit., pp.298, 299.
36. Attar, op.cit., p.84.
37. Ibid., p.81.
38. Ibid., p.84; see also Hujwiri, op.cit., p.275.
39. Attar, op.cit., p.85.
40. Ibid., p.9.
41. Jami', Nafahat al-Uns, p.59.
42. Ibid., p.60.
43. Attar, op.cit., p.92; see Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. XII, p. 12a
44. Attar, op.cit., pp. 90, 92, 110.
45. Ibid., p.90; see Hujwiri, op.cit., p.217.
46. Attar, op.cit. p. 105.
47. Ibid., p.92.
48. Ibid., p.112.
49. Ibid., p.107.
50. Ibid., p.110.
51. Ibid., p.112-115.
52. Hujwiri, op.cit., p.128; see 'Attar, op.cit., p.212.
53. 'Attar, op.cit., pp. 214-215; Hujwiri, op.cit., p.74.
54. Jami', op.cit., p.81; Arberry, op.cit., p.46. According to 'Attar, he was the disciple of Sari Saqti (op.cit., p.213.)
55. 'Attar, op.cit., p.212.
56. Hujwiri, op.cit., p.185.
57. Ibid., p.189; 'Attar, op.cit., pp.216-217.
58. Hujwiri, op.cit., p.128.
59. 'Attar, op.cit., p.214
60. Ibid., p.216.
61. Ibid., p.224.
62. Ibid., p.227; Hujwiri, op.cit., p.281.
63. 'Attar, op.cit., p.215.
64. Hujwiri, op.cit., pp.282-283.
65. Qur'an, vii, 166-67.
66. Arberry, op.cit., p.57
67. 'Attar, op.cit., p.230.
68. Ibid., p.228.
69. Ibid., p.229.
70. 'Umrah is the pilgrimage performed at any time other than the 9th of Dhu al-Hijjah.

Chapter 18: 'Abd Al-Qadir Jilani and Shihab Al-Din Suhrawardi

By B.A. Dar

Abd Al-Qadir Jilani

Shaikh 'Abd al-Qadir Jilani (470-561/1077-1166) was born at a period when Malikshah the Saljuq (465--485/1072-1091) ruled over a vast Muslim Empire. This period is famous for great patronage of learning. It was during this period that the great Nizamiyyah University was founded in Baghdad by Nizam al-Mulk. But after Malikshah's death in 485/1092, fight for succes-sion started which brought about anarchy and disorder in the country. In 513/1119 Sanjar succeeded in securing the throne and was crowned at Baghdad. But after his death in 552/1157, there was once again the same anarchy and disorder. Constant wars between the different factions of the Saljuqs destroyed the peace and security of the Empire.

But there are two events which stand out prominently. They contributed much towards the disintegration of the social and political structure of the Muslims of this period. The first was the rise and gradual spread of the group of people called Assassins under the leadership of Hasan bin Sabbah. Thousands of people, great and small, fell to the dagger of these fanatics. The second was the starting of the Crusades.

The first Crusade lasted from 488-489/1095 to 493/1099. The Christian hordes succeeded in occupying Jerusalem in 492/1099, and putting to death thousands of innocent Muslims and Jews. News of the disaster and huge processions of refugees entered Baghdad where people clamoured for revenge. But the Saljuq rulers were too busy in their wars to take up the challenge. The Christian invaders were allowed, for a long time, to rob and destroy the country. Life became unsettled and there was no peace or security.

It was amid such circumstances that Shaikh 'Abd al-Qadir lived at Baghdad where he had come from far off Jilan. Being a man of great intelligence he was soon able to acquire what the usual system of education had to offer. He then became a pupil of a Sufi saint Hammad under whose spiritual care he acquired great proficiency in the mystic lore. For eleven years he spent his life in total seclusion from worldly affairs. After this period of retirement and spiritual discipline he came back to Baghdad and adopted the career of a preacher to the people in response to what he calls the "inner command."

The students and the people in large numbers began to gather round him and within a short time the premises where he had started lecturing had to be enlarged and expanded. At the age of 51, he got married, and died at the ripe age of 91. He was a man of charming personality and by his eloquent speech exerted great influence on the people. He stands in the forefront of the Muslim mystics of all ages, and is the founder of the Qadirivyah school of Sufism which includes within its fold many renowned Sufis of the Muslim world.

Futuh al-Ghaib (Revelations of the Unseen), a collection of eighty sermons which he delivered on different occasions, reflects the unstable

condition of the times. He emphasizes in almost every sermon that social ruin and instability is the result of excessive materialistic outlook on life; true well-being is the result of a harmonious development of an individual's personality whose material as well as spiritual demands are being properly looked after. But as a reaction against the prevalent materialism he emphasizes religious values to an extent which seems to be exaggerated.

In the fifty-fourth Discourse, for instance, he advises people in general to adopt an attitude of total and complete indifference towards the world, to kill desires and ambitions of all kinds. In order that his indifference in worldly life may become complete and un-alloyed, it is proper for an individual to remove all things from his heart and cultivate pleasure in annihilation, abiding poverty, and want, so that there may not remain in his heart even so much pleasure as that of sucking the stone of a date.¹

With regard to the question of free-will he adopts an attitude of determinism, though sometimes he tries to avoid the extremes of deterministic position by resort to what has come to be known in Muslim scholastic circles as acquisition (kasb). He says, "Do not forget the position of human efforts so as not to fall a victim to the creed of the determinists (Jabriyyah) and believe that no action attains its fulfilment but in God. Nor should you say that actions of man proceed from anything but from God, because if you say so you will become an unbeliever and belong to the category of people known as the indeterminists (Qadariyyah). You should rather say that actions belong to God in point of creation and to man in point of acquisition (kasb).²

But in a later Discourse (sixteenth), he points out that to rely on kasb is shirk, i.e., association of partners with God. There is a verse in the Qur'an³ which refers to a particular episode in the life of Abraham. While denouncing idol-worship, he says that it is God who created you as well your handiwork (ta`malun).

Muslim pantheists and determinists have always used this verse in support of their contention, rendering ta`malun as "what you do," instead of correct rendering, "what you make." Shaikh Jilani here follows the same line, arguing for total determinism, though he does not advocate cessation of all activities.⁴

There is another verse of the Qur'an in which God says, "Enter the garden of paradise because of what you have been doing."⁵ Here, the text unequivocally points out that paradise is the reward of actions. But this being incompatible with the creed of determinism, Shaikh Jilani hastens to add, "Glory be to Him, how generous and merciful of Him! He ascribes the actions to the people and says that their entry into paradise is on account of their deeds, whereas their deeds owe their existence to His help and mercy."⁶

Good and evil are the twin fruits of a tree; all is the creation of God,⁷ though we should ascribe all evil to ourselves⁸. There is, however, the question of undeserved suffering which a man of conscience has to undergo. Shaikh Jilani thinks that the spiritual peace which is indispensable for a mystic cannot be said to be complete unless he is trained in the school of

adversity. The degree of the undeserved suffering, according to him, determines his spiritual rank.

He quotes a tradition of the Holy Prophet in this respect: "We prophets are beset with the greatest number of trials and so on according to rank."⁹ What is essential is to hold fast to faith for the ultimate victory of good over evil. This victory is possible not only in the hereafter but also in this world. If a man has faith and is grateful, these things will put out the fire of calamity in this life.

Men can be divided, according to the Shaikh, into four categories. The first category includes those who have neither tongue nor heart. They are the majority of the ordinary people, who do not care for truth and virtue and lead a life of subservience to the senses. Such people should be avoided except when they are approached and invited to the path of righteousness and godliness. In that case you shall be following in the honourable foot-steps of the prophets.¹⁰

The second category includes people who have tongue but no heart. They are people of great learning and knowledge and possess eloquent tongue with which they exhort people to live a life of piety and righteousness. But, they themselves lead a life of sensuality and rebellion. Their speech is charming but their hearts are black.

To the third category belong people who have a heart but no tongue. They are the faithful and true believers. They are aware of their own shortcomings and blemishes and are constantly engaged in purifying themselves of all dross. To them silence and soli-tude are far safer for spiritual health than talking to and mixing with people.

To the last category belong people who have heart as well as tongue. They are in possession of the true knowledge of God and His attributes and are able to reach and understand the ultimate truth. Equipped with this wisdom and truth they invite people to the path of virtue and righteousness and, thus, become true representatives of the prophets. They are at the highest stage, next only to prophethood, in the spiritual progress of mankind.¹¹

With reference to mystical states, he gives us four stages of spiritual development. The first is the state of piety when man leads a life of obedience to the religious Law, totally reliant on God and without any recourse to the help of other people.

The second is the state of reality which is identical with the state of saintliness (wilayah). While in this state, man obeys God's commandment (amr). This obedience is of two kinds. The first is that an individual strives to satisfy his basic needs, but abstains totally from any luxurious indulgence in life and protects himself against all open and hidden sins. The second obedience is to the inner voice, to what is directly revealed to him. All his movements and even his rest become dedicated to God.

The third is the state of resignation when the individual submits completely to God. The fourth and last is the state of annihilation (fana') which is peculiar to Abdal who are pure unitarians and Gnostics.¹²

The state of annihilation is the unitive state in which the individual attains nearness¹³ to God, which implies discarding one's own desires and

purposes and identifying oneself with the cosmic purpose of God. In this state man comes to realize that there is nothing in existence except God¹⁴ - a position which is characteristic of pantheistic mysticism, though we do not find in the Futuh al-Ghaib this statement associated with the usual metaphysical implications that we find, for instance, in Ibn 'Arabi and his followers. It is only an expression of psychological experience of the individual traversing the mystic Path. A man who reaches this stage acquires the creative power (takwin) like God's, and his ordering a thing to be (kun) becomes as effective as God's.¹⁵

Shaikh Jilani holds that mystic intuition gives the recipient knowledge of reality that is not possible to gain through reason. Not only that, vision (kashf) and experience (mushahadah) overwhelm the reasoning power of man. This manifestation reveals two aspects of God: (a) His majesty (jalal) and (b) His beauty (jamal), both of which are revealed to one at different times.¹⁶

But in another Discourse he approaches the problem in a truly empirical way. He says that the only way to know Reality is to look to the self (nafs) as well as to observe nature (afaq). It is only through this approach that we can arrive at a true conception of God. He quotes with approval the following statement of Ibn al-'Abbas, the famous Companion of the Holy Prophet:

“Everything reflects one or other of the attributes of God and every name signifies one of His names. So surely you are surrounded by His names, His attributes, and His works. He is manifest in His attributes and concealed in His person. His person is concealed in His attributes and His attributes are concealed in His actions. He has revealed His knowledge through His will and His will is manifest in His continuous creative activity. He has concealed His skill or workmanship and has expressed it only when He has so willed. So He is hidden is His aspect of ghaib (unseen) and He is manifest in His wisdom and power.¹⁷

Mysticism, according to the Shaikh, is not the result of discussion and talk but of hunger and privation. It consists of generosity, cheerful submission, patience, constant communion with God through prayer, solitude, wearing of woollen dress, globe-trotting, and faqr,¹⁸ and also of humility, sincerity, and truthfulness.¹⁹

Shihab Al-Din Suhrawardi

Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi (539-632/1144-1234) was born at a time when the fate of the whole Muslim world was hanging in the balance. The last king of the Saljuqs, Sultan Sanjar, died in 552/1157. Soon after the Ghuzz came on the scene, and carried fire and sword wherever they went; peace was, however, restored by the Khwarizm Shahs. But in 615/1218 started the Mongol invasion under Chingiz Khan. One town after another was ravaged and people were indiscriminately massacred. There was nobody to check this advance. The people had lost all morale.

It was during this period of insecurity and fear that Shaikh. Suhrawardi lived. He died in 624/1226, eight years after the death of Chingiz Khan. These events must have influenced the mind of the Shaikh; hence the note of pes-simism often met with in his work Awarif al-Ma'rif, in which he

expresses with a sad heart the decline in moral character of his contemporaries. He passed the major part of his life at Baghdad where he now lies buried. He founded the school of mysticism which is known as Suhrawardiyyah - after his name. His work 'Awarif al-Ma'rif is a standard treatise on mysticism extensively used in all mystic circles.

Origin of Sufism

According to him, the word sufi is etymologically derived from “suf,” the coarse woollen cloth which, as he says, was worn by the Holy Prophet.²⁰ He enumerates several other views: (i) The Sufis are those who stand in the first rank (saff) before God; (ii) the word was originally safawi and was later on changed into sufi; (iii) it was derived from suffah, the mound where a group of Muslims used to spend their time in religious learning and ascetic ways of life.

According to Suhrawardi, these derivations are etymologically incorrect, though with regard to the third it may be said that the life led by the people of the suffah resembled the pattern of life adopted by the Sufis. He also refers to a particular group of the people of Khurasan²¹ who used to live in caves far off from inhabited places. They were called Shaguftiyyah, from Shaguft, the name of the cave. The people of Syria used to call them Jau'iiyyah.

A detailed discussion about the origin of the word sufi has already been given in Chapter XVI, where, on the authority of Sarraj, it has been maintained that the word sufi was in use in Arabia even in pre-Islamic days. Suhrawardi, however, thinks that this word was not used in the time of the Holy Prophet. According to some people, it became current during the third generation after the Prophet (Taba` Tabi'in).

According to others, it came into use in the third century of the Hijrah. The titles of Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) and Tabi'in (their Successors) were held in great esteem and, therefore, the word sufi - a title of honour, no doubt - did not make its appearance during their times. But when these peaceful times disappeared and gave place to turbulent periods of unrest and political intrigue, pious people found it convenient for their peace of mind to shun society and live in seclusion and pass their time in meditation and spiritual exercises.²²

What is Sufism?

Suhrawardi tries to establish a very intimate relationship between Sufism and knowledge. According to him, knowledge that is followed by moral behaviour is the main characteristic of Sufi life. Such knowledge is called by him Fiqh which is not used in the usual legal sense but for spiritual insight as it is used in the Qur'an. He refers to several Qur'anic verses to prove this point. First, he quotes the verse; “He (God) taught man what he did not know,”²³ and concludes that the spiritual status of man is based solely on knowledge.²⁴

Secondly, he holds that Sufis are the people who acquire spiritual insight into religion and this helps them lead people to the right path. This spiritual perception, according to him, pertains to the sphere of the heart and not to the sphere of the head²⁵ He argues that, according to the Qur'an, knowledge

and moral uprightness are the characteristics of the truly learned persons. He holds that knowledge is the consequence of taqwa, i. e., piety and moral integrity. In a verse it is said that “those of His servants only who are possessed of knowledge have taqwa.”²⁶ This verse is very significant in establishing the relationship between knowledge and moral behaviour, for, as Suhrawardi puts it,²⁷ it excludes knowledge from those who are not characterized by moral integrity (taqwa).

But to what kind of knowledge does Suhrawardi refer? In this connection he enumerates different views. According to some, it is the knowledge of the psychological states of an individual, for, without this kind of knowledge, it is contended, it is not possible for a person to distinguish between different types of revelations and experiences.²⁸

According to others, it is the knowledge concerning worldly matters, for, without proper information in this respect, a person is liable to be misled in his religious pursuits. According to Abu Talib of Mecca, it is the knowledge of the five religious duties of a Muslim.

But, according to Suhrawardi himself, the knowledge which is incumbent on all Muslims is the knowledge of religious commandments. and prohibitions. And yet true knowledge, which manifests itself in practice and moulds and informs the life of the individual possessing that knowledge, is not formal knowledge that is imparted in schools and colleges but a state of the heart that grasps the truth of things without thereby becoming the master of details.

Such a person is called in the Qur'an the one firmly rooted in knowledge (rasikh fi al-'ilm).²⁹ He calls it the knowledge which one receives as a legacy ('ilm al-wirathah) from the prophets and saints. He distinguishes it from the knowledge gained through formal education ('ilm al-dirasah).³⁰ Their relation, according to him, is like the relation of butter and milk. It is not milk but butter that is the object of man. We take milk only because it yields butter and fat.

This type of knowledge is usually divided into three stages: knowledge by inference, knowledge by perception (or observation), and knowledge by personal experience or intuition ('ilm al-yaqin,'ain al-yaqin, and haqq al-yaqin). A person who attains to the stage of intuition, though less careful in observing ritualistic formalities, is far superior to a man who has many ritualistic practices to his credit but whose knowledge is not of the highest type.³¹

Sufism, according to Suhrawardi, is characterized by two things. It consists in following the practice of the Holy Prophet (Sunnah) and in inculcating purity of motives and attaining the highest integrity of character. There are two different categories of Sufis.

The first includes those persons in whom mystic illumination (kashf) is followed by exercise of personal effort (ijtihad). He quotes the example of Pharaoh's magicians. When they realized the spiritual stature of Moses in comparison with their petty tricks, they were overwhelmed by the effulgence of spiritual illumination as a result of which they decided there and then to break with the Pharaoh in favour of Moses. This decision of theirs for which they willingly bore all the terrible consequences with which

the Pharaoh threatened them came to them with an ease that follows spiritual illumination.

To the second category belong those people who lead a hard ascetic life spending their days in prayers and nights in meditation. It is only after a long struggle spread over days, months, and years that they receive divine illumination. Here illumination is the fruit and crown of personal efforts and hard ascetic life. He quotes a saying of Junaid: "We did not gain access to the domain of Sufism through discursive reasoning or intellectual discussion but through hunger, abdication of worldly lust and prestige, and discarding of even lawful things."

There are two other kinds of people usually called Sufis but, according to Suhrawardi, they cannot be included among mystics at all. The first are the majdhub, i.e., those who receive spiritual illumination through divine grace but cannot reap the full fruit of their illumination because they are not able to supplement it with their personal efforts. The others are the ascetics who spend their whole life in self-mortification and meditation but whose efforts are not crowned with illumination.³²

In another place, discussing the qualities of a spiritual guide, he divides persons into four categories:

(1) Pure or absolute ascetic (salik). (2) Pure or absolute majdhub. People belonging to these two categories do not deserve to be adopted as spiritual guides. The absolute ascetic retains the consciousness of self to the last. He starts with ascetic practices but, unfortunately, he is not able to ascend to the stage of kashf. The absolute majdhub, on the other hand, receives through divine grace a little illumination, and some veils from the face of Reality (God) are removed for him, but he does not put in the requisite labour that forms an indispensable part of mystic discipline.

(3) First salik and afterwards majdhub. Such a person is fit for becoming a guide. He starts with ascetic practices and reaches the goal of his endeavour, viz., spiritual illumination, which relieves him of the severity of his earlier discipline. He becomes the repository of divine wisdom.

(4) But the most perfect stage, according to him, is the fourth, viz., first majdhub and afterwards salik. Such a person receives divine illumination in the beginning and veils are removed from his heart. His interest in the material world vanishes and he looks to-wards the spiritual world with eagerness and joyful expectations. This inner transformation affects his outward life and the antagonism between love and Law ceases for him. His outward and inward life, this world and the other world, wisdom and power, all become one. His faith is so deep that even if all the veils that hide the face of the Real were removed, he will gain nothing thereby.³³

Suhrawardi makes a distinction between a person of the third rank and a person of the fourth rank. The former who follows the path of a lover (muhibb) is freed from the bonds of the lower self (nafs) but is tied down in the bondage of the heart. The latter who traverses the way of the Beloved (Mahbub) is freed both from the lower self and the heart.³⁴

Again, the former follows the forms of action (suwar al-a'mal) and thinks that just as a man cannot do with-out a body so long as he is alive, so action of one sort or other is indispensable for him. But the man belonging to the

fourth category passes beyond all these. He leaves behind everything - lower self (nafs), heart, states, and actions - and achieves complete unity with God to the extent that God be-comes his ears and eyes so that he hears with God's ears and sees with God's eyes.³⁵

Sufism covers both poverty (faqr) and continence (zuhd), but is identical with neither. Faqr is a difficult term to translate. Usually it means poverty, but in mystic morality it signifies the positive attitude of total independence from worldly needs. Suhrawardi quotes different definitions and descriptions of faqr in Sufism given by several eminent mystics.

Ruyam says that Sufism is based on three principles, the first of which is attachment to poverty. Ma'ruf of Karkh says that he who does not possess faqr is not a Sufi. Faqr, according to Shibli, is indifference towards all except God.³⁶ According to usage of the terms in Syria,³⁷ there is no difference between Sufism and faqr. They argue on the basis of the Qur'anic verse that "(alms are for) the poor (fuqara') who have devoted themselves to the way of God,"³⁸ which, according to them, is the description of the Sufis.

But Suhrawardi disagrees with this view. He thinks that a person's constant attachment to poverty and fear of riches is a sign of weakness; it amounts to reliance on external causes and conditions and dependence on expected reward. But a true Sufi is above all these things. He is motivated neither by fear nor by rewards; he is above all such limitations. Again, adoption of poverty and avoidance of riches imply exercise of personal will and freedom of choice which is contrary to the spirit of Sufism. A true Sufi has subjected his will to the will of God and, therefore, he sees no difference in poverty or riches.

Sufism is, thus, distinct from faqr, though the latter forms the basis of the former - in the sense that the way to Sufism passes through faqr, not in the sense that both are identical or indispensable to each other. The same is the case with asceticism (zuhd), which may be a preparatory stage for Sufism but cannot be identified with it at all. There is a Qur'anic verse which says to the believers, to be "upright (qawwamin) for Allah and bearer of witness with justice."³⁹ This uprightness (qawwamiyyah), according to Suhrawardi, is the essence of Sufism.

There are three stages in the mystic process; first, faith (iman); secondly, knowledge ('ilm); and lastly, intuition (dhaug). When a person is at the first stage, he is called "one who is like a true Sufi in appearance and dress (mutashabih)." When he attains to the second stage, he is called "one who pretends to be a Sufi (mutasawwif)." Only he who reaches the last stage deserves to be called a true Sufi.⁴⁰

Suhrawardi again refers to a Qur'anic verse⁴¹ where three different kinds of persons are mentioned who have been chosen by God as the repositories (warith) of the knowledge of the Book: "Of them is he who makes his soul suffer a loss, of them is he who takes a middle course, and of them is he who is foremost in deeds of goodness."

The Qur'an uses the word zalim for the first, muqtasid for the second, and sabiq for the third. According to some, zalim is the ascetic (zahid), muqtasid is a gnostic ('arif), and sabiq is the lover (muhibb). According to others, the first is one who cries when any calamity befalls him, the second is one who

patiently bears it, while the third feels positive pleasure in it. According to another version, the first are those who worship God carelessly and as a matter of routine, the second do it with hope and fear, while the third are those who do not forget God at any time. These three categories of people according to Suhrawardi are identical with the three types of mystics: Muta-shabih, Mutasawwif and the Sufi, respectively.⁴²

He refers to two other groups. The first are Malamitiyyah who do not manifest good deeds and do not hide evil. But they are inferior to a true Sufi who is so engrossed in his experiences and illumination that he does not know what to hide and what to manifest.⁴³ The second are Qalandariyyah who are people of integrity but who do not subject themselves to full ascetic discipline. They have no ambition for further spiritual progress and lead a life of happiness and contentment.⁴⁴

He mentions a group of people who claim that Shari`ah (the religious Law) is binding only up to a certain stage. When reality manifests itself to a gnostic, the bonds of the Law disappear. Suhrawardi holds that these are misguided people, for Law and reality (Shari'ah and haqiqah) are not antagonistic but interdependent. He who enters the sphere of reality (Haqiqah) becomes bound to the rank of slavehood ('ubdiyyah). Those who subscribe to the doctrine of incarnation (hulul) and employ the Christian terms lahut and nasut⁴⁵ without understanding their real significance are all misguided people.

He holds that the saying attributed to Bayazid, viz., subhani, ma a'zamu sha'ni (all praise to me, how exalted is my position!), if spoken by him at all must have been said about God and not about himself as is commonly held. The ana al-Haq (I am the Truth) of Hallaj must be similarly interpreted according to the true intention of the statement. Suhrawardi adds that if it were known that Hallaj by this statement implied incarnation (hulul), he would condemn him outright.

There are some people who think that they receive words from God and often converse with Him; and, as a result of this conversation, they claim to receive messages which they attribute to God. Such people, according to Suhrawardi, are either ignorant of the true nature of their experience or are deceived by their intellectual conceit. The words they hear are mere words which appear in their mind and in no way can be attributed to God. Such things appear when a man due to excessive ascetic practices is morally uplifted. Their attribution to God should be like attribution of everything to the Creator and not as a result of any kind of conversation with Him.

He mentions another group of people who claim to be submerged in the sea of Unity and deny man's free-will and look upon each human action as the direct consequence of God's will or act. It seems that the Shaikh is referring to those mystics who were later called pantheists, for they were the people who claimed to be the followers of the true doctrine of tawhid, interpreted by them as the denial not only of any gods besides God but the denial of any existence besides His.⁴⁶

Suhrawardi thinks that mystics must live in monasteries (khanqahs) quite unconcerned with the problem of earning their bread. Without complete break with the world, it is not possible for them to turn their attention to

God and to the purification of their hearts. As this seems to be incompatible with the generally held view, he tries to justify his stand by reference to certain Qur'anic verses and the Prophet's traditions.

There is a verse which says: "Be patient and vie you in patience and be steadfast (rabitu)."⁴⁷ Suhrawardi interprets the word *rabitu* in his own way. He says that *ribat* was originally a place where horses were tied, then it came to be used for a fortress the residents of which gave protection to the people. Later on, it came to be employed for monasteries, for the people of monasteries by their godliness are able to protect people from the influence of evil.

So the word *rabitu* in this verse stands, according to Suhrawardi, not for struggle against the enemies but for struggle against the self, not for smaller jihad but for greater jihad, as a tradition puts it.⁴⁸ But the Qur'anic verse⁴⁹ that he quotes in the beginning of the chapter conclusively disproves the whole tenor of his stand. It is clear that the Qur'an refers to the houses, the inmates of which have not turned their back upon the world but are engaged in full worldly pursuits, and these pursuits never stand in the way of their remembrance of God.

If monastic life is accepted as an ideal for the mystic, as Suhrawardi does, it follows naturally that begging and celibacy should be adopted as the basic principles governing the life of the mystics. Naturally, therefore, we find him defending both these principles in spite of his view that they are not in complete accord with the Islamic way of life, as enunciated by the Qur'an and sanctioned by the Holy Prophet. While discussing begging, he refers to several traditions which prohibit a man from begging and yet he insists that a Sufi who is engaged in a life of total dedication to *dhikr-Allah* (remembrance of God) is compelled to satisfy his minimum physical needs of hunger and thirst by resort to begging. For justifying his point of view he misinterprets the traditions.

There is a saying of the Prophet that the most lawful of foods for a Muslim is what he earns by his own hands. Many mystics tried to explain it away by holding that "earning by hand" means stretching hand in prayers to God for sending them food through other persons. He refers to Abu Talib of Mecca who rejected this misinterpretation and still clings to it.⁵⁰ There is another tradition according to which the upper hand (of the giver) is better than the lower hand (of the beggar). But Suhrawardi, following Hujwiri, interprets it again in his own way. According to him, the upper hand is the hand of the beggar who by receiving alms gives blessing to the alms-giver.⁵¹

Similarly, discussing the question of celibacy, he wavers between the two positions. On the one hand, he feels inclined towards celibacy as a logical consequence of the conception of mysticism that he holds. On the other hand, there are many traditions to the effect that he who does not marry does not belong to the Muslim community. Ultimately, he leaves the question to the discretion of the individual mystic or to the advice of the spiritual guide.⁵²

On the question of listening to music, again, his attitude is non-committal. On the one hand, he quotes several eminent Sufis who were fond of music and who referred to several traditions in their support. On the

other, there were several eminent persons who did not like it because, according to them, there was no scriptural support for it.

While discussing the question of musical assemblies, he points out that some people look upon these assemblies as innovations. But he adds that not all innovations are religiously blameworthy and, therefore, the question under discussion cannot be decided on this ground.⁵³ Again, he quotes a tradition in support of the mystic dance (wajd) and tearing of the mystic robe (khirqah) in these assemblies and yet adds that traditions invariably reject them as unlawful,⁵⁴ and, therefore, the matter stands where it is. But on the whole he seems to be in favour of music.⁵⁵

With regard to travel, Suhrawardi thinks that a Sufi cannot be expected to conform to any particular pattern of life. He divides Sufis into four classes in this respect:

First those who start their mystic career as travellers but then change into stays-at-home. Their travelling is for several purposes -for acquiring knowledge, which, as the Shaikh quotes different traditions, is incumbent on all Muslims; for visiting people versed in knowledge (rasikhun fi al-'ilm) and benefiting from their company; for observing the various forms of natural phenomena, for, according to the Qur'an, God shows "His signs in the objective world and in the subjective world of the self till the truth is clear to them"⁵⁶; for moral and spiritual discipline which will season them and train them to achieve self-control and other virtues.

The second are those who start their mystic life with a retreat to solitude and end up with travelling. Such persons happen to enjoy the company of a perfect saint and under his guidance cover several stages of the mystic discipline and then after maturity try to consolidate their position by travelling from place to place.

To the third category belong people who start their mystic life in solitude and retirement and end with it. "Such people keep their heads on the knees and find therein the Mount of Sinai." In other words, they enjoy the nearness and see the light of divine illumination. It is said that water if stationary begins to stink. To this the mystics reply that one should become as vast as an ocean and thereby become protected from stagnation and nasty smell.

To the fourth category belong people who are always on the move and with them travelling is the beginning and end of mystic discipline.

Psychology: Soul, Appetitive Self, Heart

The Shaikh bases his account of the soul (ruh) on two verses of the Qur'an. In the first it is held⁵⁷ that man was created by God from fine clay, then it successively changed into a moist germ, a clot of blood and flesh, till all of a sudden this compound of apparently chemical changes assumed a form beyond the material plane, acquired the new spiritual dimension and became a new creation (khalqan akhar). Beginning as a piece of matter, man acquires at a certain stage of development characteristics which as if push him out of this plane into the plane of life. This stage, according to Suhrawardi, was reached when soul was breathed into him. But what is this soul which changes a piece of clay and matter into a being of a different

dimension? He refers to the second verse: "They ask you of the soul (ruh). Say, the soul is from the command (amr) of my Lord."⁵⁸

On the basis of this verse, some mystics regard the soul as eternal - as being an emanation of God's amr, which, as an attribute of God, is eternal. Suhrawardi, however, thinks that the soul is not eternal but created (hadith), though it is the most subtle of all things and purer and lighter than all else.

The next question is to determine whether it is an attribute (ʿard) or a substance (jauhar). In a tradition it is mentioned that the souls have the capacity to move here and there, fly to different places, etc. On this basis some mystics are inclined to the view that soul is a substance characterized by some definite attributes. But Suhrawardi does not accept this interpretation.

He holds that the account of the soul in the traditions is only symbolical and, therefore, cannot be taken in a literal sense. Soul is neither eternal nor is it a substance but created (hadith) and is an attribute (ʿard). It is a created thing which acts according to its nature; it keeps the body alive as long as it is associated with it; it is nobler than the body; it tastes death when it is separated from the body; just as the body meets death when it is separated from the soul.

There are, according to him, two stages of the soul. The first is that of the animal soul (ruh al-hayawani) which is a subtle body. It is the source of movement in the human body and produces in it the capacity of receiving sensations from the outside world. This soul is common to all animals and is intimately connected with the digestive organism of the body.

The other grade of the soul is what Suhrawardi calls the heavenly soul of man. It belongs to the world of command (ʿalam al-amr). When it descends upon the animal soul, the animal soul is totally transformed. Now it acquires the characteristic of rationality and becomes capable of receiving inspiration (ilham).⁵⁹

The appetitive self (nafs) is the source of all undesirable activities. It has two dominant impulses, rage and avarice. When in rage, it is like a circular substance which is by its nature always on the move. When avaricious, it is like the moth which, being not satisfied with a little light, throws itself headlong into the flame of the candle and burns itself to death. A man is able to attain true rank of manliness when he tries to purify his self (nafs) of these gross characteristics by bringing into play reason and patience.

The self passes through three different stages of development. The first stage of the Self is evil-prompting (ammarah), the second is repentant (lawwamah), while the third is satisfied (mutma'innah).⁶⁰

Heart (qalb) is a spiritual principle (latifah) and has its locus in the heart of flesh. It comes into being as a result of mutual attraction between the human soul and the appetitive self. According to a tradition of the Holy Prophet (narrated by Hudhaifah), there are four kinds of hearts. The first is like a pure soil free from all kinds of vegetation. It is illumined as if by a shining lamp. It is the heart of a true believer (mu'min). The second is a dark, inverted heart which belongs to an unbeliever. The third belongs to a hypocrite and is enveloped in a veil. The last is a pure but many-faceted heart, with an inclination towards good as well as evil.⁶¹

Mystery (Sirr)

There is difference of opinion among the mystics with regard to the exact place which the secret occupies in the psychological make-up of man. According to some, it is prior to the soul (ruh) and posterior to the heart (qalb) as a spiritual principle. To others it is posterior to the soul, though higher and subtler than it. According to these mystics, sirr is the locus of spiritual observation (mushahahadah), soul is the locus of love, and heart is the locus of gnosis (ma`rifah).⁶²

Suhrawardi, however, thinks that secret (sirr) has no independent being like the soul and heart. It refers to a particular stage in the spiritual development of man. When man is able to free himself from the dark prison of the appetitive self, and looks towards the spiritual soul, his heart acquires a new characteristic which is called mystery (sirr). Similarly, at this stage his soul also attains a special position which again is called mystery. At this stage, man acquires the satisfied self and he acts and wills what God wishes him to do or will; he loses his individual power of action and freedom of choice and becomes a perfect servant (`abd).

Reason ('Aql)

It is the essence of the heavenly soul, its tongue, and its guide. The Shaikh quotes the usual traditional account that reason was the first creation of God. God asked it to come forward, to turn back, to sit, to speak, to become silent in turn, and it obeyed God's orders to the very letter. At this God said, "I swear by My majesty and power that I did not create a being dearer and more honourable than you. I shall be known, praised, and obeyed through you. I shall give as well as take through you. My pleasure and wrath shall follow deeds through you. People shall be rewarded or punished in accordance with you."

Some people think that reason develops from the study of sciences (`ulum), especially those which are necessary and axiomatic. But Suhrawardi does not seem to agree to this, for, as he argues, there are many people who are not versed in any art or science and yet possess abundance of reason and common sense. It is the inborn capacity of man which helps him in acquiring different kinds of arts and sciences. There is placed in man a natural power which prompts him to acquire different kinds of knowledge. It is thus truly established that reason is the tongue of the soul which is the Word of God (amr Allah). From this flows the light of reason which then leads to the discovery of know-ledge, science, and art.

Some people think that reason is of two kinds. By the one, man looks to the affairs of this world, and its seat is brain. The other reason has its place in the heart (qalb) with which a man looks to the affairs of the other world. But, according to Suhrawardi, this division is meaningless and unnecessary. Reason as the vehicle of the soul (ruh) is one. When it is supported and supplemented by the light of the Shari`ah and spiritual perception (basirah), it helps a man traverse the straight path of guidance and tread the middle course of the golden mean.

Such a person gets knowledge of the heavenly spheres (malakut) which is the innermost secret (batin) of the universe. This illumination is the peculiar characteristic of the elect. Such men are capable of looking to the

affairs of both the worlds, the world of matter and space and. the world of spirit, the present world and the next world. When reason is not supplemented and supported by the Shari'ah and basirah, a man may be able to do well in this world, but he shall be deprived of the blessings of the world of spirit.⁶³

As the goal of the mystics is thoroughly practical, their excursion as novices into the psychological field is really for the purpose of securing a good ground on which to build an edifice of moral and spiritual development. Their aim is to attain a vision of God and enjoy communion with Him. This involves the necessity of the destruction of vices and elimination of imperfections, which often raise their head imperceptibly.

The main cause is the wrong interpretation which a man puts on the revelations (ilhamat) he receives after undergoing mortification. A true mystic is one who is able to discriminate between the sources of these experiences (khawatir). With regard to the sources, he divides these experiences into four kinds: (1) those that flow from the appetitive self (nafs), (2) from God (Haq), (3) from Satan, and (4) from the angels. There must be one of the following causes why a person cannot discriminate between the sources of experiences: (a) weakness in faith, (b) lack of proper knowledge with regard to the appetitive self and morals, (c) following the dictates of the appetitive self, and, lastly, (d) love of the world and material goals.

Anyone who protects himself from all these causes will surely be able to distinguish between revelations from God and those from Satan. It is an established fact, according to Suhrawardi, that he whose source of livelihood is not pure cannot be safe from evil influences. An attitude of balanced detachment from the material world, mortification of flesh, and constancy in ascetic practices are essential for a true mystic, and it is only then that a mystic can hope to achieve the beatific vision.⁶⁴

State and Station (Hal wa Maqam)

Suhrawardi thinks that most mystics confuse state with station because there is a great similarity between the two, and yet these must be distinguished, for otherwise there is a possibility of a misunderstanding the true nature of the mystic experience.

State (hal) as a technical term is indicative of a psychological condition which is implied in its etymology, viz., its liability to change and progress, while station (maqam) implies a psychological condition which is relatively permanent. A psychological attitude that a mystic adopts at a particular stage of his mystic experience may be called state because the mystic is not yet used to it, but when later on through practice it becomes a permanent feature of his mystic life, it becomes a station.

Take, for instance, the attitude of critical examination (muhasabah) of one's self from a moral point of view. When a mystic adopts this attitude first, it is a state which recurs at different periods; it comes and goes at intervals. By constant practice, however, he is able later on to make it a permanent feature of his normal life. Then it is a station.

Again, the mystic tries to adopt the attitude of meditation or contemplation (muraqabah) which becomes his state. Sometimes he is able

to contemplate but, due to negligence and other distractions, he cannot find it possible to make it a permanent feature of his life. But steadily and gradually he gains his desired end and a day comes when contemplation becomes a station.

Then he advances to the third stage, of observation (mushahadah), where he perceives with his own eyes the secrets of the spiritual world. This, again, is first a state and only gradually by personal effort passes into a station. Thus it follows that “station” is a psychological state which is the result of personal effort, while “state” is the result of divine grace. Every moral attitude is characterized by both.

Continence (zuhd), complete reliance on God (tawakkul), and submission to God's pleasure (rida'), for instance, have both these aspects - at one stage, they are acquired after a constant and toil-some effort and, at another stage they become a permanent feature of the life of a mystic due to divine grace.⁶⁵

Among the states Suhrawardi discusses love, feeling of nearness to God (qurb), bashfulness, reverence, union (ittisal), contraction (qabd) and ex-pansion (bast), annihilation (fana') and abiding (baqa'), etc.

Love

There is an instinctive love in man for wife, wealth, and children, but the love at which the mystics aim is not instinctive. It flows from the heart of an individual after he has reached a particular level of moral development where all his capacities and tendencies are directed towards the realization of union with God. It is then that the sentiment of love appears in him and all inclinations are subordinated to it. He begins to feel love for God with the full force of instinctive impulse as well as conscious purpose. There are four kinds of love, according to Suhrawardi: (1) love of appetitive soul (nafs), (2) love of reason, (3) love of heart as a symbol of spiritual perception, and (4) love of soul (ruh). The love for God which is the ideal of the mystics combines all these loves.

When love appears in a mystic on the basis of the first three sources, it is called general love which is the result of direct apprehension (mushahadah) of God's attributes. But when he passes from attributes to God's essence (dhat), his love assumes a new dimension; it flows from his soul, and he is thus enabled to attain his goal. At this stage the mystic acquires and appropriates all the divine attributes. His position becomes what God says: “When I love a person I become his eyes and ears, etc. “

Nearness (Qurb)

This is not physical nearness but only a psychological state in which the mystic feels a profound consciousness of intimacy with the Ultimate Reality. The Qur'an says: “And prostrate and draw near (to Him).”⁶⁶ On this basis Suhrawardi thinks that attainment of nearness depends upon concentration on God which enables the individual to surpass levels of normal consciousness. There are two stages in this process. In the first place, the mystic falls as if into a trance and is overcome by intoxication (sukr); his consciousness of self (nafs) disappears in the spiritual light of his soul (ruh). The next phase begins when both nafs and ruh regain their

separate identities and the individual feels the consciousness of nearness intimately and yet, in spite of it, the consciousness of otherness, which is involved in his relation of slavehood ('ubdiyyah) to God, is also conspicuously present. He quotes a mystic as saying: "By following the Sunnah one attains gnosis (ma`rifah), by observing the obligatory duties (fara'id) one reaches nearness, while by practising daily 'extra' prayers (nawafil), one attains love."

Bashfulness (Haya')

There is a saying of the Holy Prophet: "Be modest with God as it is due to Him." Suhrawardi explained it as follows: "He alone can be called modest in relation to God who is careful of his daily behaviour towards Him and remembers his death and the hereafter, with the result that his heart cools off towards this world and its entanglements."

But this modesty or bashfulness, being acquired, is a station (maqam), while bashfulness of a special quality is a state. In order to define it, Suhrawardi quotes certain sayings of some mystics. One says: "Bashfulness and attachment (uns) hover about the heart, and when they find that it is possessed of continence (zuhd) and piety (war'), they descend into it, otherwise they move away."

This bashfulness is the submission of one's soul to God for maintaining the grandeur of His majesty (jalal), while attachment is the soul's experience of pleasure in the perfection of His beauty (jamal). When both bashfulness and attachment combine, it is the end of a mystic's ambition. According to Abu Sulaiman, there are four different motives of action: fear, hope, awe, and bashfulness, and that action is the best which is motivated by the last.

Union (Ittisal)

As Nuri says, union is the revelation of the heart and the observation of secrets. There is a person who attains union through his personal efforts but loses this position as soon as there is slackness in his efforts. This is all but natural, for human efforts cannot be kept up at the same degree of intensity for a long time. Such a person is called mufassal. But the union that Suhrawardi commends is one which is the result not of personal effort but of divine grace. A person who receives it is called united (wasil). But there are several grades of this union.

There is a person who receives illumination from divine actions. To such a person, actions, his own as well as those of others, cannot be attributed, for his role is only passive. It is God who does all actions through him and he loses all freedom of choice or independence of action. Secondly, there is illumination from divine attributes. Here the recipient through revelation of divine attributes of majesty and beauty stays at the stations of awe (haibah) and attachment (uns).

Then there is the illumination of divine essence (dhat) which is a stage towards annihilation (fana'). A person at this stage is illumined with the divine light of faith and in the observation of God's face loses his individuality. This is a further stage in union (ittisal). It is open only to a few, the muqarrabin, who enjoy nearness to God.

Above it is the stage of spiritual perception (haqq al-yaqin) which is vouchsafed to very few persons and that only for the twinkling of an eye. It is the complete permeation of divine light in the recipient, so much so that his self (nafs) and heart both feel overpowered by it. And, in spite of its being a very rare experience attainable by a few select persons, the recipient feels that he is perhaps at some preliminary stage of his journey towards union. It is a long and toilsome journey for which perhaps a life of eternity may not suffice.

Contraction and Expansion (Qabd wa Bast)

These two emotional states are dependent for their appearance on certain preliminary conditions. They are usually experienced by a mystic when he is traversing the early stages of what Suhrawardi calls the states of special love.⁶⁷ They appear neither at the stage of general love, nor at the termination of the stage of special love.

There are some emotional experiences in the state of general love which seem to correspond to contraction and expansion, but which in reality are nothing more than fear (khauf) and hope (raja'), while at other times they are what he calls grief (hamm) and pleasure (nishat) which the experient confuses with contraction and expansion. Grief and pleasure emanate from the self (nafs) which is yet at the appetitive stage (nafs-i ammarah), a stage susceptible to the promptings of evil. Hamm is the feeling of dissatisfaction experienced at the failure of attaining the object of self-love while nishat is the crest of the wave when the sea of self-indulgence is all astorm.

It is only when the mystic enters the next stage which is connected with the stage of special love and when his appetitive self becomes the repentant self (nafs-i lawwamah) that the true moods of contraction and expansion make their appearance. The mood of contraction is the result of a psychological state when the self (nafs) is in ascendance, while the mood of expansion follows when the heart (as an organ of spiritual perception) is in ascendance.

When the appetitive self becomes repentant (lawwamah), there is a constant up and down in the urges towards evil; sometimes the urge towards good has the upper hand, while at others there is a tendency towards the other pole. The appearance of contraction and expansion corresponds to these two poles of the life of the self. Nafs is the veil of darkness and heart is the veil of light, and as long as an individual is in the sphere of these veils, he continues to experience these two moods of contraction and expansion. But as soon as he passes beyond these veils, these moods also disappear. In the experience of annihilation (fana') and abiding (baqa'), there is neither contraction nor expansion; they are intimately connected with the consciousness of selfhood.

According to some Sufis, the mystic first experiences contraction in his spiritual development and then it is followed by expansion. Suhrawardi also holds the same opinion. But there are certain situations where this order is reversed. Under the mood of expansion, the experient feels overjoyed and happy. This happiness then filters down to the self (nafs) which is by nature inclined to interpret it appetitively so that this mood of expansion degenerates into an attitude of pleasure. At this stage the mood of

contraction of necessity makes its appearance to bring the self to the state of sanity and equilibrium. If the self were to be free from a tendency towards the extremes, the mystic would be in a perpetual state of expansion (bast) and blessedness.

When the self passes into the last stage and becomes the satisfied soul, it attains complete harmony and passes beyond the bi-polar strife of good and evil. For such a person the moods of contraction and expansion are non-existent.

Annihilation and Abiding (Fana' wa Baqa')

According to Suhrawardi, what most mystics describe as the state of annihilation (fana') is in reality not fana' but something else. According to some, fana' is the annihilation of all attachment, absence of all urges towards satisfaction of worldly desires, etc. This state, according to Suhrawardi, is what is implied in repentance of a true type (taubat al-nasuh).

To some fana' is the annihilation of evil attributes and baqa', the abiding of good attributes. This, again, according to Suhrawardi, is not true fana' and baqa' but the result of moral transformation and purification (tazkiyah). There are many phases of fana', but the state of absolute fana' is one where the Being of God is so overpowering and overwhelming that the consciousness of the finite self is totally obliterated.

He quotes with approval the following event as a true representation of the state of annihilation (fana'). A person greeted 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar while he was engaged in circumambulation (tawaf) of the Ka'bah to which he made no response. Later on he heard that the man had complained to someone at the absence of his response. At this 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar replied that in that state he was in communion with God and, therefore, did not have any consciousness of himself, not to speak of others.

There are two kinds of fana'. The first is the apparent annihilation (fana' al-zahir). Here the mystic receives illumination through divine action with the result that freedom of action and choice disappears from him. He sees all actions, his as well as those of others, emanating directly from God. At the stage of the real annihilation (fana' al-batin), the mystic receives illumination from God's attributes and His essence (dhat) with the result that he is over-whelmed by the divine amr so much so that he becomes totally immune from evil promptings of all kinds.

Some people in the state of annihilation lose all consciousness but, according to Suhrawardi, it is not an essential phase of this state.

In the state of abiding (baqa'), the mystic is restored the power of action which had been annihilated previously. God allows him full freedom to act as he likes and as the situation demands. In this state he is conscious of the obligations both to the world and to God and none of these becomes a hindrance to the other. His duty to the world does not make him oblivious of his duty to God, nor does his communion with God debar him from turning his attention to the worldly matters.

The apparent annihilation (fana' al-zahir) is for those who are at the station of heart and are busy with emotional states, while the real annihilation (fana' al-batin) is for those who have passed beyond that station

and attained union with God and who are what he calls bi-Allah (with God).⁶⁸

Union and Separation (Jam' wa Tafriqah)

According to Junaid, near-ness to God in ecstasy (wajd) is union while the sense of selfhood (bashriyyah) and absence from God (ghaibah), i.e., awareness of self, is separation (tafriqah). Suhrawardi accepts this position and says that the state where the mystic feels himself united with God (tauhid al-tajrid) is denoted by union (jam'), while ordinary and normal state of consciousness, where the mystic feels the separate individuality of his own self as well as of other things, is called separation (tafriqah).

He adds that both these states are complementary; if we ignore union, we are landed in negation of the divine attributes (ta`til) and if we ignore separation, it leads to heresy (ilhad) and denial of God (zandaqah). Union is annihilation in God (fana' bi-Allah), while separation (tafriqah) is relationship of an obedient servant to God (`ubdiyyah). Union is the result of man's possession of a soul, while separation is due to his possession of a body, and as long as the combination of the soul and the body persists, these two states must equally be emphasized in the life of the mystic.

There is another state which is called by mystics the union of the union (jam' al-jam'). When a mystic looks towards God's action, he is in the state of separation; when he looks towards God's attributes, he is in the state of union; and when he looks towards God's essence, he is in the state of union of the union.⁶⁹

Process of Self-Purification

The ideal life, according to Suhrawardi, is the life of a perfect man who, in spite of the highest spiritual attainments, is yet conscious of his subservience to the Law of Shari`ah. But this stage of purification cannot be attained without a long process of self-mortification which demands self-examination, introversion, contemplation, patience, submission to God's will, and an attitude of complete detachment.

The spark of life that is kindled within the heart of the mystic has a charm of its own, but it cannot be kept burning unless it is fed constantly on the oil that flows from continuous efforts towards asceticism. He receives wayward glimpses of the Infinite Beauty and is charmed, but they prove fleeting; he wants this experience to be broadened in extensity and deepened in intensity; he wants this experience to be stabilized and enriched - hence the necessity of the whole process of self-purification. The result is second birth out of the womb of spirit into the kingdom of the re-awakened spirit.

Suhrawardi gives the details of this process of gradual enlightenment. There are four preliminary stages: Faith, repentance (taubah), continence, constancy in unblemished virtuous actions. These four must be supplemented by four other things which are essentials of asceticism, viz., minimum conversation, minimum food, minimum stay-at-home, and minimum contact with people.

Repentance (taubah) over past shortcomings and determination to avoid them in future are effective only when a person keeps a constant check over his thoughts and actions and is fully awake to all situations.⁷⁰ But to

maintain this psychological state of repentance there are certain essential requirements. The first is self-examination (muhasabah) and the other is introversion or meditation (muraqabah.). A person asked Wasti, "Which is the best virtuous action?" He said, "Outwardly self-examination and inwardly meditation; both are perfected by each other and help to maintain the attitude of repentance in the mystic which leads to concentration on and communion with God (inabah) "

The other thing that is essential for a mystic is patience (sabr) without which it is not possible for him to continue his life. This moral quality enables him to endure the vicissitudes of life. It is far more easy for an individual to show his mettle in adversity than in prosperity and hence the mystics have emphasized the importance of patience in a state of affluence which is regarded superior to patience shown in a state of want.

The next state is that of rida' which is in a way the fruit of conversion (taubah) where the mystic enters the sphere of fear and hope. He feels shocked at the tendency towards evil and, being morally at a higher stage of development, he fears succumbing to these temptations. This feeling of fear, therefore, serves to keep him aware and make him watchful of any fall towards the satisfaction of his baser self. He is repentant and feels hopeful of ultimate victory over these evil forces. Thus, the life of the mystic moves between these two poles of fear and hope and gradually attains the stage of what Suhrawardi calls continence (zuhd), which in a way sums up all that he has achieved so far.

The stage of continence, in other words, is the stage where the fruits of conversion (taubah) with its constituents of self-examination and meditation, patience and voluntary sub-mission to God, piety, hope, and fear, all converge and make the mystic into a perfect ascetic who lives, moves, and has his being in complete communion with God and in total reliance (tawakkul) upon Him. This second stage of continence is distinct from poverty (faqr). A faqir is one who is forced by circumstances to lead a life of poverty, while the continent person (zahid), on the other hand, adopts this life of detachment of his own free-will even when the state of affluence is open to him.

The third stage is that of stability in morally virtuous actions. According to Suhrawardi, a zahid who does not follow the Law of the Shari`ah is liable to be led astray. It is only through constancy in action for God ('aml li-Allah), remembrance (dhikr), recitation from the Qur'an, prayers, and meditation (muraqabah) that a mystic can hope to attain his objective which is 'ubudiyah, perfect obedience to God.

Sahl b. 'Abd Allah Tustari said about this stage: "When a man after passing through repentance, continence, and con-stancy in virtuous deeds reaches the stage of slavehood, he becomes totally passive towards the divine will and of his own free-will decides no longer to exercise his freedom of choice and action. Then he is granted full power of activity and freedom of action because he has identified himself with the will of God. His self-determination is equivalent to God-determination; the liability of his falling prey to evil temptations and ignorance are totally obliterated."

According to Suhrawardi, the stage of giving up freedom of choice and action is the stage of annihilation, while the second stage where the mystic freely acts, because his will follows the will of God, is the state of abiding in God. It is the shedding of the mortal self for the eternal, material for the spiritual, human for the divine. The mystic at this stage is the perfect servant.⁷¹

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Notes

1. *Futuh al-Ghaib*, Discourse 54, pp.102-104.
2. *Ibid.*, Discourse 10, pp.23-24.
3. *Qur'an*, xxxvii, 96.
4. *Futuh al-Ghaib*, Discourse 27, pp.56-58; see also Discourse 13, p. 29, and Discourse 70, pp. 129-30.
5. *Qur'an*, xvi, 32.
6. *Futuh al-Ghaib*, Discourse 27.
7. *Ibid.*, Discourse 27, p. 56.
8. *Ibid.*, Discourse 70, p.130.
9. *Ibid.*, Discourse 27, p.59.
10. Shaikh Jilani extols in many sermons the role of a mystic saint who, after completing his spiritual discipline and attaining proficiency in mystic lore, assumes the onerous duty of leading the people to the way of God. The ideal type of a mystic in his eyes is not one who becomes a recluse or anchorite but a man of the world who by the example of his life and the words of his mouth helps the ignorant and misguided to the way of taqwa, righteousness.
11. *Futuh al-Ghaib*, Discourse 33, pp.66-69; see also Discourse 77 where a different division is presented.
12. *Ibid.*, Discourse 10, pp.23-26; see also Discourse 18, p.40.
13. Shaikh Jilani is careful to point out that the term union (*wusul*) is only symbolical, for this union is something totally different when applied to human individuals. See *Futuh al-Ghaib*, Discourse 17, p.36.
14. *Futuh al-Ghaib*, Discourse 40, p.81; Discourse 17, p.37.
15. *Ibid.*, Discourse 46, p.93; Discourse 13, pp.40-42; Discourse 18, p.60. Discourse 28, etc.
16. *Ibid.*, Discourse 9, p.21.
17. *Ibid.*, Discourse 74, pp.135-6.
18. *Ibid.*, Discourse 75, p.137.
19. *Ibid.*, Discourse 76.
20. According to the tradition translated by Ans b. Malik, cf. *Awarif al-Ma'arif*, Chapter 6.
21. Khurasan had been one of the centres of Buddhist missionaries before Islam, where, it seems, people adopted the practice of Buddhist Bhikshus in later times.

22. Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi, *Awarif al-Ma'arif*, Urdu translation, Newal Kishore Press, Lucknow, Chapter 6.
23. Qur'an, xcvi, 5.
24. *Awarif al-Ma'arif*, Chapter 1, p.17.
25. In another place he explicitly says that this knowledge is intuitional. Only he who experiences it can fully realize its import. You may describe the sweetness of sugar in any way you like, but it can be realized only by one who tastes it. *Ibid.*, Chap. 3, p. 43.
26. Qur'an, xxxv, 28.
27. *Awarif al-Ma'arif*, Chap.3, p.46.
28. Reference is to what is theologically called as interpolations of Satan in the revelations of saints. See the Qur'an, xxii, 51, and also 'Awarif al-Ma'arif, Chap.3, p. 36.
29. Qur'an, iii, 6.
30. *Awarif al-Ma'arif*, Chap.9, p.21; Chap.6, p.14; Chap.25, p.50.
31. *Ibid.* Chap.3, p.54.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 61-64. He adds that any revelation or ecstatic experience (kashf or wajd) which is contrary to the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet is unacceptable to the Sufis.
33. *Ibid.*, Chap.10, pp. 103-07. But Ghazali thinks otherwise. According to him, the third category is the perfect specimen of spiritual leaders. See B.A. Dar's article, "Intellect and Intuition," in *Iqbal*, Vol. IV, No. 3, pp. 97-99.
34. He defines nafs as a dark earthly veil and qalb as a veil of heavenly light.
35. *Awarif al-Ma'arif*, Chap.10, pp.103-107.
36. One mystic, Abu al-Muzaffar Farmaisi, said that faqir is one who is independent even of God. Such a saying is, of course, a blasphemy, but almost all mystics have tried to explain away its sting. Qushairi in his *Risalah* and Suhrawardi in his book both try to justify this saying, but Ibn al-Qayyim is not satisfied with any of these explanations and rejects this definition in two. See *Islami Tasawuruf*, al-Hilal Book Agency, Lahore, pp. 124-26
37. Syria here does not stand for the geographical area which is now called Syria. Previously, nearly all the land now including Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, etc., was called Syria.
38. Qur'an, ii, 273.
39. *Ibid.*, v, 8.
40. *Awarif al-Ma'arif*, Chap.7, pp.80ff.
41. Qur'an, xxxv, 32.
42. *Awarif al-Ma'arif*, Chap.7, p.82.
43. *Ibid.*, Chap.8, pp.85-90.
44. *Ibid.*, Chap. 9, pp.90-92.
45. Lahut and nasut are terms for the divine and human aspects of Christ's personality. This doctrine became the basis of many controversies in the Christian Church and many sects like the Nestorians and Monophysites (or Jacobites) appeared in Syria and Egypt respectively. But in spite of Suhrawardi's protests, these terms were used first by Hallaj and then by Ibn 'Arabi and even Ghazali, after which they were accepted by almost all later mystics.
46. *Awarif al-Ma'arif*, Chap.9, pp. 93-96.
47. Qur'an, iii, 199.
48. He quotes the story of two brothers, one of whom was a Sufi and the other a soldier. The latter wrote to his brother inviting him to join war against the enemy because the times were critical. The Sufi brother refused to accept his advice for he preferred his way of life to that of his brother's, with the remarks: "If all people were to follow my path and remember Allah sitting on their prayer-carpet, they would have conquered Constantinople." *Awarif al-Ma'arif*, Chap. 13, pp. 125-26.
49. Qur'an, xxiv, 36-37. "In houses which Allah has permitted to be exalted so that His name may be remembered in them; they glorify Him therein in the morning and evening, men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from remembrance of Allah"
50. *Awarif al-Ma'arif*, Chap.19, pp.178-179.
51. *Ibid.*, Chaps. 19, 20, pp. 173, 186.
52. *Ibid.*, Chap. 21, pp. 192-206. It appears that, in his estimation of women, he is influenced by the Christian doctrine that woman is the source of all evil. See p.195.
53. *Ibid.*, p.224.

54. Ibid., p.248.
55. Ibid., Chaps. 22, 23, 24 and 25.
56. Qur'an, xli, 53.
57. Ibid., xxiii, 12-14.
58. Qur'an, xvii, 85.
59. Awarif al-Ma'arif, p.552.
60. Ibid., pp.555-558.
61. Ibid., p553.
62. The Shaikh points out that the Qur'an mentions only soul (ruh), self (nafs), reason ('aql), heart (fu'ad), but there is not reference to what Sufis call sirr. See Awarif al-Ma'arif, p.558.
63. Awarif al-Ma'arif, Chap. 56, pp.541-64
64. Ibid., Chap.57, pp.565-78.
65. Ibid., Chap. 58, pp.578-82.
66. Qur'an, xcvi, 19.
67. As previously stated in this chapter, general love is the result of observation of divine attributes as distinguished from special love which appears when the mystic passes to the observation of divine essence (dhat).
68. Awarif al-Ma'arif, Chap. 61, pp.623-53.
69. Ibid., pp.655-57.
70. He calls them scolding of one's self (zajr), warning (intibah), and awakening (bidari).
71. 'Awarif al-Ma'arif, Chap. 59, pp. 585-600.

Chapter 19: Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi Maqtul

By Seyyed Hossein Nasr

The intellectual life of Islam and that of Christianity - the two sister civilizations in the Middle Ages can be compared with each other to a large extent through the role that Aristotelian philosophy played in them. Peripatetic science and philosophy entered the Western world through translations from Arabic in the seventh/thirteenth century and eventually became dominant to such an extent as to replace the Augustinian and Platonic wisdom of the earlier period only to be overthrown itself by the humanistic rationalism of the Renaissance.

In Islam the attack of Sufis and theologians upon the ratio-nalistic aspect of Aristotelian philosophy weakened its hold at the very time when that philosophy was gaining strength in the Christian West and was replaced in the Muslim world by two elements, the doctrinal Sufism of Muhyi al-Din ibn 'Arabi and the Hikmat al-Ishraq¹ or illuminative wisdom of Shaikh al-Ishraq Shihab al-Din Yahya ibn Habash ibn Amirak Suhrawardi,² both of which aimed at an effective realization of the "truth" and replaced the rationalism of Peripatetic philosophy by intellectual intuition (dhauq).

Life, Works and Sources of Doctrines

Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi, whose ishraqi wisdom has played such a great role in the intellectual and spiritual life of Islam and especially of Shi'ism, was born in Suhraward, a village near the present city of Zinjan in northern Persia, in 549/1153. He studied at first with Majd al-Din Jili at Maraghah and later with Zahir al-Din Qari at Ispahan. Having finished his formal studies, he began to travel through Persia, meeting various Sufi masters and benefiting from their presence and teachings. During this period he spent much time in meditation and invocation in spiritual retreats. He also journeyed during the same period through the regions of Anatolia and Syria and acquired great love for the cities of these countries.

On one of his journeys, he went from Damascus to Aleppo and met Malik Zahir, the son of Salah al-Din Ayyubi, the celebrated Muslim ruler. Malik Zahir became much devoted to Shihab al-Din and asked him to stay at his Court. It was here that the master of ishraq fell into disgrace with the religious authorities in the city who considered some of his statements dangerous to Islam. They asked for his death, and when Malik Zahir refused, they petitioned Salah al-Din himself who threatened his son with abdication unless he followed the ruling of the religious leaders. Shihab al-Din was thereby imprisoned and in the year 587/1191, at the age of 38, he was either suffocated to death or died of starvation.³

Many miraculous features have been connected with the life of Suhrawardi and many stories told of his unusual powers. His countenance was striking to all his contemporaries. His illuminated and ruddy face and dishevelled hair, his handsome beard and piercing eyes reminded all who met him of his keen intelligence. He paid as little attention to his dress as he did to his words. Sometimes he wore the woollen garb of the Sufis, sometimes the silk dress of the courtiers. His short and tragic life contains many similarities to the life of Hallaj, whom he quoted so often, and to that

of the Sufi poet 'Ain al--Qudat Hamadani who was to follow a similar career a few years later.

The writings of Suhrawardi are numerous despite his short and turbulent life. Some of them have been lost, a few published, and the rest remain in manuscript form in the libraries of Persia, India, and Turkey.⁴ Unlike his predecessors, Ibn Sina and al-Ghazali, he was never translated into Latin and, therefore, never became well known in the Western world. Yet, his influence in the East can almost match that of Ibn Sina, and any history of Islamic philosophy written without mentioning him and the school of Ishraq is, to say the least, incomplete.

Histories of Muslim philosophy written by Western-ers, like Munk and de Boer, usually end with Ibn Rushd because the authors have considered only that aspect of Muslim philosophy which influenced Latin scholasticism. Actually, the seventh/thirteenth century, far from being the end of speculative thought in Islam, is really the beginning of this most important school of Ishraq. Suhrawardi's writings came to the East at the same time as Peripatetic philosophy was journeying westward to Andalusia and from there through the influence of Ibn Rushd and others to Europe.

There are altogether about fifty titles of Suhrawardi's writings which have come down to us in the various histories and biographies.⁵ They may be divided into five categories as follows:⁶

1. The four large doctrinal treatises, the first three dealing with Aristotelian (masha'i) philosophy with certain modifications and the last with ishraqi wisdom proper. These works, all in Arabic, include the *Talwihat*, *Muqawwamat*, *Mutarahat*, and the *Hikmat al-Ishraq*.⁷

2. Shorter doctrinal treatises like *Hayakil al-Nur*, *al-Alwah al-'Imadiyyah*, *Partau-Nameh*, *Itiqad al-Hukama'*, *al-Lamahat*, *Yazdan Shinakht*, and *Bustan al-Qulub*⁸ all of which explain further the subject-matter of the larger treatises. These works are partly in Arabic and partly in Persian.

3. Initiatory narratives written in symbolic language to depict the journey of the initiate towards gnosis (ma`rifah) and illumination (ishraq). These short treatises, all written in Persian, include *'Aql-i Surkh*, *Awaz-i Par-i Jibra'il*, *al-Ghurbat al-Gharbiyyah* (also in Arabic), *Lughat-i Muran*, *Risalah fi Halat al-Tufuliyyah*, *Ruzi ba Jama`at-i Sufiyan*, *Risalah fi al-Mi`raj*, and *Safir-i Simurgh*.

4. Commentaries and transcriptions of earlier philosophic and initiatic texts and sacred Scripture like the translation into Persian of the *Risalat al-Ta'ir* of Ibn Sina, the commentary in Persian upon Ibn Sina's *Isharat wa Tanbihat*, and the treatise *Risalah fi Haqiqat al-'Ishq* which last is based on Ibn Sina's *Risalat al-'Ishq* and his commentary upon the verses of the Qur'an and on the Hadith.⁹

5. Prayers, litanies, invocations, and what may be called books of the hour, all of which Shahrazuri calls *al-Waridat w-al-Taqdisat*.

These works and the large number of commentaries written upon them during the last seven centuries form the main corpus of the tradition of ishraq and are a treasure of traditional doctrines and symbols combining in them the wisdom of Sufism with Hermeticism, and Pythagorean, Platonic,

Aristotelian, and Zoroastrian philosophies together with some other diverse elements. There is little doubt that Suhrawardi is greatly indebted to the Muslim philosophers, especially Ibn Sina, for the formulation of many of his ideas.

Moreover, inasmuch as he is a Sufi as well as a philosopher or, more properly speaking, a theosophist,¹⁰ he is in debt, both for spiritual inspiration and for his doctrines, to the great chain of Sufi masters before him. More specifically he is indebted to Hallaj whom he quotes so often and to al-Ghazali whose *Mishkat al-Anwar* played so important a role in his doctrine of the relation of light to the Imam.

Suhrawardi came also under the influence of Zoroastrian teaching, particularly in angelology and the symbolism of light and darkness.¹¹ He identified the wisdom of the ancient Zoroastrian sages with that of Hermes and, therefore, with the pre-Aristotelian philosophers, especially Pythagoras and Plato, whose doctrines he sought to revive.

Finally, he was influenced directly by the vast tradition of Hermeticism which is itself the remains of ancient Egyptian, Chaldaean and Sabaeen doctrines metamorphosed within the matrix of Hellenism and is based on the primordial symbolism of alchemy. Suhrawardi considered himself to be the reviver of the perennial wisdom, *philosophia perennis*, or what he calls *Hikmat al-Ladunniyyah* or *Hikmat al-`Atiqah* which existed always among the Hindus, Persians, Babylonians, Egyptians, and the ancient Greeks up to the time of Plato.¹²

The concept of the history of philosophy for Suhrawardi and his school is itself of great interest. This school identifies philosophy with wisdom rather than with rational systematization. Philosophy for it does not begin with Plato and Aristotle; rather, it ends with them. Aristotle, by putting wisdom in a rationalistic dress, limited its perspective and separated it from the unitive wisdom of the earlier sages.¹³

From the Ishraqi point of view, Hermes or the Prophet Idris is the father of philosophy, having received it as revelation from heaven. He was followed by a chain of sages in Greece and in ancient Persia and later in Islam which unified the wisdom of previous civilizations in its milieu. The chain of transmission of ishraqi doctrines, which must be understood symbolically rather than only historically, may be schematized as follows:

In the introduction to his *Hikmat al-Ishraq*, Suhrawardi states explicitly the nature of ishraqi wisdom and its relation to ancient doctrines. As he writes: "Although before the composition of this book I composed several summary treatises on Aristotelian philosophy, this book differs from them and has a method peculiar to itself. All of its material has not been assembled by thought and reasoning; rather, intellectual intuition, contemplation, and ascetic practices have played an important role in it.

Since our sayings have not come by means of rational demonstration but by inner vision and con-templation, they cannot be destroyed by the doubts and temptations of the sceptics. Whoever is a traveller (*salik*) on the way to truth is my companion and a help on this Path. The procedure of the master of philosophy, the divine Plato, was the same, and the sages who preceded Plato in time like Hermes, the father of philosophy, followed the same path.

Since sages of the past, because of the ignorance of the masses, expressed their sayings in secret symbols (rumuz), the refutations which have been made against them have concerned the exterior of these sayings and not their real intentions. And the ishraqi wisdom the foundation and basis of which are the two principles of light and darkness as established by the Persian sages like Jamasp, Far-shadshur, and Buzarjumihir is among these hidden, secret symbols. One must never think that the light and darkness which appear in our expressions are the same as those used by the infidel Magi, or the heretical Manichaeans for they finally involve us in idolatry (shirk) and dualism.”¹⁴

The Meaning of Ishraq

The Arabic words ishraq meaning illumination and mashriq meaning the east are both derived etymologically from the root sharq meaning the rising of the sun. Moreover, the adjective illuminative, mushriqiyyah, and Oriental, mashriqiyyah, are written in exactly the same way in Arabic. This symbolic identification of the Orient with light which is inherent in the Arabic language and is employed often by the Ishraqi sages, has given rise to many difficulties in the interpretations of that wisdom which is both illuminative and Oriental.

Already in his Mantiq al-Mashriqiyyin most of which is lost, Ibn Sina refers to an Oriental wisdom which is superior to the commonly accepted Peripatetic (masha'i) philosophy.¹⁵ Due to the fact that the word mashriqiyyun could also be read as mushriqiyyin in Arabic, the latter meaning illuminative, one could interpret the esoteric teachings which Ibn Sina proposes as being illu-minative as well as Oriental.

Since the famous article of Nallino,¹⁶ it has become common opinion that the reading is Oriental and has nothing to do with illumination. Yet, this opinion, however correct it may be linguistically, is essentially limited in that it does not take into account the profound sym-bolism inherent in the language and does not consider the great debt which Suhrawardi and ishraqi wisdom owe to Ibn Sina.

Suhrawardi writes that Ibn Sina wanted to recapture Oriental philosophy but did not have access to the necessary sources.¹⁷ Yet, if we consider how the sacred geography of the Orient of light and the Occident of darkness in the initiatory trilogy of Ibn Sina, Hayy Ibn Yaqzan, Risalat al- Ta'ir, and Salaman wa Absal, is followed by Suhrawardi, how the Shaikh al-Ishraq translated several of the treatises of Ibn Sina into Persian, and how parts of Hikmat al-Ishraq resemble closely the commentary of Ibn Sina upon the Theology of Aristotle, it will become clear how profoundly the roots of Ishraqi philosophy lie in certain of the later non-Aristotelian works of Ibn Sina and how illumina-tion and the Orient are united in this form of wisdom.

The unification of the meaning of illumination and the Orient in the term ishraq is connected with the symbolism of the sun which rises in the Orient and which illuminates all things so that the land of light is identified with that of gnosis and illumination.¹⁸

Inasmuch as the Occident is where the sun sets, where darkness reigns, it is the land of matter, ignorance, or dis-cursive thought, entangled in the

mesh of its own logical constructions. The Orient is, on the contrary, the world of light, of being, the land of knowledge, and of illumination which transcends mere discursive thought and rational-ism. It is the land of knowledge which liberates man from himself and from the world, knowledge which is combined with purification and sanctity.¹⁹

It is for this reason that Suhrawardi connects ishraqi wisdom with the ancient priest-kings of Persia like Kai Khusrau and with the Greek sages like Asclepius, Pythagoras, and Plato whose wisdom was based on inner purification and intellectual intuition rather than on discursive logic.²⁰

In a historical sense, ishraqi wisdom is connected with pre-Aristotelian metaphysics. Jurjani in his Ta'rifat calls the Ishraqis "the philosophers whose master is Plato." 'Abd al-Razzaq Kashani, the celebrated Sufi, in his commentary upon the Fusus al-Hikam of Ibn 'Arabi writes that the Ishraqis derive their chain from Seth, often identified with Agathodemon, from whom craft initiations and Hermetic orders also derive their origin. Ibn Wahshiyyah in his Nabataean Agriculture mentions a class of Egyptian priests who were the children of the sister of Hermes and who were called Ishraqiyyun.²¹

Suhrawardi himself writes in his Mutarahat that the wisdom of Ishraq was possessed by the mythological priest-kings of ancient Persia, Kiumartha, Faridun, and Kai Khusrau and then passed on to Pythagoras and Plato, the latter being the last among the Greeks to possess it, and was finally inherited by the Muslim Sufis like Dhu al-Nun Misri and Bayazid Bistami.²²

Both metaphysically and historically, ishraqi wisdom means the ancient pre-discursive mode of thought which is intuitive (dhauqi) rather than discursive (bahthi) and which seeks to reach illumination by asceticism and purification. In the hands of Suhrawardi it becomes a new school of wisdom integrating Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy with Zoroastrian angelology and Hermetic ideas and placing the whole structure within the context of Sufism.

In reading the texts of Suhrawardi one is particularly struck by the large number of quotations from the Qur'an, Hadith, and the sayings of earlier Sufis and by the profound transformation into the Islamic mould of all the diverse ideas which Suhrawardi employs. It is by virtue of such an integration and transformation that the ishraqi wisdom could come to play such a major role in Shi'ism.

In the introduction to Hikmat al-Ishraq, Suhrawardi outlines the hierarchy of those who know in a manner which demonstrates how he integrates ancient wisdom into the perspective of Islam. There are, according to this scheme, four major types of "knowers": -

1. The hakim ilahi, or theosophos, who knows both discursive philosophy, i.e., Aristotelianism, and gnosis (ta'alluh). Suhrawardi considers Pythagoras, Plato, and himself among this group.

2. The sage who does not involve himself with discursive philosophy but remains content with gnosis, like Hallaj, Bistami, and Tustari.

3. The philosopher who is acquainted with discursive philosophy but is a stranger to gnosis like Farabi or Ibn Sina.²³

4. He who still seeks knowledge (talib) but has not yet reached a station of knowledge.

Above all these degrees is that of the Pole (Qutb) or Leader (Imam) who is the head of the spiritual hierarchy and of his representatives (khulafa').²⁴

The stations of wisdom are also described in a purely Sufi fashion as degrees of penetration into the divine unity expressed by the shahadah. In his initiatory treatise, *Safir-i Simurgh* (Song of the Griffin), Suhrawardi enumerates five degrees of unity²⁵: la ilaha il-Allah, none is worthy of worship but God, which is the common acceptance of the oneness of God and rejection of any other divinity; la huwa illa huwa, there is no he but He, which is the negation of any otherness than God, i, e., only God can be called "He"; la anta illa anta, there is no thou but Thou, which is the negation of all thouness outside of God; la ana illa ana, there is no "I" but the divine "I", which means that only God can say "I"; finally, the highest station of unity which is that of those who say wa kullu shai'-in halikun illa wajhahu, i.e., all things perish except His face (essence)²⁶.

The formulations of Sufism become, therefore, the framework of his classification of knowledge into which he tries to place the heritage of universal gnosis and philosophy inherited by Islam.

The Orient and Occident in Sacred Geography

As already mentioned, the term *ishraq* is closely connected with the symbol-ism of directions and sacred geography which are essential elements of the traditional sciences. In the trilogy of Ibn Sina to which we have already re-ferred, the disciple passes from the Occident which is the world of matter, through intermediate Occidents and Orientals which are the heavens and separate substances, to the Orient proper which symbolizes the world of archangels.

A similar division of the cosmos occurs in the writings of Suhrawardi. The Occident is the world of matter, the prison into which man's soul has fallen and from which he must escape. The Orient of lights is the world of archangels above the visible cosmos which is the origin of his soul (ruh). The middle Occident is the heavens which also correspond to the various inner faculties of man.

It is important to note that, contrary to Peripatetic philosophy, the *Ishraqis* hold that the boundary between the Occident and the Orient is set at the *primum mobile*; all that is visible in the cosmos including the celestial spheres is a part of the Occident, because it is still connected with matter, however subtle it may be. The Orient, properly speaking, is above the visible cosmos; it is the world of informal manifestation with its boundary at the heaven of the fixed stars.

In his treatise *al-Qissat al-Ghurbat al- Gharbiyyah*, "the Story of the Occidental Exile," in which Suhrawardi seeks to reveal the secrets of the trilogy of Ibn Sina, the universe becomes a crypt through which the seeker after truth must journey, beginning with this world of matter and darkness into which he has fallen and ending in the Orient of lights, the original home of the soul, which symbolizes illumination and spiritual realization.²⁷

The journey begins at the city of Qairawan in present-day Tunis, located west of the main part of the Islamic world.²⁸ The disciple and his brother are

imprisoned in the city at the bottom of a well which means the depth of matter. They are the sons of Shaikh Hadi ibn al-Khair al-Yamani, i, e., from the Yaman, which in Arabic means also the right hand and, therefore, symbolically the Orient, and is connected traditionally with the wisdom of the Prophet Solomon and the ancient sages as the left is connected with matter and darkness.²⁹

Above the well is a great castle with many towers, i.e., the world of the elements and the heavens or the faculties of the soul. They will be able to escape only at night and not during the day which means that man reaches the intelligible or spiritual world only in death, whether this be natural or initiatory, and in dream which is a second death. In the well there is such darkness that one cannot see even one's own hands, i, e., matter is so opaque that rarely does light shine through it. Occasionally they receive news from the Yaman which makes them homesick, meaning that they see the intelligible world during contemplation or in dreams. And so, they set out for their original home.

One clear night an order is brought by the hoopoe from the Governor of the Yaman telling them to begin their journey to their homeland, meaning the reception of a revelation from the intelligible world and the beginning of asceticism. The order also asks them to let go the hem of their dress, i.e., become free from attachment, when they reach the valley of ants, which is the passion of avidity. They are to kill their wives, i.e., passions, and then sit in a ship and begin their journey in the name of God.³⁰ Having made their preparation they set out for their pilgrimage to Mount Sinai.

A wave comes between the disciple and the son, meaning that the animal soul is sacrificed. Morning is near, that is, the union of the particular soul with the universal soul is approaching. The hero discovers that the world in which evil takes place, meaning this world, will be overturned and rain and stones, i.e., diseases and moral evils, will descend upon it. Upon reaching a stormy sea he throws in his foster-mother and drowns her, meaning that he even sacrifices his natural soul.

As he travels on still in storm, i, e., in the body, he has to cast away his ship in fear of the king above him who collects taxes, meaning death which all mortals must taste. He reaches the Mount of Gog and Magog, i, e., evil thoughts and love of this world enter his imagination. The jinn, the powers of imagination and meditation, are also before him as well as a spring of running copper which symbolizes wisdom. The hero asks the jinn to blow upon the copper which thus becomes fiery, and from it he builds a dam before Gog and Magog.

He takes the carnal soul (nafs ammarah) and places it in a cave, or the brain which is the source of this soul. He then cuts the "streams from the liver of the sky," i. e., he stops the power of motion from the brain which is located in the head, the sky of the body. He throws the empyrean heaven so that it covers all the stars, the sun, and the moon, meaning all powers of the soul become of one colour, and passes by fourteen coffins, the fourteen powers of ishraqi psychology,³¹ and ten tombs, the five external and the five internal senses. Having passed through these stages he discovers the path of God and realizes that it is the right path.

The hero passes beyond the world of matter and reaches a light, the active intellect which is the governor of this world. He places the light in the mouth of a dragon, the world of the elements, and passes by it to reach the heavens and beyond them to the signs of the Zodiac which mark the limit of the visible cosmos. But his journey is not yet at an end; he continues even beyond them to the upper heavens. Music is heard from far away, and the initiate emerges from the cavern of limitation to the spring of life³² flowing from a great mountain which is Mount Sinai. In the spring he sees fish that are his brothers; they are those who have reached the end of the spiritual journey.

He begins to climb the mountain and eventually reaches his father, the archangel of humanity, who shines with a blinding light which nearly burns him. The father congratulates him for having escaped from the prison of Qairawan, but tells him that he must return because he has not yet cast away all bonds. When he returns a second time, he will be able to stay. The father tells him that above them is his father, the universal intellect, and beyond him their relatives going back to the Great Ancestor who is pure light. "All perishes except His essence."³³

From this brief summary we see how ishraqi wisdom implies essentially a spiritual realization above and beyond discursive thought. The cosmos becomes transparent before the traveller and interiorized within his being. The degrees of realization from the state of the soul of fallen man to the centre of the soul freed from all limitation corresponds "horizontally" to the journey from the Occident of matter to the Orient of lights, and "vertically" to the ascent from the earth to the limits of the visible universe and from there, through the world of formless manifestation, to the divine essence.

Hikmat al-Ishraq

Ishraqi wisdom is not a systematic philosophy so that its exposition in a systematic fashion is hardly possible. What Suhrawardi says in one text seems at first sight to be contradicted in another work, and one has to discover the point of view in each case in order to overcome the external contradictions. In expounding the major points of ishraqi wisdom we will, therefore, follow the outlines of Hikmat al-Ishraq, the most important text in which this wisdom is, expounded, drawing also from the shorter treatises which Suhrawardi wrote as further explanations of his major work.

Hikmat al-Ishraq is the fourth of the great doctrinal works of Suhrawardi, the first three dealing with Aristotelian philosophy which is the necessary prerequisite and foundation for illuminative wisdom. It deals with the philosophy of Ishraq itself which is written for those who are not satisfied with theoretical philosophy alone but search for the light of gnosis. The book which in the beauty of style is a masterpiece among Arabic philosophical texts was composed during a few months in 582/1186, and, as Suhrawardi himself writes at the end of the book, revealed to him suddenly by the Spirit;³⁴ he adds that only a person illuminated by the Spirit can hope to understand it.³⁵

The work consists of a prologue and two sections: the first concerning logic and the criticism of certain points of Peripatetic philosophy, and the second composed of five chapters (maqalat), dealing with light, ontology,

angelology, physics, psychology and, finally, eschatology and spiritual union.

In the section on logic he follows mostly the teaching of Aristotle but criticizes the Aristotelian definition. According to the Stagirite, a logical definition consists of genus plus differentia. Suhrawardi remarks that the distinctive attribute of the object which is defined will give us no knowledge of that thing if that attribute cannot be predicated of any other thing. A definition in ishraqi wisdom is the summation of the qualities in a particular thing which when added together exist only in that thing.

Suhrawardi criticizes the ten categories of Aristotle as being limited and confined only to this universe. Beyond this world there is an indefinite number of other categories which the Aristotelian classification does not include. As for the nine categories of accidents, he reduces them to four by considering relation, time, posture, place, action, and passivity as the one single category of relation (nisbah) to which are added the three categories of quality, quantity, and motion.

Suhrawardi alters several points of Aristotelian philosophy in order to make it a worthy basis for the doctrine of illumination.³⁶ A major point of difference between the Ishraqis and the Muslim followers of Aristotle (Masha'is), also a central issue of Islamic philosophy, is that of the priority of Being or existence (wujud) to essence (mahiyah).³⁷

The Masha'is like the Sufis consider Being to be principal and mahiyah or essence to be accidental with respect to it. Suhrawardi objects to this view and writes that existence does not have any external reality outside the intellect which abstracts it from objects. For example, the existence of iron is precisely its essence and not a separate reality. The Masha'is consider existence to have an external reality and believe that the intellect abstracts the limitation of a being which then becomes its essence.³⁸

The argument of Suhrawardi against this view is that existence can be neither substance nor accident and, therefore, has no external reality. For if it is an accident, it needs something to which it is an accident. If this something is other than existence, it proves what we sought, i.e., this something is without existence. If existence is a substance, then it cannot be accident, although we say accidents "are." Therefore, existence is neither substance nor accident and consequently can exist only in the intellect.

The issue involved, which is essential to the understanding of all medieval and ancient philosophy, is the relation between Being and existence, on the one hand, and the archetypes and limitations on the other. The Masha'is and Sufis consider the universe to consist of degrees of Being and limitations which distinguish various beings from one another. The Sufis, particularly those of the school of Ibn 'Arabi who are concerned essentially with metaphysical doctrines, transpose these limitations into the principial domain and consider them the same as the archetypes or the Platonic ideas.

The traditional inter-preters of Shaikh al-Ishraq interpret his doctrine in a way which does not destroy the principality of Being³⁹ but rather subordinates the existence of a thing which is temporary and "accidental" to its archetype which with respect to the terrestrial existence of the thing is

principlal. In other words, essence (mahiyyah) is subordinated to Being (wujud), if we understand by this term Being qua Being; but as archetype, it is superior to particular existence which is an “exteriorization” of Being.

The Ishraqis believe in fact that it is useless to discuss about the principlality of wujud and mahiyyah, of Being and essence, because the essence or mahiyyah is itself a degree of Being. The Ishraqis differ from the Masha'is in that the former considers the world to be actual in its being and potential in its qualities and attributes, and the latter believes, on the contrary, that the world is potential in its being and actual in its qualities and perfections.⁴⁰

Another important criticism of the Aristotelians by Suhrawardi is that of the doctrine of hylomorphism, of form and matter, which is the foundation of Aristotle's philosophy. As we shall see later, Suhrawardi considers bodies to be darkness and transforms the Aristotelian forms into the guardian lights or angels which govern each being. He defines a body as an external, simple substance (jauhar basit) which is capable of accepting conjunction and separa-tion.⁴¹ This substance in itself, in its own essence, is called body (jism), but from the aspect of accepting the form of species (surah nau'yyah) it is called the materia prima or hyle (hayula).

He also differs from the Aristotelians in defining the place (makan) of the body not as the internal surface of the body which contains it but as the abstract dimension (bu`d mujarrad) in which the body is placed. Suhrawardi follows Ibn Sina and other Masha'is in rejecting the possibility of a void and an indivisible particle or atom, and in considering the body to be indefinitely divisible even if this division cannot be carried out physically.

Other elements of Peripatetic philosophy which Suhrawardi condemns include its doctrine of the soul and arguments for its subsistence which he believes to be weak and insufficient;⁴² its rejection of the Platonic ideas which are the cornerstone of ishraqi wisdom and upon the reality of which Suhrawardi insists in nearly every doctrinal work; and its theory of vision.

This last criticism is of interest in that Suhrawardi rejects both of the theories of vision commonly held during the Middle Ages. Regarding the Aristotelian theory that forms of objects are imprinted upon the pupil of the eye and then reach the senses communis and finally the soul, Suhrawardi asks how the imprinting of large objects like the sky upon this small pupil in the eye is possible. Since man does not reason at the time of vision which is an immediate act, even if large objects were imprinted in smaller proportions, one could not know of the size of the object from its image.

The mathematicians and students of optics usually accepted another theory according to which a conic ray of light leaves the eye with the head of the cone in the eye and the base at the object to be seen. Suhrawardi attacks this view also by saying that this light is either an accident or a substance. If it is an accident it cannot be transmitted; therefore, it must be a substance. As a substance, its motion is dependent either on our will or it is natural. If dependent on our will, we should be able to gaze at an object and not see it, which is contrary to ex-perience; or if it has natural motion, it should move only in one direction like vapour which moves upward, or stone which moves downward, and we should be able to see only in one

direction which is also contrary to experience. There-fore, he rejects both views.

According to Suhrawardi, vision can occur only of a lighted object. When man sees this object, his soul surrounds it and is illuminated by its light. This illumination (ishraq) of the soul (nafs) in presence of the object is vision. Therefore, even sensible vision partakes of the illuminative character of all knowledge.

With this criticism of the Aristotelian (masha'i) philosophy, Suhrawardi turns to the exposition of the essential elements of ishraqi wisdom itself beginning with a chapter on light, or one might say the theophany of light, which is the most characteristic and essential element of the teachings of this school.⁴³

Light (nur), the essence of which lies above comprehension, needs no definition because it is the most obvious of all things. Its nature is to manifest itself; it is being, as its absence, darkness (zulmah), is nothingness. All reality consists of degrees of light and darkness.⁴⁴ Suhrawardi calls the Absolute Reality the infinite and limitless divine essence, the Light of lights (Nur al-anwar).⁴⁵ The whole universe, the 18,000 worlds of light and darkness which Suhrawardi mentions in his Bustan al-Qulub, are degrees of irradiation and effusion of this Primordial Light which shines everywhere while remaining immutable and for ever the same.⁴⁶

Suhrawardi "divides" reality according to the types of light and darkness. If light is subsistent by itself, it is called substantial light (nur jauhari) or incorporeal light (nur mujarrad); if it depends for its subsistence on other than itself, it is called accidental light (nur `ardi). Likewise, if darkness is subsistent by itself it is called obscurity (ghasaq) and if it depends on other than itself for its subsistence it is called form (hai'ah).

This division is also based on the degrees of comprehension.⁴⁷ A being is either aware of itself or ignorant of it. If it is aware of itself and subsists by itself it is incorporeal light, God, the angels, archetypes, and the human soul. If a thing has need of a being other than itself to become aware of itself, it is accidental light like the stars and fire. If it is ignorant of itself but subsists by itself, it is obscurity like all natural bodies, and if it is ignorant by itself and subsists by other than itself, it is form like colours and smells.

All beings are the illumination (ishraq) of the Supreme Light which leaves its vicegerent in each domain, the sun in the heavens, fire among the elements, and the lordly light (nur isphabad) in the human soul. The soul of man is essentially composed of light; that is why man becomes joyous at the sight of the light of the sun or fire and fears darkness. All the causes of the universe return ultimately to light; all motion in the world, whether it be of the heaven, or of the elements, is caused by various regent lights (nur mudabbir) which are ultimately nothing but illuminations of the Light of lights.

Between the Supreme Light and the obscurity of bodies there must be various stages in which the Supreme Light weakens gradually to reach the darkness of this world. These stages are the orders of angels, personal and universal at the same time, who govern all things.⁴⁸ In enumerating these angelic orders Suhrawardi relies largely upon Zoroastrian angelology and

de-parts completely from the Aristotelian and Avicennian schemes which limit the intelligences or angels to ten to correspond to the celestial spheres of Ptolemaic astronomy.

Moreover, in the Avicennian scheme, the angels or intellects are limited to three intelligible “dimensions” which constitute their being, namely, the intellection of their principle, of the necessity of their existence, and of the contingency of their essence (mahiyah).⁴⁹ Suhrawardi begins with this scheme as a point of departure but adds many other “dimensions” such as domination (qahr) and love (mahabbah), independence and dependence, illumination (ishraq) and contemplation (shuhud) which open a new horizon beyond the Aristotelian universe of the medieval philosophers.

Suhrawardi calls the first effusion of the Light of lights (nur al-anwar or nur al-a`zam) the archangel Bahman or the nearest light (nur al-aqrab). This light contemplates the Light of lights and, since no veil exists in between, receives direct illumination from it. Through this illumination, a new triumphal light (nur al-qahir) comes into being which receives two illuminations, one directly from the Supreme Light and the other from the first light.

The pro-cess of effusion continues in the same manner with the third light receiving illumination four times, twice from the light preceding it, once from the first light and once from the Supreme Light; and the fourth light eight times, four times from the light preceding it, twice from the second light, once from the first light, and once from the Light of lights or Supreme Light.⁵⁰ In this manner the order of archangels, which Suhrawardi calls the longitudinal order (tabaqat al-tul) or “world of mothers” (al-ummahat) and in which the number of archangels far exceeds the number of intelligences in Aristotelian cosmology, comes into being.⁵¹

Each higher light has domination (qahr) over the lower and each lower light, love (mahabbah) for the higher. Moreover, each light is a purgatory or veil (barzakh) between the light above and the light below. In this manner the supreme order of angels is illuminated from the Light of lights which has love only for Itself because the beauty and perfection of Its essence are evident to Itself.

The supreme hierarchy of being or the “longitudinal” order gives rise to a new polarization of Being. Its positive or masculine aspect such as dominance, contemplation, and independence gives rise to a new order of angels called the latitudinal order (tabaqat al 'ard) the members of which are no longer generators of one another; rather, each is integral in itself and is, therefore, called mutakafiyah. Suhrawardi identifies these angels with the Platonic ideas and refers to them as the lords of the species (arbab al-anwa') or the species of light (anwa' nuriyyah).

Each species in the world has as its arche-type one of these angels, or to express it in another manner, each being in this world is the theurgy (tilism) of one of these angels which are, therefore, called the lords of theurgy (arbab al-tilism). Water is the theurgy of its angel khurdad, minerals of shahrwar, vegetables of murdad, fire of urdibihisht, etc.⁵²

Suhrawardi uses the names of the Amshaspands (Amesha Spentas), the separate powers of Ahura Mazda in Zoroastrianism, to designate these

arche-types, and in this way unites Zoroastrian angelology with the Platonic ideas. These longitudinal angels are not, however, in any way abstract or mental objects, as sometimes the Platonic ideas are interpreted to be. They are, on the contrary, concrete as angelic hypostases and appear abstract only from man's point of view who, because of his imprisonment in the cage of his senses, considers only the object of the senses to be concrete. These angels are the real governors of this world who guide all of its movements and direct all of its changes. They are at once the intelligences and principles of the being of things.

From the negative and feminine aspect of the longitudinal order of arch-angels, that is, love, dependence, and reception of illumination, there comes into being the heaven of fixed stars which these angels share in common. The stars are the crystallization into subtle matter of that aspect of the archangels which is "Non-Being" or removal from the Light of lights. This "material-ization" marks the boundary between the Orient of pure lights or the archangelic world which lies beyond the visible heavens and the Occident which is comprised of increasing condensations of matter from the luminous heavens to the dense earthly bodies.

The latitudinal order of angels or the archetypes gives rise to another order of angels through which they govern the species. Suhrawardi calls this intermediary order the regent lights (anwar al-mudabbirah) or sometimes anwar ispahbad using a term from ancient Persian chivalry. It is this intermediary order which moves the heavenly spheres the motion of which is by love rather than by nature,⁵³ and which governs the species as the agent of the arche-types for which the species are theurgies (tilimat) or "icons" (asnam).

The ispahbad lights are also the centres of men's souls, each light being the angel of some individual person.⁵⁴ As for mankind itself, its angel is Gabriel. Humanity is an image of this archangel who is the mediator between man and the angelic world and the focus in which the lights of the Orient are concentrated. It is also the instrument of all knowledge inasmuch as it is the means by which man's soul is illuminated.⁵⁵

This archangel as the Holy Spirit is also the first and supreme intelligence and the first as well as the last prophet, Muhammad (upon whom be peace), the archetype of man (rabb al-nau' al-insan) and the supreme revealer of divine knowledge.

The physics and psychology of Hikmat al-Ishraq treat of the world of bodies and the world of souls which, along with the world of the intelligences or angels, comprise the totality of this universe.⁵⁶ As already mentioned, Suhrawardi does not divide bodies into form and matter. Rather, his division of bodies is based on the degree in which they accept light.

All physical bodies are either simple or compound; the simple bodies are divided into three classes: those that prevent light from entering (hajiz), those which permit the entrance of light (latif), and those which permit light to enter in various degrees (muqtasid) and which are themselves divided into several stages.⁵⁷

The heavens are made of the first category in the luminous state. As for the elements below the heavens, they consist of earth belonging to the first category, water to the second, and air to the third.⁵⁸ Compound bodies belong likewise to one of the above categories, depending on which element predominates in them. All bodies are essentially purgatories or isthmus (barzakh) between various degrees of light by which they are illuminated and which they in turn reflect.

Suhrawardi rejects the view that the change of bodies is due to particles of one element entering into those of another. As a reason against this view he cites the example of a jug full of water that has been heated, i. e., according to this view particles of fire have entered into it. The volume of the water, how-ever, does not change since it does not spill over; therefore, particles of fire cannot have entered into it.

Qualitative change is due rather to the coming into being of a quality which is intermediate between the qualities of the original bodies and which is shared by all the particles of the new compound. For example, when water is heated a new quality between the cold of the water and the heat of the fire is brought into being by the light governing the change.

In the explanation of meteorological phenomena, Suhrawardi follows closely the teachings of Ibn Sina and Aristotle in accepting the exhalation and vapour theory. He differs, however, from them in the importance he attaches to light as the cause of all these changes. For example, the heat which is responsible for evaporation is nothing but one of the effects of reflected light. All changes in fact which one observes in the world are caused by various hierarchies of light.⁵⁹

The elements are powerless before the heavens, the heavens are dominated by the souls, the souls by the intelligences, the intelligences by the universal intellect, and the universal intellect by the Light of lights.

The elements or simple bodies combine to form compounds which comprise the mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms, each of which is dominated by a particular light or angel. All that exists in the mineral kingdom is “lighted body” (barzakh nuriyyah) the permanence of which is like that of the heavens.⁶⁰ Gold and various jewels like rubies make man happy because of the light within them which is akin to the soul of man. This light within the minerals is governed by isifandarmudh which is the master of theurgy for earthy sub-stances.

With greater refinement of the mixture of the elements, plants and animals come into being having their own faculties and powers which are so many “organs” of the light governing them. In higher animals and in man who is the most complete terrestrial being these faculties appear in their perfection. Man as the microcosm contains in himself the complete image of the universe, and his body is the gate of life of all elemental bodies. This body in turn is the theurgy for the ispahbad light which governs each man.

All the faculties of the soul are aspects of the light which shines upon all elements of the body and illuminates the powers of imagination and memory for which it is the source. This light is connected with the body by means of the animal soul (ruh hayawaniyyah) the seat of which is in the liver and leaves the body for its original home in the angelic world as soon

as death destroys the equilibrium of the bodily elements. It is the love (mahabbah) of the light which creates the power of desire as it is its domination (qahr) which brings about anger.⁶¹

Suhrawardi draws heavily upon the psychology of Ibn Sina for the enumeration of the faculties of the various souls.⁶² It may be said in fact that with a few changes his classification is the same as that of his famous predecessor, despite the different role which the intellect or light plays in governing and illuminating the various faculties in each case.

The classification of the various faculties of the soul by Suhrawardi may be outlined as follows:⁶³

Vegetative soul (al-nafs al-nabatiyyah):

feeding (ghadhiyyah), growth (namiyyah), reproduction (muwallidah), attraction (jadhilah), retention (masikah), digestion (hadimah), repulsion (dafi'ah)

Animal soul (al-nafs al-hayawaniyyah):

power of motion (muharrikah), power of desire (nuzu'iyah), power of lust (shahwah), power of anger (ghadb).

Man, besides the above faculties and the five external senses, possesses five internal senses which serve as a bridge between the physical and the intelligible worlds and have their counterpart in the macrocosmic order. These senses consist of:

Sensus communis (hiss mushtarik): The centre in which all the data of the external senses are collected. It is located in the front of the frontal cavity of the brain.

Fantasy (khayal): The place of storage for the sensus communis. It is located in the back of the frontal cavity.

Apprehension (wahn): Governs sensible things by what does not belong to the senses. It is located in the middle cavity.

Imagination (mutakhayyilah): Analyses, synthesizes, and governs forms and is sometimes identified with apprehension. It is located in the middle cavity.

Memory (hafizah): The place of storage for apprehension. It is located in the back of the middle cavity.

These faculties are crowned by the intellectual soul (nafs natiqah) which belongs to the spiritual world and which, through the network of these faculties, becomes for a period attached to the body and imprisoned in the fortress of nature. Often it is so lost in this new and temporary habitat that it forgets its original home and can be re-awakened only by death or ascetic practices.⁶⁴

The last section of the Hikmat al-Ishraq concerning eschatology and spiritual union outlines precisely the way by which the spirit returns to its original abode, the way by which the catharsis of the intellect is achieved. Every soul, in whatever degree of perfection it might be, seeks the Light of lights, and its joy is in being illuminated by it. Suhrawardi goes so far as to say that he who has not tasted the joy of the illumination of the victorial lights has tasted no joy at all.⁶⁵ Every joy in the world is a reflection of the

joy of gnosis, and the ultimate felicity of the soul is to reach toward the angelic lights by purification and ascetic practices.

After death the soul of those who have reached some measure of purity departs to the world of archetypes above the visible heavens and participates in the sounds, sights, and tastes of that world which are the principles of terrestrial forms. On the contrary, those whose soul has been tarnished by the darkness of evil and ignorance (ashab al-shaqawah) depart for the world of inverted forms (suwar mu`allaqah) which lies in the labyrinth of fantasy, the dark world of the devils and the jinn.⁶⁶ As for the gnostics or the theosophos (muta'allihin) who have already reached the degree of sanctity in this life, their soul departs to a world above the angels.

After leaving the body, the soul may be in several states which Suhrawardi outlines as follows:⁶⁷

Either the soul is simple and pure like that of children and fools who are attracted neither to this world nor to the next.

Or it is simple but impure and as such is attracted more to this world, so that upon death it suffers greatly by being separated from the object of its desire; gradually, however, it forgets its worldly love and becomes simple as in the first case.

Or it is not simple but perfect and pure and upon death joins the intelligible world to which it is similar and has an undescrivable joy in the contemplation of God.

Or it is complete but impure, so that upon death it suffers greatly both for separation from the body and from the First Source; gradually, how-ever, the pains caused by alienation from this world cease and the soul enjoys spiritual delights.

Or the soul is incomplete but pure, i.e., it has a love for perfection but has not yet realized it; upon death, therefore, it suffers cease-lessly, although the love of this world gradually dies away. Finally, the soul is incomplete and impure, so that it suffers the greatest pain.

Man should, therefore, spend the few days he has here on earth to transform the precious jewel of his soul into the image of an angel and not into that of an animal.

The highest station to be reached by the soul is that of the prophets (nafs qudsiyyah) who perceive the forms of the universals or archetypes naturally. They know all things without the assistance of teachers or books. They hear the sounds of the heavens, i. e., the archetypes of earthly sounds, and not just vibrations of the air, and see the intelligible forms. Their souls and those of great saints also reach such degree of purity that they can influence the world of the elements as the ordinary soul influences the body.⁶⁸ They can even make the archetypes subsist by will, that is, give them existence.

The knowledge of the prophets is the archetype of all knowledge. In his nocturnal Ascension (mi`raj) the Prophet Muhammad - upon whom be peace- - journeyed through all the states of being beyond the universe to the Divine Presence or microcosmically through his soul and intellect to the Divine Self.-⁶⁹ This journey through the hierarchy of Being symbolizes the degrees of know-ledge which the initiate gains as he travels on the Path in imitation of the bringer of revelation who has opened the way for him. A

prophet is absolutely necessary as a guide for the gnostic and as a bringer of Law for society.

Man needs a society in order to survive and society needs law and order and, therefore, prophets to bring news of the other world and to establish harmony among men. The best man is he who knows, and the best of those who know are the prophets, and the best prophets are those who have brought a revelation (mursilin), and the best of them are the prophets whose revelation has spread over the face of the earth, and the completion and perfection of the prophetic cycle is the Prophet Muhammad - upon whom be peace - who is the seal of prophethood.⁷⁰

The Initiatory Narratives

In a series of treatises written in beautiful Persian prose, Suhrawardi expounds another aspect of ishraqi wisdom which is the complement of the metaphysical doctrine. These works which we have called initiatory narratives are symbolic stories depicting the journey of the soul to God much like certain medieval European romances and poems such as Parsifal and the Divine Comedy although of shorter length. Unfortunately, in this limited space we cannot deal with all of these narratives each of which treats of a different aspect of the spiritual journey using various traditional symbols such as the cosmic mountain, the griffin, the fountain of life, and the lover and the be-loved.

Some of the more important of these narratives are the Risalah fi al-Mi`raj (The Treatise on the Nocturnal Journey), Risalah fi Halat al-Tufuliyah (Treatise on the State of Childhood), Ruzi ba Jama'at-i Sufiyan (A Day with the Community of Sufis), Awaz-i Par-i Jibra'il (The Chant of the Wing of Gabriel), 'Aql-i Surkh (The Red Intellect), Safir-i Simurgh (The Song of the Griffin), Lughat-i Muran (The Language of Termites), Risalah al-Tair (The Treatise on the Birds), and Risalah fi Haqiqat al-'Ishq (Treatise on the Reality of Love).

The titles alone indicate some of the rich symbolism which Suhrawardi uses to describe the spiritual journey. Each narrative depicts a certain aspect of the spiritual life as lived and practised by sages and saints. Some-times theory and spiritual experience are combined as in the Awaz-i Par-i-Jibra'il⁷¹ where in the first part of the vision the disciple meets the active intellect, the sage who symbolizes the "prophet" within himself who comes from the "land of nowhere" (na-kuja-abad), and asks certain questions about various aspects of the doctrine.

In the second part, however, the tone changes; the hero asks to be taught the Word of God and after being instructed in the esoteric meaning of letters and words, i. e., jafr, he learns that God has certain major words like the angels, as well as the supreme Word which is to other words as the sun is to the stars. He learns furthermore that man is himself a Word of God, and it is through His Word that man returns to the Creator. He, like other creatures of this world, is a chant of the wing of Gabriel which spreads from the world of light to that of darkness. This world is a shadow of his left wing as the world of light is a reflection of his right wing. It is by the Word, by the sound of the wing of Gabriel, that man has come into existence, and it is by

the Word that he can return to the principal state, the divine origin, from which he issued forth.

The Ishraqi Tradition

The influence of Suhrawardi has been as great in the Islamic world, particularly in Shi'ism, as it has been small in the West. His works were not translated into Latin so that his name hardly ever appears along with those of Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd as masters of philosophy. But in the East from the moment of his death, his genius in establishing a new school of traditional wisdom was recognized and he was to exercise the greatest influence in Shi'ism. With the weakening of Aristotelianism in the sixth/twelfth century the element that came to replace it and to dominate Islamic intellectual life was a combination of the intellectual Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi and the ishraqi wisdom of Suhrawardi.

These two masters who lived within a generation of each other came from the two ends of the Islamic world to Syria, one to die in Damascus and the other in Aleppo, and it was from this central province of Islam that their doctrines were to spread throughout the Muslim East, particularly in Persia. The main link between these two great masters of gnosis was Qutb al-Din Shirazi who was, on the one hand, the disciple of Sadr al-Din Qunawi, himself a disciple and the main expositor of the teachings of Ibn 'Arabi in the East, and, on the other, the commentator of Hikmat al-Ishraq.⁷²

Throughout the last seven centuries the tradition of Ishraq has continued especially in Persia where it played a major role in the survival of Shi'ism during the Safawid period. Among the most important commentaries written on Suhrawardi's works are those of Shams al-Din Shahrazuri and Qutb al-Din Shirazi in the seventh/thirteenth century, Wudud Tabrizi in the tenth/sixteenth century, and Mulla Sadra in the eleventh/seventeenth century on the Hikmat al-Ishraq, the commentaries of Shahrazuri, Ibn Kammunah, and 'Allamah Hilli in the seventh and eighth/thirteenth and fourteenth centuries on the Talwihat, and the commentaries of Jalal al-Din Dawwani in the ninth/fifteenth century and Maula 'Abd al-Razzaq Lahiji in the eleventh/seven-teenth century on the Hayakil al-Nur.

These commentaries and many others which we have not been able to mention here present a veritable treasure of ishraqi wisdom which has influenced so many philosophers, theologians, and gnostics from Khwajah Nasir al-Din Tusi and Dawwani to Mir Damad, Mulla Sadra, Shaikh Ahmad Ahsa'i, and Haji Mulla Hadi Sabziwari. Some of the works of Suhrawardi were also to influence the sages and philosophers in the Mughul Court in India where parts of his writings were even translated into Sanskrit,⁷³ as they were translated into Hebrew some time earlier.

Ishraqi wisdom has, therefore, been one of the universal elements of Eastern intellectuality during the past centuries and, as it is a version of the perennial philosophy, it is touched by the breath of eternity which, as in the case of all expressions of truth, gives it a freshness and actuality that make this wisdom as essential today as it has been through the ages.

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Notes

1. The Arabic word hikmah is neither philosophy as currently understood in modern European language, i.e., one form or another of rationalism, nor theology. It is, properly speaking, theosophy as understood in its original Greek sense and not in any way connected with the pseudo-spiritualistic movements of this century.

It is also sapiential inasmuch as the Latin root Sapere, like the Arabic word dhauq by which this wisdom is known, means taste. Moreover, it can be designated as speculative wisdom because speculum means mirror and this wisdom seeks to make man's soul a mirror in which divine knowledge is reflected.

2. Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi is often called al-Maqtul, meaning he who was killed, since he was put to death for certain indiscreet formulations. We, however, refer to him as Shaikh al-Ishraq by which name he is universally known among his disciples.

3. The best source for the biography of Shihab al-Din is the *Nuzhat al-Arwah wa Raudat al-Afrah* of his disciple and commentator Shams al-Din Shahrzuri. See also O. Spies and S. K. Khattak, *Three Treatises on Mysticism*, Verlag W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, 1935, pp. 90-101; H. Corbin, *Suhrawardi d'Alep fondateur de la doctrine illuminative (ishraqi)*, G. P. Maisonneuve, Paris, 1939.

4. We are most grateful to Prof. M. Minovi and Mr. M. Daneshpazhuh of the University of Teheran and to Dr. M. Bayani, the head of the Teheran National Library, for making these manuscripts available to us.

5. See the introduction in M. Bayani, *Dau Risaleh-i Farsi-i Suhrawardi*, Teheran 1925.

6. We follow in part the classification of H. Corbin, however, with some modifications. See Suhrawardi, *Opera Metaphysica et Mystica*, ed. H. Corbin, Vol. I, Ma`arif Mathaasi, Bibliotheca Islamica, Istanbul, 1945, "Prolegomene," pp. xvi ff.

7. The metaphysical sections of the first three treatises have been published in the first volume of the Opera by Corbin and the complete *Hikmat al-Ishraq* in the second volume entitled *Oeuvres philosophiques et mystiques (Opera Metaphysica et Mystica, II)*, Institut Franco-Iranien, Teheran, and Andrien Maisonneuve, Paris, 1952. Henceforth we shall refer to the two volumes as Opera, Volumes I and II.

8. The treatise *Yazdan Shinakht* has often been attributed to *Ain al-Quddat Hamadani* and its authorship remains in any case doubtful. *Bustan al-Qulub* has also appeared under the name *Raudat al-Qulub* and has been occasionally attributed to *Sayyid Sharif Jurjani*.

9. A commentary upon the *Fusus of Farabi* of which no trace has as yet been found is also attributed to him.

10. The *hakim muta'allih* which Suhrawardi considers himself and other sages before him to be is exactly *theosophos* by which the Greek sages were designated. See the *Prolegomene* by H. Corbin to Suhrawardi's Opera, Vol. II, p. xxiv.

11. Suhrawardi is careful in distinguishing between exoteric Zoroastrians and the sages among Zoroastrians whom he follows. As he writes in *Kalimat al-Tasawwuf*: "There were among the ancient Persians a community of men who were guides towards the Truth and were guided by Him in the Right Path, ancient sages un-like those who are called the Magi. It is their high and illuminated wisdom, to which the spiritual experiences of Plato and his predecessors are also witness, and which we have brought to life again in our book called *Hikmat al-Ishraq*." MS., Ragip, 1480, fol. 407b, Istanbul, cited in H. Corbin, *Les motifs zoroastriens dans la philosophie de Sohrawardi*, Editions du Courrier, Teheran, 1946, p. 24. Also Teheran University Library MS. 1079, pp. 34ff

12. *Mutarahat, Physics*, Book VI, cited by H. Corbin in Suhrawardi, Opera, Vol. I, p. xli.

13. Originally, philosophy like all forms of wisdom consisted of a doctrine, a rite, and a "spiritual alchemy." In Greek civilization the first element gradually separated from the others and became reduced to a theoretical form of knowledge which came to be known as philosophy. In the 55th section of *Talwihat*, Suhrawardi writes how he saw Aristotle, who is most likely Plotinus, the author of the *Theology of Aristotle*, in a dream and asked if the Islamic Peripatetics were the real philosophers. Aristotle answered, "No, a degree in a thousand." Rather the Sufis, Bistami and Tustari, are the real philosophers. Aristotle told Suhrawardi to wake into himself and to pass beyond theoretical knowledge (*'ilm suri*) to effective realization or the "knowledge of presence" (*'ilm huduri* or *shuhudi*). See the *Prolegomene* of H Corbin in Suhrawardi, Opera, Vol. I, p. lxx.

14. Suhrawardi, Opera, Vol. II, pp. 10-11. Some modern interpreters of Suhrawardi have considered him to be anti-Islamic and of Zoroastrian sympathy. A. von Kremer in his *Geschichte der Herrschenden Ideen des Islam*, Leipzig, 1868, pp. 89ff., writes that Suhrawardi was part of the current directed against Islam. On the other hand, the scholarly and sympathetic interpreter of Suhrawardi, H. Corbin, insists on the role of Shaikh al-Ishraq in reviving the philosophy of Zoroastrian Persia and on his sympathy for Zoroastrian and Manichaeism ideas, although he does not consider this revival to be a movement against Islam but rather an integration of ancient Persian myths in "the prism of Islamic spirituality." In any case, all views which consider ishraqi wisdom to be simply a revival of Zoroastrianism or Manichaeism confuse the form with the spirit. There is no doubt that Suhrawardi makes use of Mazdaean symbols especially with regard to angelology, but that is no more reason for calling him Mazdaean than it is to call Jabir ibn Hayyan a follower of Egyptian religion, because he used Hermetic symbols. The only criterion of orthodoxy in Islam is the first shahadah (*la ilaha ill-Allah*) and, according to it, Suhrawardi cannot be said to lie outside the pale of Islam, no matter how strange his formulations may be. Furthermore, the disciples of the Ishraqi school consider the Persian sages of whom Suhrawardi speaks to have lived before Plato and Pythagoras and not during the Sassanid

period. The genius of Islam to integrate diverse elements into itself is evident here as elsewhere and should not be interpreted as a sign of departure from the straight path (*sirat al-mustaqim*) or the universal orthodoxy which embraces all the perspectives within the tradition. The vocation of Islam is the re-establishment of the primordial tradition so that all the streams of the ancient religions and cultures have flowed into it without in any way destroying its purity.

15. Ibn Sina, *Mashriq al-Mantiqiyyin*, Cairo 1338/1919, pp.2-4.

16. A. Nallino, "Filosofia 'orientali' od 'illuminativa' d'Avicenna," *Rivista degli studi orientali*, Vol. X, 1925, pp. 433-67. H. Corbin rightly emphasizes the illuminative as well as the Oriental aspect of Ibn Sina's Oriental wisdom and its profound connection with the Ishraqi school of Suhrawardi. See Corbin, *Avicenne et Lericit visionnaire*, Institut Franco-Iranien, Teheran, 1952-54, Vol. I, Introduction, p. iii.

17. Suhrawardi, *Opera*, Vol. I, p. 195

18. In European languages the word "orient" means both the east and the placing of oneself in the right direction, and refers to the same symbolism.

19. As Corbin states, "Ishraq is a knowledge which is Oriental because it is itself the Orient of knowledge." Suhrawardi, *Opera*, Vol. I, p. xxix.

20. Throughout our writings we use the word "intellect" as the instrument of gnosis, of direct intuitive knowledge where the knower and the known become identical, and distinguish it from reason which is its passive reflection.

21. Ibn Wahshiyyah, *Ancient Alphabet and Hieroglyphic Characters*, London, 1806, p. 100. These historical connections are discussed by H. Corbin in *Les motifs zoroastriens dans la philosophie de Sohrawardi*, Editions du Courier, Teheran, 1325 Solar, p. 18, and the *Prolegomene to Suhrawardi*, *Opera*, Vol.I, pp. xxv ff. We are indebted to him for drawing our attention to them.

22. Suhrawardi, *Opera*, Vol. I, pp. 502-03.

23. Suhrawardi is considering only the Peripatetic aspect of Ibn Sina.

24. Suhrawardi, *Opera*, Vol. II, pp. 10-11. Actually, the stations mentioned are more numerous; we have described only the major ones.

25. Suhrawardi, *Risaleh Safir-i Simurgh*, MS. Teheran National Library, 1758, pp. 11-12

26. In this same treatise Suhrawardi writes that the most noble knowledge is gnosis which lies above human reason. As he says, "To seek the knowledge of God through reason is like seeking the sun with a lamp." *Ibid.*, p. 14

27. There is a profound correspondence between the microcosm and the macro-cosm in all traditional wisdom so that the inward journey of man through the centre of his being corresponds to a journey through the various stages of the universe and finally beyond it. To escape from the prison of the lower soul (*nafs ammarah*) is also to pass beyond the crypt of the cosmos.

28. Suhrawardi, *Opera*, Vol. II, pp. 274ff

29. It is said that when Christian. Rosenkreutz, the founder of the order of the Rosy-Cross, abandoned Europe, he retired to the Yaman.

30. Suhrawardi indicates here the main technique of Sufism which is the invocation (*dhikr*) of one of the names of God and which Sufi masters call the sacred barque that carries man across the ocean of the spiritual path to the shore of the spiritual world.

31. These fourteen powers are: Attraction, retention, purgation, repulsion digestion, growth, sleep, imagination, anger, lust, and the four humours

32. The inward journey beyond the carnal soul (*nafs*) corresponding externally to the journey beyond the visible universe is described by the Ishraqis symbolically as reaching the fountain of life in which there are found the jewels of the purely spiritual world.

33. Suhrawardi, *Opera*, Vol. II, p. 296.

34. The inspiration for the book came to the author on an auspicious day when all the seven planets were in conjunction in the Sign of the Balance.

35. Suhrawardi writes that he who wishes to understand the essence of this work should spend forty days in a retreat (*khalwah*) occupying himself only with invocation (*dhikr*) under the direction of the spiritual guide whom he calls in several places *qa'im bi al-Kitab*.

36. For his criticism, see Suhrawardi, *Opera*, Vol. II, pp. 46ff

37. The term mahiyyah in Arabic is composed of ma meaning “what” and hiyyah derived from the word huwa (“it”). It is the answer given to the question “What is it?” It is used to denote the essence of anything whether the existence of that thing is certain or doubtful, while the word dhat is used to denote the essence of something which possesses some degree of being. In Islamic philosophy reality is understood in terms of wujud and mahiyyah, the latter meaning the limitation placed upon Being and identified with the Platonic ideas. See. S. H. Nasr, “The Polarisation of Being” [Proceedings of the Sixth] Pakistan Philosophical Congress, Lahore, 1959, pp. 50-55.

38. For a general discussion of this subject in the philosophy of the master of the Masha'is, Ibn Sina, see A. M. Goichon, *La distinction d l'essence et de l'existence d'apres Ibn Sina (Avicenne)*, de Brouwer Descles, Paris, 1937.

39. In fact, as Mulla Sadra asserts, Suhrawardi substitutes light (nur) for Being, attributing the former with all the features which the latter term possesses in other schools. We are deeply indebted for the knowledge of this interpretation and many other essential elements of ishraqi doctrines to one of the greatest masters of traditional wisdom in Persia, Sayyid Muhammad Kazim `Assar.

40. Although in his *Hikmat al-Ishraq*, Suhrawardi does not speak of the necessary and possible beings, in many of his other treatises like the *Partau-Narneh*, *Γteqad al-Hukama'* and *Yazdan Shinakht*, he speaks of the masha'i categories of Necessary Being. (wajib al-wujud), possible being (mumkin al-wujud), and impossible being (mumtani' al-wujud).

41. Suhrawardi defines a substance in masha'i fashion as that possible being (mumkin) which has no place (mahall), and accident as that possible being which does have a place. He also defines a body as that substance which has height, width, and depth. *Partau-Nameh*, MS., Teheran National Library, 1257, pp. 190ff.

42. In his works Suhrawardi insists on the perishable nature of the body and its being a prison into which the soul has fallen. In the *Bustan al-Qulub*, MS., Teheran Sipahsalar Library, 2911, he gives as argument for the permanence of the soul and its spiritual nature, the fact that the body of man changes its material every few years while man's identity remains unchanged. The masha'i doctrine of the soul is essentially one of defining its faculties; the ishraqi view is to find the way by which the soul can escape its bodily prison.

43. Suhrawardi, *Opera*, Vol. II, pp. 106-21.

44. As the quotations we have already cited demonstrate, Suhrawardi insists that he is not dealing with the dualism of the Zoroastrians. Rather, he is explaining the mysterious polarization of reality in this symbolism. The Ishraqis usually interpret light as Being and darkness as determination by ideas (mahiyyah). They say that all ancient sages taught this same truth but in different languages. Hermes spoke of Osiris and Isis; Osiris or the sun symbolizes Being and Isis or the moon, mahiyyah. They interpret the pre-Socratic Greek philosophers in the same fashion.

45. Actually this term means both the divine essence and its first determination which is the archangel or the universal intellect.

46. “The immense panorama of diversity which we call the Universe is, therefore, a vast shadow of the infinite variety in intensity of direct or indirect illuminations of rays of the Primary Light.” Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, Luzac & Co., London, 1908, p. 135.

47. In his *Risaleh Yazdan Shinakht*, *Matba`-i `Ilmi*, Teheran, 1316 Solar, pp. 13ff., Suhrawardi divides comprehension (idrak) into four categories: - (i) Sense of sight which perceives external forms like colours, etc. (ii) Imagination (khayal) which perceives images not depending upon external objects. (iii) Apprehension (wahm) which is stronger than the other two and which perceives the meaning of sensible things, but, like the other two, cannot be separated from the matter of bodies. (iv) Intellectual apprehension (‘aql) the seat of which is the heart, the instrument which is a bridge between the human being and the intellectual world, and perceives intellectual realities, the world of angels, and the spirit of prophets and sages.

48. Suhrawardi, *Opera*, Vol. II, pp. 131-32

49. Ibn Sina, *Najat*, MS. al-Kurdi, Cairo, 1938, pp. 256-57.

50. Suhrawardi, *Opera*, Vol. II, pp. 133ff. Also *Prolegomene*, II, pp. 42ff. In ishraqi wisdom all of the cosmic hierarchies are understood in terms of a series of illumina-tions (ishraqat) and contemplation (shuhud), the first being a descent and the second an ascent.

51. Usually in medieval cosmology the elements, the acceptors of form, are called the 'mothers' and the celestial orbits, the givers of form, the "fathers." The term "mothers" used by Suhrawardi to designate the archangelic world should not, therefore, be confused with the elements.

52. Suhrawardi, Opera, Vol. II, pp. 157ff. Also H. Corbin, Les motifs Zoroastrien dans la philosophie de Sohrawardi, Editions du Courier, Teheran, 1325 Solar, Chap. I.

53. The governing light of the heavens moves each heaven by means of the planet attached to it, which is like the organ of the light. Suhrawardi calls this mover hurakhsh which is the Pahlawi name for the sun, the greatest of the heavenly lights. Suhrawardi, Opera, Vol. II, p. 149. Regarding the motion of each heaven, Suhrawardi writes, "Its illumination is the cause of its motion, and its motion is the cause of another illumination; the persistence of the illuminations is the cause of the persistence of motion, and the persistence of both the cause of the persistence of the events in this world." Hayakil al-Nur, MS. Istanbul, Fatih, 5426, Part 5.

54. Each being in this world, including man is connected to the Supreme Light not only through the intermediary angels but also directly. This light which connects each being directly to the Divine Light and places that being in the hierarchy of beings at a place proper to it is called khurrah. In ancient Persia it was believed that when a new king was to be chosen, the royal khurrah would descend upon him and distinguish him from the other pretenders to the throne.

55. Suhrawardi describes Gabriel as one of the supreme archangels who is the archetype of the "rational species" (nau` natiq), the giver of life, knowledge, and virtue. He is also called the giver of the spirit (rawan bakhsh) and the Holy Spirit (ruh al-qudus). Suhrawardi, Opera, Vol. II, p. 201.

56. In the I'tiqad al-Hukama' and Partau-Nameh, Suhrawardi divides the universe into the world of intelligences (`alam al-'uql or `alam al-jabarut), the world of souls (`alam at-nufus or `alam al-malakut), and the world of bodies (`alam al-ajsam or `alam al-muluk). Also *ibid.*, p. 270

57. *Ibid.* p.187.

58. Suhrawardi considers fire, the fourth of the traditional elements, to be a form of light and theurgy of urdibihisht, and not one of the terrestrial elements.

59. Suhrawardi gives a different meaning to causality than the Aristotelians' whose four causes which he does not accept. For Suhrawardi all these causes are really nothing but light, i. e., everything is made of light and by light, and is given a form by the archangelic light whom he calls the "giver of forms" (wahib al-suwar) and seeks the Light of lights as its goal and end.

60. Suhrawardi, Opera, Vol. II, pp. 199-200

61. *Ibid.*, pp.204-09.

62. Ibn Sina, Psychologie v Jehe dile as-Sifa, ed. J. Bakos, Editions de l'Academie Tchecoslovaque des Sciences, Prague, 1956, Vol. I, pp. 53ff.

63. Suhrawardi, Partau-Nameh, pp.190ff.

64. Suhrawardi, Hayakil al-Nur, Sections 6 and 7. In certain other writings Suhrawardi avers that the light of each man is created with his body but survives after it. By creation, however, Suhrawardi means essentially "individualization" and "actualization" rather than creation in the ordinary sense. There is no doubt that his basic teaching is that the spirit or soul comes from the world of light and ultimately returns to it.

65. Suhrawardi, Opera, Vol. II, p. 225

66. This is, properly speaking, the world of the unconscious which has become the subject of study for modern psychologists. It should be clearly distinguished from the world of archetypes which, rather than the "collective unconscious," is the source of symbols.

67. Suhrawardi, Risaleh Yazdan Shinakht, pp.53-63.

68. *Ibid.*, pp. 66ff. Since human souls are brought into being by the celestial souls they are able to acquire the knowledge which these heavenly souls possess when they are put before them as a mirror. In the dreams of ordinary men this effect occurs occasionally since the external and internal senses which are the veils of the soul are partially lifted. In the case of prophets and saints such effects occur in awakening, i.e., they always reflect the intelligible world in the mirror of their souls so that they have knowledge of the unmanifested world even when awake.

69. The journey to the spring of life which lies at the boundary of the visible heavens symbolizes the journey through the soul (nafs), while the journey to the cosmic mountain Qaf from which the spring flows and the ascent of this mountain which lies above the visible heavens symbolize the inner journey to the centre of one's being. In his *Mi`raj-Nameh*, Suhrawardi describes the symbolic meaning of the nocturnal Ascension of the Prophet which is the model that all Sufis seem to imitate.

70. Suhrawardi, *Risaleh Yazdan Shinakht*, pp. 81-82

71. For the translation into French and analysis of this work, see H. Corbin and P. Kraus, "Le bruissement de l'aile de Gabriel," *Journal Asiatique*, July-Sept.1935, pp. 1-82.

72. This commentary, finished in 694/1295, appears on the margin of the standard edition of *Hikmat al-Ishraq* which is studied in all the theological schools in present-day Persia. It has been the means by which the doctrines of Suhrawardi have been interpreted through the centuries.

73. Corbin and certain other European scholars have also emphasized the role of ishraqi wisdom in the tenth/sixteenth-century Zoroastrianism and the movement connected with the name of Azar Kaiwan. This curious eclectic movement in which elements of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Zoroastrianism are combined but which differs greatly from original Zoroastrian doctrines has left behind several works like the *Dabistan al-Madhahib* and the *Dasatir* some passages of which seem to be forged. Such a leading scholar of Zoroastrianism as I. Poure-Davoud considers the whole work to be purposeful falsification. See his article "Dasatir", *Iran-i Imruz*, second year, No. II.

Whatever importance this syncretic movement which is so similar to the religious movements at the Court of Akbar may have had, its followers paid great attention to the writings of *Hikmat al-Ishraq*. In fact, one of the disciples of Azar Kaiwan by the name of Farzanih Bahram ibn Farshad translated several works of Suhrawardi into Persian. For a discussion of the school of Azar Kaiwan, see M. Mu`in, "Azar Kaiwan wa Pairuwan-i ,u," *Revue de la Faculte des Letters, Teheran Uni-versity*, Vol. IV, No. 3, 1336/1917, pp. 25-42.

Chapter 20: Ibn `Arabi

By A.E. Affifi

Life And Works

A fair and critical account of the life and thought of Shaikh Muhyi al-Din ibn al-'Arabi (or Ibn 'Arabi as he was known in the East) presents certain difficulties. Biographical material is not lacking; he is given great prominence in many of the biographical and historical books, both in Arabic and Persian. Some whole books and chapters of books have been written in defence of his orthodoxy or against his alleged heterodoxy. Many of his own works, particularly the Futuhat, Risalat al-Quds, and the "Memorandum" in which he enumerates his works and describes the conditions under which they were written, throw abundant light on some of the obscure aspects of his life as a man, and above all as an eminent Sufi and Sufi author.

But the account we derive from all these various sources is conflicting, and the real problem that faces us lies in drawing a true picture of his personality, his pattern of thought, and his works, based on such account. Yet as far as his personal life and his mental and spiritual make-up are concerned, our best source should be his own works to which we have already referred; for in such works we have first-hand information about his mental and spiritual progress.

There are also abundant details concerning his early masters in the Sufi Path, his personal contacts with the men and women he encountered on his vast travels. Here and there we come across a vivid description of his mystical experiences, visions, and dreams. Without the help of such material which has hitherto been neglected, Ibn 'Arabi's true personality, both as a thinker and a mystic, would remain considerably unknown to us.

The task is by no means easy. It means hunting through his voluminous Futuhat and other works for the biographical details we have just described. An outline of the main historical facts of his life is easy enough to give, but it would be no complete or scientific biography in the full sense of the word.

Ibn 'Arabi was born at Murcia - South-east of Spain - on the 17th of Ramadan 560/28th of July 1165. His nisbah - al-Hatimi al-Ta'i - shows that he was a descendant of the ancient Arab tribe of Tayy - a fact which proves that Muslim mysticism was not the exclusive heritage of the Persian mind as some scholars maintain. He came from a family well known for their piety. His father and two of his uncles were Sufis of some renown.

He received his early education at Seville which was a great centre of learning at the time. There he remained for thirty years studying under some of the great scholars of that city such as Abu Bakr b. Khalaf, Ibn Zarqun, and Abi Muhammad 'Abd al-Haqq al-Ishbili. At Seville he also met a number of his early spiritual masters such as Yusuf b. Khalaf al-Qumi who was a personal disciple of Shaikh Abu Madyan,¹ and Salih al-`Adawi whom he describes as a perfect ascetic. He refers to such men in terms of admiration and gratitude in his Futuhat and Risalat al-Quds, and acknowledges, his debt to them for the initiation he had received from them into the Path of Sufism.

While making Seville his permanent place of residence, he travelled widely throughout Spain and Maghrib establishing wherever he went fresh relations with eminent Sufis and other men of learning. He visited Cordova, while still a lad, and made acquaintance with Ibn Rushd, the philosopher, who was then the judge of the city.²

In 590/1194 he visited Fez and Morocco. At the age of 38, i.e., in 589/1193, he set out for the East during the reign of Ya`qub b. Yusuf b. 'Abd al-Mu'min, the Sultan of Africa and Andalusia. His apparent intention was to perform his pilgrimage, but his real aim was perhaps to seek settlement in another country far away from the very much troubled West. The political and religious atmosphere there was stifling, and men like Ibn 'Arabi. were looked upon with suspicion both by the narrow-minded theologians and the ruling monarchs. The Sultans of the Muwahhids and Murabits feared them for the influence they had over their followers and the possible danger of using these followers for political purposes as was the case with Abu al-Qasim b. Qasi, head of the Muridin, who was killed in 546/1151.

The Maliki theologians of the West were most intolerant towards the new school of thought that was beginning to take shape at the time. Even al-Ghazali's teaching was rejected and his books committed to the flames. The East, on the other hand, was more tolerant and more ready to accept new ideas and movements. Yet not the whole of the East can be said to be so, for when Ibn 'Arabi visited Egypt in 598/1201, he was ill-received by some of its people and an attempt was made on his life.

After leaving Egypt he travelled far and wide throughout the Middle East visiting Jerusalem, Mecca (where he studied and taught Hadith for a time), the Hijaz, Baghdad, Aleppo, and Asia Minor. He finally settled down in Damascus until he died on the 28th of Rabi al-Thani 638/17th of November 1240. He was buried in Mount Qasiyun in the private sepulchre of Qadi Muhyi al-Din b. al-Dhaki.³

Ibn 'Arabi is one of the most prolific authors in Muslim history. He is adequately described by Brockelmann⁴ as a writer of colossal fecundity. There are at least 140 extant works which bear his name, varying from short treatises of some few pages to voluminous books like the Futuhat. The exact number of his works is uncertain. Sha`rani gives the figure of 400,⁵ and the Persian author Jami, the much exaggerated figure of 500.⁶ Muhammad Rajab Hilmi, in a book entitled al-Burhan al-Azhar fi Manaqib al-Shaikh al-Akbar, enumerates 284 books and tracts.

In the "Memorandum" which Ibn 'Arabi himself drew up in the year 632/1234, six years before his death, he gave the titles of 251 of his writings and said that that was as far as he could remember. The writing of the "Memorandum" has its significance. It provides a written evidence against anyone who might attempt to forge books in his name; and there must have been many amongst his enemies in the East who made such attempts.

To establish the identity and authenticity of all the works that have been ascribed to him is a task which has not been undertaken by any scholar yet. But we know within limits the genuineness of most of his major works, although doubt might arise with regard to certain parts of their contents. If

what Sha`rani says about the Futuhat is true, it would make us wonder how much of this most important book is genuinely Ibn 'Arabi's and how much of it is foisted upon him.⁷

When he tried to summarize the Futuhat, Sha`rani said, he came across certain passages which he thought were in conflict with the established opinions of the orthodox Muslims. He omitted them after some hesitation. One day, he was discussing the matter with Shaikh Shams al-Din al-Madani (d. 955/1648) who produced a copy of the Futuhat which had been collated with Ibn 'Arabi's own MS. of the book at Qunyah. On reading it he discovered that it contained none of the passages which he had omitted. This convinced him, he goes on to say, that the copies of the Futuhat which were in current use in Egypt in his time contained parts which had been foisted upon the author as done in the case of the Fusus and other works.⁸

This may very well have been the case, but having not yet read the Qunyah MS. of the Futuhat which is still extant, one is unable to say how it compares with the printed texts of our time. A critical edition of the book based on the Qunyah MS. is of utmost importance. Indeed it might considerably alter our knowledge of Ibn 'Arabi's mystical philosophy.

What seems more certain is that many works or parts of works were written by later disciples of Ibn 'Arabi's school and attributed to him; and many others were extracted from his larger works and given independent titles. All these exhibit the same strain of thought and technique which characterize his genuine works. Such facts account, partly at least, for the enormous number of works which are usually attributed to him.

Although his output was mainly in the field of Sufism, his writings seem to have covered the entire range of Muslim scholarship. He wrote on the theory and practice of Sufism, Hadith, Qur'anic exegesis, the biography of the Prophet, philosophy, literature, including Sufi poetry, and natural sciences. In dealing with these diverse subjects he never lost sight of mysticism. We often see some aspects of his mystical system coming into prominence while dealing with a theological, juristic, or even scientific problem. His mystical ideas are imperceptibly woven into his writings on other sciences and make it all the more difficult to understand him from a mixed and inconsistent terminology.

The dates of only ten of his works are definitely known, but we can tell, within limits, whether a work belongs to his early life in Spain and al-Maghrib, or, to his later life in the East. With a few exceptions, most of his important works were written after he had left his native land, principally at Mecca and Damascus; and his maturest works like Futuhat, the Fusus, and the Tanazzulat were written during the last thirty years of his life.

His earlier works, on the other hand, are more of the nature of monographs written on single topics and show no sign of a comprehensive philosophical system. It seems that it is his contact with the resources and men of the East that gave his theosophical speculations their wide range, and his mystical system of philosophy its finality.

His opus magnum, as far as mystical philosophy is concerned, is his celebrated Fusus al-Hikam (Gems of Philosophy or Bezels of Wisdom) which he finished at Damascus in 628/1230, ten years before his death. The

rudiments of this philosophy are to be found scattered throughout his monumental Futuhat which he started at Mecca in 598/1201 and finished about 635/1237. The general theme of the Fusus was foreshadowed in the Futuhat in more places than one, and more particularly in Vol. II, pp. 357-77.

Pattern Of Thought And Style

The extraordinary complexity of Ibn 'Arabi's personality is a sufficient explanation of the complexity of the manner of his thinking and his style of writing. It is true that sometimes he is clear and straightforward, but more often - particularly when he plunges into metaphysical speculations - his style becomes twisted and baffling, and his ideas almost intractable. The difficulty of understanding him sometimes can even be felt by scholars who are well acquainted with the characteristic aspect of his thought. It is not so much what he intends to say as the way in which he actually says it that constitutes the real difficulty.

He has an impossible problem to solve, viz., to reconcile a pantheistic theory of the nature of reality with the monotheistic doctrine of Islam. His loyalty to both was equal, and indeed he saw no contradiction in holding that the God of Islam is identical with the One who is the essence and ultimate ground of all things. He was a pious ascetic and a mystic, besides being a scholar of Muslim Law, theology, and philosophy. His writings are a curious blend of all these subjects.

He is for ever trying either to interpret the whole fabric of the teaching of Islam in the light of his pantheistic theory of the unity of all being, or to find justification for this theory in some Islamic texts. The two methods go hand in hand, with two different languages, i. e., the esoteric language of mysticism and the exoteric language of religion, used con-currently. Logically speaking, Islam is irreconcilable with any form of panthe-ism, but Ibn 'Arabi finds in the mystic experience a higher synthesis in which Allah and the pantheistic One are reconciled.

Interpretation within reasonable limits is justifiable, but with Ibn 'Arabi it is a dangerous means of converting Islam into pantheism or vice versa. This is most apparent in the Fusus, and to a certain extent in the Futuhat, where the Qur'anic text and traditions of the Prophet are explained mystically or rather pantheistically. Furthermore, while he is thus occupied with eliciting from the Qur'anic text his own ideas, he gathers round the subject in hand material drawn from all sources and brings it all into the range of his meditation. This accounts for the very extensive and inconsistent vocabulary which makes his writings almost un-intelligible.

Whenever he is challenged or he thinks he would be challenged about the meaning of a certain statement, he at once brings forth another meaning which would convince the challenger. He was asked what he meant by saying:

“O Thou who seest me, while I see not Thee, How oft I see Him, while He sees not me!”

He replied at once, making the following additions which completely altered the original sense, by saying.

“O Thou who seest me ever prone to sin, While Thee I see not willing to upbraid: How oft I see Him grant His grace's aid While He sees me not seeking grace to win.”⁹

Similarly, when his contemporaries read his *Tarjuman al-Ashwaq*, which is supposed to be written on divine love, they could see in the *Diwan* nothing but erotic poems describing beautiful women, lovely scenes of nature and ordinary human passions. They accused the Shaikh of being in love with Shaikh Makin al-Din's daughter whose physical and moral qualities he describes in the introduction of the *Diwan*.

On hearing this he wrote a commentary on the work explaining it all allegorically. He did not deny that he loved al-Nizam, the beautiful daughter of Makin al-Din. What he denied was that he loved her in the ordinary sense of human love. For him she was only a symbol, a form, of the all-pervading beauty which manifests itself in the infinite variety of things.

“Every name I mention,” he says, “refers to her; and every dwelling I weep at is her dwelling ... Yet the words of my verses are nothing but signs for the spiritual realities which descend upon my heart. May God guard the reader of this *Diwan* against entertaining thoughts which do not become men with noble souls and lofty aspirations, for the hearts of such men are only occupied with heavenly things.”¹⁰

It is not improbable that Ibn 'Arabi made a deliberate effort to complicate the style, as Professor E. G. Browne remarks, in order to conceal his ideas from the narrow-minded orthodox and the uninitiated. He certainly succeeded, partly at least, in covering his pantheistic ideas with an apparel of Qur'anic texts and Prophetic traditions - a fact which is largely responsible for the controversy which raged throughout the Muslim world regarding his orthodoxy. But it is also possible, as we have already remarked, that he was equally con-vinced of the truth of Islam and of his own philosophical system which was verified by his mystical experience. In this case there is no need to talk about concealment of ideas or intentional complexity of style.

It would be a mistake to judge Ibn 'Arabi by the ordinary canons of logic. He is undoubtedly a thinker and founder of a school of thought, but he is pre-eminently a mystic. His mystical philosophy, therefore, represents the union of thought and emotion in the highest degree. It is a curious blend of reasoned truths and intuitive knowledge. He is also a man of colossal imagi-nation. His dialectical reasoning is never free from forceful imagery and mystic emotions. In fact, his thought seems to be working through his imagination all the time. He dreams what he thinks, yet there is a deep under-current of reasoning running through.

He does not always prove his ideas with a formal dialectic, but refers his readers to mystic intuition and imagination as the final proof of their validity. The world of imagination for him is a real world; perhaps even more real than the external world of concrete objects. It is a world in which true knowledge of things can be obtained. His own imagination was as active in his dreams as in his waking life.

He tells us the dates when and the places where he had the visions, in which he saw prophets and saints and discoursed with them; and others in which a whole book like the *Fusus* was handed to him by the Prophet Muhammad who bade him “take it and go forth with it to people that they may make use thereof.”¹¹ He calls this an act of revelation or inspiration and claims that many of his books were so inspired.¹²

“All that I put down in my books,” he says, “is not the result of thinking or discursive reasoning. It is communicated to me through the breathing of the angel of revelation in my heart.”¹³ “All that I have written and what I am writing now is dictated to me through the breathing of the divine spirit into my spirit. This is my privilege as an heir not as an independent source; for the breathing of the spirit is a degree lower than the verbal inspiration.”¹⁴

Such claims point to a supernatural or supermental source by which Ibn 'Arabi's writings were inspired. Yet in discussing the problem of revelation (*kashf* and *wahi*) in general, he emphatically denies all outside supernatural agents, and regards revelation as something which springs from the nature of man. Here are his own words:

“So, if any man of revelation should behold an object revealing to him gnosis which he did not have before, or giving him something of which he had no possession, this `object' is his own 'ain (essence) and naught besides. Thus from the tree of his 'self' he gathers the fruit of his own knowledge, just as the image of him who stands before a polished mirror is no other than himself.”¹⁵

Revelation, therefore, is an activity of man's, soul, when all its spiritual powers are summoned and directed towards production. It is not due to an external agent, neither is it the work of the mind as we usually know it. What is sometimes seen as an “object” revealing knowledge to an inspired man is nothing but a projection of his own “self.”

Ibn 'Arabi is quite consistent with himself when he denies an outside source of divine inspiration, for man, according to him, like everything else, is in one sense divine. So there is no need to assume a duality of a divine revealer and a human receiver of knowledge.

Another very important aspect of his thought is its digressive character. He has offered the world a system of mystical philosophy, but nowhere in his books can we find this system explained as a whole or with any appreciable degree of unity or cohesion. He goes on from one subject to another with no apparent logical connection, pouring out details which he draws from every conceivable source. His philosophical ideas are widely spread among this mass of irrelevant material and one has to pick them up and piece them together.

That he has a definite system of mystical philosophy is a fact beyond doubt. It is hinted at in every page in the *Fusus* and in many parts of the *Futuh*; but the system as a complete whole is to be found in neither. It is extraordinary that he admits that he has intentionally concealed his special theory by scattering its component parts throughout his books and left the task of assembling it to the intelligent reader. Speaking of the doctrine of the super-elect (by which he means the doctrine of the Unity of all Being), he says:

“I have never treated it as a single subject on account of its abstruse-ness, but dispersed it throughout the chapters of my book (the Futuhat). It is there complete but diffused, as I have already said. The intelligent reader who understands it will be able to recognize it and distinguish it from any other doctrine. It is the ultimate truth beyond which there is nothing to obtain.”¹⁶

The third aspect of his thought is its eclectic character. Although he may rightly claim to have a philosophy of religion of his own, many of the component elements of this philosophy are derived from Islamic as well as non-Islamic sources. He had before him the enormous wealth of Muslim sciences as well as the treasures of Greek thought which were transmitted through Muslim philosophers and theologians. In addition, he was thoroughly familiar with the literature of earlier Sufis.

From all these sources he borrowed what-ever was pertinent to his system; and with his special technique of interpretation he brought whatever he borrowed into line with his own ideas. He read into the technical terms of traditional philosophy and theology - as he did with the Qur'anic terms - totally different meanings. He borrowed from Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Philo, and the Neo-Platonists terms of which he found equivalents in the Qur'an or in the writings of the Sufis and Scholastic Theologians. All were used for the construction and defence of his own philosophy from which he never wavered.

Controversy About His Orthodoxy

There has never been in the whole history of Islam another man whose faith has been so much in question. The controversy over Ibn 'Arabi's orthodoxy spread far and wide, and occupied the minds of the Muslims for centuries. We may even say that some traces of it are still to be found. Muslim scholars in the past were not concerned with his philosophy or mysticism as such, but with how far his philosophical and mystical ideas were in harmony or dis-harmony with the established dogmas of Islam. Instead of studying him objectively and impartially, and putting him in the place he deserves in the general frame of Muslim history, they spent so much time and energy in trying to prove or disprove his orthodoxy. No work could have been more futile and unrewarding.

The difference of opinion on this subject is enormous. By some Ibn 'Arabi is considered to be one of the greatest figures of Islam as an author and a Sufi, while others regard him as a heretic and impostor. His peculiar style perhaps is largely responsible for this. The ambiguity of his language and complexity of his thoughts render his ideas almost intractable, particularly to those who are not familiar with his intricate ways of expression. He is a writer who pays more attention to ideas and subtle shades of mystical feelings than to words. We must, therefore, attempt to grasp the ideas which lie hidden beneath the surface of his conventional terminology. Again, we must not forget that he is a mystic who expresses his ineffable experience - as most mystics do - in enigmatic language. Enigmas are hard to fathom, but they are the external expression of the feelings that lie deep in the heart of the mystic.

People who read Ibn 'Arabi's books with their eyes fixed on the words mis-understand him and misjudge him. It is these who usually charge him

with infidelity (kufr) or at least with heresy. Others who grasp his real intention uphold him as a great mystic and a man of God. A third class suspends their judgment on him on the ground that he spoke in a language which is far beyond their ken. They have nothing to say against his moral or religious life, for this, they hold, was beyond reproach.

It seems that the controversy about his religious beliefs started when a certain Jamal al-Din b. al-Khayyat from the Yemen made an appeal to the `ulama' of different parts of the Muslim world asking them to give their opinion on Ibn 'Arabi to whom he attributed what Firuzabadi describes as heretical beliefs and doctrines which are contrary to the consensus of the Muslim community.

The reaction caused by the appeal was extraordinarily varied. Some writers condemned Ibn 'Arabi right out; others defended him with great zeal. Of this latter class we may mention Firuzabadi, Siraj al-Din al--Makhzumi, al-Siraj al-Balqini, Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, Qutb al-Din al-Hamawi, al-Qutb al-Shirazi, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, and many others. Both Makhzumi and Suyuti wrote books on the subject. They could see no fault with Ibn 'Arabi except that he was misunderstood by people who were not of his spiritual rank.

Suyuti puts him in a rank higher than that of Junaid when he says that he was the instructor of the gnostics (`arifin) while Junaid was the instructor of the initiates (muridin). All these men are unanimous in according to Ibn 'Arabi the highest place both in learning and spiritual leadership. They recognize in his writings a perfect balance between Shari'ah (religious Law) and Haqiqah (the true spirit of the Law), or between the esoteric and exoteric aspects of Islam.

The greatest opposition appeared in the eighth and ninth/fourteenth and fifteenth centuries when an open war was declared against speculative Sufism in general and that of Ibn 'Arabi and Ibn al-Farid in particular. The Hanbalite Ibn Taimiyyah (d. 728/ 1328), with his bitter tongue and uncompromising attitude towards the Sufis, led the attack. He put these two great mystics in the same category with Hallaj, Qunawi, Ibn Sab`in, Tilimsani, and Kirmani as men who believed in incarnation and unification. In this respect, he said, they were even worse than the Christians and the extreme Shi`ites.¹⁷

He does not even distinguish between the mystical ravings of Hallaj, the deeply emotional utterances of Ibn al-Farid, the cold-blooded and almost materialistic pantheism of Tilimsani, and the monistic theology of Ibn 'Arabi. They were all guilty of the abominable doctrines of incarnationism and pantheism. Curiously enough, he was less violent in his criticism of Ibn 'Arabi's doctrine which, he said, was nearer Islam than any of the others.

By far the worst enemy of Ibn 'Arabi and Ibn al-Farid and most insolent towards them was Burhan al-Din Ibrahim al-Biq'a'i (d. 858/1454). He devoted two complete books to the refutation of their doctrines, not sparing even their personal characters. In one of these books entitled *Tanbih al-Ghabi 'ala Takfir Ibn `Arabi*¹⁸ (Drawing the Attention of the Ignorant to the Infidelity of Ibn 'Arabi) he says:

“He deceived the true believers by pretending to be one of them. He made his stand on the ground of their beliefs; but gradually dragged them into narrow corners, and led them by seduction to places where perplexing questions are lurking. He is the greatest artist in confusing people; quotes authentic traditions of the Prophet, then twists them around in strange and mysterious ways. Thus, he leads his misguided followers to his ultimate objective which is the complete overthrowing of all religion and religious beliefs. The upholders of such doctrines hide themselves behind an outward appearance of Muslim ritual such as prayer and fasting. They are in fact atheists in the cloaks of monks and ascetics, and veritable heretics under the name of Sufis.”¹⁹

These accusations are unjust as they are unfounded. Ibn 'Arabi, it is true, does interpret the Qur'an and Prophetic traditions in an esoteric manner, and he is not the first or the last Sufi to do it, but his ultimate aim is never the abandonment of religious beliefs and practices as Biqa'i maintains. On the contrary, he did his utmost to save Islam which he understood in his own way. The charge of pretence and hypocrisy is contradicted by the bold and fearless language in which Ibn 'Arabi chooses to express himself. He does not pretend to be a Muslim in order to please or avoid the wrath of true believers to whom Biqa`i refers.

He believes that Islam which preaches the principle of the unity of God could be squared with his doctrine of the unity of all Being, and this he openly declares in the strongest terms. He may have deceived himself or expressed the mystical union with God in terms of the metaphysical theory of the unity between God and the phenomenal world, but he certainly tried to deceive no one.

In contrast to Biqa'i's terrible accusations, we should conclude by citing the words of Balqini who had the highest opinion of Ibn 'Arabi. He says

“You should take care not to deny anything that Shaikh Muhyi al-Din has said, when he - may God have mercy upon him - plunged deep into the sea of gnosis and the verification of truths, mentioned towards the end of his life in the Fusus, the Futuhat, and the Tanazzulat - things which are fully understood only by people of his rank.”

Influence On Future Sufism

Although Ibn 'Arabi was violently attacked by his adversaries for his views which they considered unorthodox, his teachings not only survived the attacks, but exercised the most profound influence on the course of all future Sufism. His admirers in the East, where he spent the greater part of his life, called him al-Shaikh al-Akbar (the Greatest Doctor), a title which has never been conferred on another Sufi since. It pointed to his exceptional qualities both as a great spiritual master and a Sufi author - and it is held to be true of him to this-day. He marks the end of a stage where speculative Sufism reached its culminating point.

The centuries that followed witnessed the rapid spread of Sufi orders all over the Muslim world; and Sufism became the popular form of Islam with much less theory and more ritual and practice. The founders of the Fraternities were better known for their piety and spiritual leadership than for their speculation. This is why Ibn 'Arabi's theosophy and mystical

philosophy remained unchallenged. They were in fact the only source of inspiration to anyone who discoursed on the subject of the Unity of all Being, whether in Arabic-speaking countries or in Persia or Turkey.

Some writers of his own school, such as 'Abd al-Karim al-Jili and 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Kashani, did little more than reproduce his ideas in a different form. Other schools of Sufis were not entirely free of his influence, at least as far as his terminology was concerned. The tremendous commentary of Arusi on Qushairi's Risalah, which is the classical model of Sunni Sufism, abounds with ideas and terms borrowed from Ibn 'Arabi's works.

His influence seems to show itself most markedly in the delightful works of the mystic poets of Persia from the seventh/thirteenth to the nineteenth century. 'Iraqi, Shabistari, and Jami were all inspired by him. Their wonderful odes are in many respects an echo of the ideas of the author of the Fusus and the Futuhat, cast into magnificent poetry by the subtle genius of the Persian mind. They overflow with the ideas of divine unity and universal love and beauty.

God is described as the source and ultimate ground of all things. He is for ever revealing Himself in the infinite forms of the phenomenal world. The world is created anew at every moment of time; a continual process of change goes on, with no repetition and no becoming. The divine light illuminates all particles of Being, just as the divine names have from eternity illuminated the potential, non-existent realities of things. When these realities become actualized in space and time, they reflect, like mirrors, the divine names which give them their external existence. The phenomenal world is the theatre wherein all the divine names are manifested. Man is the only creature in whom these names are manifested collectively.

These are but a few of the many ideas which the mystic poets of Persia borrowed from Ibn 'Arabi and to which they gave an endless variety of poetical forms. It is said that 'Iraqi wrote his Lama'at after hearing Sadr al-Din Qunawi's lectures on the Fusus, and Jami who commented on the same book wrote his Lawa'ih in the same strain. The following is an extract from 'Iraqi's Lama'at which sums up Ibn 'Arabi's theory of the microcosm (man):

“Though Form,” he said, “proclaims me Adam's son,
My true degree a higher place hath won.
When in the glass of Beauty I behold,
The Universe my image doth unfold:
In Heaven's Sun behold me manifest-
Each tiny molecule doth me attest....
Ocean's a drop from my pervading sea,
Light but a flash of my vast Brilliancy:

From Throne to Carpet, all that is doth seem

Naught but a Mote that rides the sunlit Beam.
When Being's Veil of Attributes is shed,
My Splendour o'er a lustrous World is Spread ... “²⁰

Doctrines

Unity of All Being

The most fundamental principle which lies at the root of Ibn 'Arabi's whole philosophy, or rather theologico-philosophical and mystical thought, is the principle of the "Unity of All Being" (wahdat al-wujud). Perhaps the word "pantheism" is not a very happy equivalent, partly because it has particular associations in our minds, and also because it does not express the full significance of the much wider doctrine of the Unity of All Being as understood by our author. From this primordial conception of the ultimate nature of reality all his theories in other fields of philosophy follow with an appreciable degree of consistency.

Much of the criticism levelled against Ibn 'Arabi's position is due to the misunderstanding of the role which he assigns to God in his system - a fact which attracted the attention of even Ibn Taimiyyah, who distinguishes between Ibn 'Arabi's wahdat al-wujud and that of other Muslim pantheists. He says that "Ibn 'Arabi's system is nearer to Islam in so far as he discriminates between the One who reveals Himself and the manifestations thereof, thus establishing the truth of the religious Law and insisting on the ethical and theological principles upon which the former Shaikhs of Islam had insisted."²¹ In other words, Ibn Taimiyyah does not wish to put Ibn 'Arabi in the same category with Tilimsani, Isra'ili, and Kirmani whom he condemns as atheists and naturalists.

Ibn 'Arabi's pantheism is not a materialistic view of reality. The external world of sensible objects is but a fleeting shadow of the Real (al-Haqq), God. It is a form of acosmism which denies that the phenomenal has being or meaning apart from and independently of God. It is not that cold-blooded pantheism in which the name of God is mentioned for sheer courtesy, or, at the most, for logical necessity or consistency. On the contrary, it is the sort of pantheism in which God swallows up everything, and the so-called other-than-God is reduced to nothing. God alone is the all-embracing and eternal reality. This position is summed up in Ibn 'Arabi's own words

"Glory to Him who created all things, being Himself their very essence ('ainuha)";

and also in the following verse:

"O Thou Who hast created all things in Thyself,

Thou unitest that which. Thou createst.

Thou createst that which existeth infinitely

In Thee, for Thou art the narrow and the all-embracing."²²

Reality, therefore, is one and indivisible. We speak of God and the world, the One and the many, Unity and multiplicity, and such other terms when we use the language of the senses and the unaided intellect. The intuitive knowledge of the mystic reveals nothing but absolute unity which - curiously enough - Ibn 'Arabi identifies with the Muslim doctrine of unification (tauhid). Hence the further and more daring identification of his pantheistic doctrine with Islam as the religion of unification.

"Base the whole affair of your seclusion (khalwah)," he says, "upon facing God with absolute unification which is not marred by any (form of) polytheism, implicit or explicit, and by denying, with absolute conviction,

all causes and intermediaries, whole and part, for indeed if you are deprived of such tauhid you will surely fall into polytheism.”²³

This, in other words, means that the real tauhid of God is to face Him alone and see nothing else, and declare Him the sole agent of all that exists. But such a view points at once to a fact long overlooked by scholars of Muslim mysticism, i.e., that Muslim pantheism (wahdat al-wujud) is a natural - though certainly not a logical - development of the Muslim doctrine of tauhid (unification). It started with the simple belief that “there is no god other than God,” and under deeper consideration of the nature of Godhead, assumed the form of a totally different belief, i. e., there is nothing in existence but God.

In Ibn 'Arabi's case, the absolute unity of God, which is the monotheistic doctrine of Islam, is consistently interpreted to mean the absolute unity of all things in God. The two statements become equivalent, differing only in their respective bases of justification. The former has its root in religious belief or in theological or philosophical reasoning or both; the latter has its final justification in the unitive state of the mystic. We have a glimpse of this tendency in the writings of the early mystics of Islam such as Junaid of Baghdad and Abu Yazid of Bistam, but they speak of wahdat al-shuhud (unity of vision) not of wujud (Being), and attempt to develop no philosophical system in any way comparable to that of Ibn 'Arabi's.

It is sufficiently clear now that according to Ibn 'Arabi reality is an essential unity - substance in Spinoza's sense; but it is also a duality in so far as it has two differentiating attributes: Haqq (God) and khalq (universe). It can be regarded from two different aspects. In itself it is the undifferentiated and Absolute Being which transcends all spatial and temporal relations. It is a bare monad of which nothing can be predicated or known, if by knowledge we mean the apprehension of a thing through our senses and discursive reason. To know in this sense is to determine that which is known; and determination is a form of limitation which is contrary to the nature of the Absolute. The Absolute Monad is the most indeterminate of all indeterminates (ankar al-nakirat); the thing-in-itself (al-shai) as Ibn 'Arabi calls it.

On the other hand, we can view reality as we know it; and we know it invested with divine names and attributes. In other words, we know it in the multiplicity of its manifestations which make up what we call the phenomenal world. So, by knowing ourselves and the phenomenal world in general, we know reality of which they are particular modes.

In Ibn 'Arabi's own words “we” - and this goes for the phenomenal world as well - “are the names by which God describes Himself.” We are His names, or His external aspects. Our essences are His essence and this constitutes His internal aspect. Hence reality is One and many; Unity and multiplicity; eternal and temporal; transcendent and immanent. It is capable of receiving and uniting in itself all conceivable opposites.

Abu Said al-Kharraz (d. 277/890) had already discovered this truth when he said that God is known only by uniting all the opposites which are attributed to him. “He is called the First and the Last: the External and the Internal. He is the Essence of what is manifested and of that which remains

latent.... The Inward says no when the Outward says I am; and the Outward says no when the Inward says I am, and so in the case of every pair of contraries. The speaker is One, and He is identical with the Hearer.”²⁴

Thus, Ibn 'Arabi's thought goes on moving within that closed circle which knows no beginning and no end. His thought is circular because reality as he envisages it is circular. Every point on the circle is potentially the whole of the circle and is capable of manifesting the whole. Looking at the points with an eye on the centre of the circle (the divine essence), we can say that each point is identical with the essence in one respect, different from it in another respect. This explains the verbal contradictions with which Ibn 'Arabi's books abound.

Sometimes he comes nearer the philosophers than the mystics when he explains the relation between God and the universe. Here we have theories reminiscent of the Platonic theory of ideas and the Ishraqi doctrine of intelligible existence (al-wujud al-dihni) and the scholastic theory of the identification of substance and accidents (the theory of the Ash`arites).

“Before coming into existence,” he says, “things of the phenomenal world were potentialities in the bosom of the Absolute.” They formed the contents of the mind of God as ideas of His future becoming. These intelligible realities are what he calls “the fixed prototypes of things” (al-a`yan al-thabitah). God's knowledge of them is identical with His knowledge of Himself.

It is a state of self-revelation or self-consciousness, in which God saw (at no particular point of time) in Himself these determinate “forms” of His own essence. But they are also latent states of His mind. So they are both intelligible ideas in the divine mind as well as particular modes of the divine essence. Hence the a`yan al-thabitah are identified, on the one hand, with the quiddity (mahiyah) of things, and, on the other hand, with their essence (huwiyah). The former explains the first aspect of the a`yan as ideas; the latter, their second aspect as essential modes.

He calls them non-existent in the sense that they have no external existence, on the one hand, and no existence apart from the divine essence, on the other. They are the prototypes and causes of all external existents because they are the potential relations between the divine names as well as the potential modes of the divine essence. When these potentialities become actualities we have the so-called external world. Yet, there is no real becoming, and no becoming in space and time. The process goes on from eternity to everlastingness.

This complicated relation between the One and the many is nowhere systematically explained in Ibn 'Arabi's works, not even in the Fusus. A certain formal dialectic can be detected in the Fusus where the author attempts to explain his metaphysical theory of reality, but the thread of the formal reasoning is often interrupted by outbursts of mystic emotion. Ibn 'Arabi is essentially a mystic, and in the highest degree a dreamer and fantasist as we have already observed. He often uses symbols and similes in expressing the relation between the multiplicity of the phenomenal world and their essential unity.

The One reveals Himself in the many, he says, as an object is revealed in different mirrors, each mirror reflecting an image determined by its nature and its capacity as a recipient. Or it is like a source of light from which an infinite number of lights are derived. Or like a substance which penetrates and permeates the forms of existing objects: thus, giving them their meaning and being. Or it is like a mighty sea on the surface of which we observe count-less waves for ever appearing and disappearing. The eternal drama of existence is nothing but this ever-renewed creation (al-khalq al-jadid) which is in reality a perpetual process of self-revelation. Or again, he might say, the One is the real Being and the phenomenal world is its shadow having no reality in itself.

But beautiful as they are, such similes are very ambiguous and highly mis-leading. They are at least suggestive of a duality of two beings: God and the universe, in a system which admits only an absolute unity. Duality and multiplicity are illusory. They are due to our incapacity to perceive the essential unity of things. But this oscillation between unity and duality is due to confusing the epistemic side of the issue with its ontological side.

Ontologically, there is but one reality. Epidemically, there are two aspects: a reality which transcends the phenomenal world, and a multiplicity of sub-jectivities that find their ultimate explanation in the way we view reality as we know it. To our limited senses and intellects the external world undergoes a process of perpetual change and transformation. We call this creation but it is in fact a process of self-unveiling of the One Essence which knows no change.

Notion of Deity

In spite of his metaphysical theory of the nature of reality, Ibn 'Arabi finds a place for God in his system. His pantheism, like that of Spinoza, is to be distinguished from the naturalistic philosophy of the Stoics and the materialistic atheists. God that figures in his metaphysics as an unknowable and incommunicable reality, beyond thought and description, appears in his theology as the object of belief, love, and worship. The warmth of religious sentiment displayed in his writings attaches itself to his conception of God in the latter sense which comes close to the monotheistic conception of Islam. Indeed he tries his utmost to reconcile the two concep-tions; but his God is not in the strict religious sense confined to Islam or any other creed. He is not the ethical and personal God of religion, but the essence of all that is worshipped and loved in all religions

“God has ordained that ye shall worship naught but Him. “²⁵

This is interpreted by Ibn 'Arabi to mean that God has decreed that nothing is actually worshipped except Him. This is an open admission of all kinds of worship, so long as the worshippers recognize God behind the external “forms” of their gods. They call their gods by this or that name, but the Gnostic (al-‘arif) calls his God “Allah” which is the most universal of all names of God. Particular objects of worship are creations of men's minds, but God, the Absolute, is uncreated. We should not, therefore, confine God to any particular form of belief to the exclusion of other forms, but acknowledge Him in all forms alike. To limit Him to one form - as the

Christians have done - is infidelity (kufr); and to acknowledge Him in all forms is the spirit of true religion.

This universal religion which preaches that all worshipped objects are forms of One Supreme Deity is the logical corollary of Ibn 'Arabi's meta-physical theory that reality is ultimately one. But it has its deep roots in mysti-cism rather than in logic. It is nowhere better expressed than in the following verse:

“People have different beliefs about God
But I behold all that they believe.”²⁶

And the verse:

“My heart has become the receptacle of every 'form';
It is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks.
And a temple for idols, and pilgrims' Ka'bah,
And the Tablets of the Torah, and the Book of the Qur'an.
I follow the religion of love whichever way its camels take,
For this is my religion and my faith.”²⁷

So, all paths lead to one straight path which leads to God. It would be a gross mistake to think that Ibn 'Arabi approves of the worship of stones and stars and other idols, for these as far as his philosophy is concerned are non-existent or mere fabrications of the human mind. The real God is not a tangible object; but one who reveals Himself in the heart of the gnostic. There alone He is beheld.

This shows that Ibn 'Arabi's theory of religion is mystical and not strictly philosophical. It has its root in his much wider theory of divine love. The ultimate goal of all mysticism is love; and in Ibn 'Arabi's mystical system in particular, it is the full realization of the union of the lover and the Beloved. Now, if we look deeply into the nature of worship, we find that love forms its very basis. To worship is to love in the extreme. No object is worshipped unless it is invested with some sort of love; for love is the divine principle which binds things together and pervades all beings. This means that the highest manifestation in which God is worshipped is love. In other words, universal love and universal worship are two aspects of one and the same fact. The mystic who sees God (the Beloved) in everything worships Him in everything. This is summed up in the following verse

“I swear by the reality of Love that Love is the Cause of all love.

Were it not for Love (residing) in the heart, Love (God) would not be worshipped.”²⁸

This is because Love is the greatest object of worship. It is the only thing that is worshiped for its own sake. Other things are worshiped through it.

God, as an object of worship, therefore, resides in the heart as the supreme object of love. He is not the efficient cause of the philosophers or the transcendent God of the Mu'tazilites. He is in the heart of His servant and is nearer to him than his jugular vein.²⁹ “My heaven and my earth contain Me not,” says the Prophetic tradition, “but I am contained in the heart of My servant who is a believer.”

God and Man

It was Husain b. Mansur al-Hallaj (d. 309/922) who first laid down the foundation for the theory that came to be known in the writings of Ibn

'Arabi and 'Abd al-Karim al-Jili as the Theory of the Perfect Man. In the final form in which Ibn 'Arabi cast it, it played a very important role in the history of Muslim mysticism. Hallaj's theory was a theory of incarnation based on the Jewish tradition which states that "God created Adam in His own image" - a tradition which the Sufis attributed to the Pro-phet.

He distinguished between two natures in man: the divine (al-lahut), and the human (al-nasut). The two natures are not united but fused, the one into the other, as wine is fused into water. Thus for the first time in the history of Islam a divine aspect of man was recognized, and man was regarded as a unique creature not to be compared with any other creature on account of his divinity.

The Hallajian idea was taken up by Ibn 'Arabi, but completely transformed and given wider application. First, the duality of lahut and nasut became a duality of aspects of one reality, not of two independent natures. Secondly, they were regarded as actually present not only in man but in everything what-ever; the nasut being the external aspect of a thing, the lahut, its internal aspect. But God who reveals Himself in all phenomenal existence is revealed in a most perfect and complete way in the form of the perfect man, who is best represented by prophets and saints.

This forms the main theme of the Fusus al-Hikam and al-Tadbirat al-Ilahiyyah of Ibn 'Arabi, but many of its aspects are dealt with in his Futuhat and other works. Each one of the twenty-seven chapters of the Fusus is devoted to a prophet who is both a Logos (kali-mah) of God and a representative of one of the divine names. They are also cited as examples of the perfect man. The Logos par excellence is the Prophet Muhammad or rather the reality of Muhammad, as we shall see later.

So man in general - and the perfect man in particular - is the most perfect manifestation of God. The universe which, like a mirror, reflects the divine attributes and names in a multiplicity of forms, manifests them separately or analytically. Man alone manifests these attributes and names collectively or synthetically. Hence he is called the microcosm and the honoured epitome (al-mukhtasar al-sharif) and the most universal being (al-kaun al-jami'), who comprises all realities and grades of existence. In him alone the divine pre-sence is reflected, and through him alone God becomes conscious of Himself and His perfection. Here are Ibn 'Arabi's own words:

"God, glory to Him, in respect of His most beautiful names, which are beyond enumeration, willed to see their a'yan (realities), or if you wish you may say, His (own) 'ayn, in a Universal Being which contains the whole affair - inasmuch as it is endowed with all aspects of existence - and through which (alone) His mystery is revealed to Himself: for a vision which consists in a thing seeing itself by means of itself is not the same as that of the thing seeing something else which serves as a mirror... . Adam was the very essence of the polishing of this mirror, and the spirit of this form (i.e., the form in which God has revealed Himself: which is man)."³⁰

Here Ibn 'Arabi almost repeats the words of Hallaj who says:

"God looked into eternity, prior to all things, contemplated the essence of His splendour, and then desired to project outside Himself His supreme joy and love with the object of speaking to them. He also created an image of

Himself with all His attributes and names. This image was Adam whom God glorified and exalted.”³¹

Yet, the difference between the two, thinkers is so fundamental. Hallaj is an incarnationist; Ibn 'Arabi, a pantheist. On man as the microcosm he says:

“The spirit of the Great Existent (the Universe)

Is this small existent (man).

Without it God would not have said:

'I am the greatest and the omnipotent.'

Let not my contingency veil thee,

Or my death or resurrection,

For if thou examinest me,

I am the great and the all-embracing.

The eternal through my essence,

And the temporal are manifested.”³²

This is why man deserves the high honour and dignity of being God's vice-gerent on earth - a rank which God has denied all other creatures including the angels. This superior rank goes not to every individual man, for some men are even lower than the beasts, but to the perfect man alone, and this for two reasons:

a) He is a perfect manifestation of God in virtue of unity in himself, of all God's attributes and names.

b) He knows God absolutely through realizing in some sort of experience his essential oneness with Him.

Here Ibn 'Arabi's metaphysical theory of man coincides with the theory of mysticism.

Ethical and Religious Implications

We have already pointed out that Ibn 'Arabi's pantheistic theory of the nature of reality is the pivot round which the whole of his system of thought turns. Some aspects of this philo-sophy have been explained; and it remains now to show its bearing on his attitude towards man's ethical and religious life.

Everything in Ibn `Arabi's world is subject to rigid determinism. On the ontological side we have seen that phenomenal objects are regarded as the external manifestations of their latent realities and determined by their own laws. Everything is what it is from eternity and nothing can change it, not even God Himself. “What you are in your state of latency (thubut) is what you will be in your realized existence (zuhur),” is the fundamental law of existence. It is self-determinism or self-realization in which freedom plays no part either in God's actions or in those of His creatures.

Moral and religious phenomena are no exception. God decrees things in the sense that He knows them as they are in their latent states, and pre-judges that they should come out in the forms in which He knows them. So He decrees nothing which lies outside their nature. This is the mystery of predestination (sirr al-qadar).³³

Belief and unbelief, sinful and lawful actions, are all determined in this sense and it is in this sense also that men are the makers of their own destiny for which, Ibn 'Arabi says, they are responsible. “We are not unjust to

them,” says God, “but it is they who are unjust to themselves.” “I am not unjust to My servants.”³⁴

On this Ibn 'Arabi comments as follows: “I (God) did not ordain infidelity (kufr) which dooms them to misery, and then demand of them that which lies not in their power. Nay, I deal with them only as I know them, and I know them only as they are in themselves. Hence if there be injustice they are the unjust. Similarly, I say to them nothing except that which My essence has decreed that I should say; and My essence is known to Me as it is in respect of My saying this or not saying that. So I say nothing except what I know that I should say. It is Mine to say, and it is for them to obey or not to obey after hearing My command.”³⁵

There is, therefore, a difference between obeying one's own nature and obeying the religious command, a distinction which was made long before Ibn 'Arabi by Hallaj. On the one hand, all men - indeed all creatures - obey their own law which he calls the creative law (al-amr al-takwini). On the other, some obey and others disobey the religious Law (al-amr al-taklifi). The first is in accordance with God's creative will (al-mashiyyah) which brings things into existence in the forms in which they are eternally predetermined. The second is something imposed from without for some ulterior reason, ethical, religious, or social.

Everything obeys the creative commands in res-ponse to its own nature, and by so doing obeys God's will, regardless of whether this obedience is also obedience or disobedience to the religious or ethical command. When Pharaoh disobeyed God and Iblis (Satan) refused the divine command to prostrate himself before Adam, they were in fact obeying the creative command and carrying out the will of God, although from the point of view of the religious command they were disobedient. To express the same thing in different words, an action-in-itself, i. e., irrespective of any form whatever, is neither good nor evil, neither religious nor irreligious. It is just an action pure and simple. It comes under one or another of these categories when it is judged by religious or ethical standards.

The whole theory reduces obedience and disobedience in the religious sense to a mere formality, and denies moral and religious obligations. It tells us that man is responsible for his actions, but affirms that he is not a free agent to will his actions. Responsibility and complete absence of freedom do not go together. Theoretically, there are different alternatives out of which man may choose his actions, but according to this theory he is so created that he chooses the only alternative which is determined by his own necessary laws. So he actually chooses nothing and has no more freedom than a stone falling down to the earth in obedience to its own law.

Thus, we go on moving within that closed circle of thought which is so typical of Ibn 'Arabi's reasoning. He has one eye on his pantheistic doctrine with all that it entails, and the other on Islamic teachings, and oscillates between the two all the time. His pantheistic doctrine implies that God is the Ultimate Agent of all actions, and Islam insists on the moral and religious responsibility of man for his actions. The two conflicting points of view cannot be reconciled, and Ibn 'Arabi's way of reconciling them is full of paradoxes.

He is more consistent when he says that all actions are created by God and there is no real difference between the Commander and the command-ed.³⁶ There is no real servanthip (ʿubudiyyah), for the servant is one who carries out the commands of his master. But in reality the servant of God is a mere locus (mahall) through which God's creative power acts. So the servant is the Lord and the Lord is the servant.³⁷

This seems to contradict what we have already said, i. e., that, according to Ibn 'Arabi, actions belong to man and spring directly from his nature in a determined way. Actually, there is no contradiction when we think of the distinction he makes between the One and the many. In fact, all his paradoxes can be solved when considered in the light of this distinction. When he says that God is the doer of all actions, he is regarding the question from the point of view of the One, for God's essence is the essence of men to whom actions are attributed. And when he asserts that men are the doers of their actions, he is regarding the question from the point of view of the many.

Having reduced obligation, obedience, disobedience; and similar other concepts to mere formal relations, it was natural enough for him to give the concepts of punishment and reward a positive content. Heaven and hell and all the eschatological matters connected with them are described in the minutest details, but no sooner does he give a constructive picture of one of them than he uses his allegorical method of interpretation to explain it away.

His method bears some remarkable resemblance to that of the Isma'ilians and the Carmathians, used for the same purpose. All eschatological terms such as punishment, reward, purgatory, the Balance, the Bridge, intercession, heaven, hell, and so on, are regarded as representations of states of man, and corporealizations of ideas. What we learn from Tradition, he says, are words, and it is left to us to find out what is meant by them,³⁸ i. e., to read into them whatever meaning we please.

This is precisely what Ibn 'Arabi him-self has done. Heaven and hell, according to him, are subjective states, not objective realities. Hell is the realization of the individual "self"; it is self-hood. Heaven is the realization of the essential unity of all things. There is no real difference between the two. If any, the difference is one of degree, not of kind. Salvation is the ultimate end of all. Speaking of the people of hell and heaven, Ibn 'Arabi says: -

“Nothing remains but the Fulfiller of Promise alone;
The threat of God has no object to be seen.
When they enter the Abode of Misery they experience
Pleasure wherein lies a bliss so different
From that of the Gardens of Everlastingness.
It is all the same: the difference is felt at the beatific vision.”³⁹

This means that when the truth is known and God reveals Himself as He really is, everyone, whether in heaven or in hell, will know his position, i. e., will know how near or how far he is from the truth. Those who fully realize their essential oneness with God are the blessed ones who will go to paradise. Those who are veiled from the truth are the damned ones who will

go to hell. But both parties will enjoy in their respective abodes happiness proportionate to their degree of knowledge.

Conclusion

In the foregoing pages an attempt has been made to give a bird's-eye view of a tremendously vast field. We have concentrated on the most important features of Ibn 'Arabi's life and thought; many important facts have of necessity been omitted for lack of space. If Ibn 'Arabi experienced - as we must assume he did - some sort of strain while writing his mystical philosophy, we are placed under greater strain while writing about him. There is more than one way of interpreting his ideas and fathoming his intricate and obscure style. This makes it possible for scholars to give not only different but conflicting accounts of his teachings.

The present account deals with him as a thorough-going pantheist who tried his best to reconcile his pantheistic doctrine with Islam. In doing so he had to read new meanings into the traditional Muslim concepts, and change Islam from a positive into a mystic religion. It is true he never lost sight of the idea of Godhead, but his God is not the transcendent God of revealed religions, but the Absolute Being who manifests Himself in every form of existence, and in the highest degree in the form of man.

People may agree or disagree with some of his theories, but the fact remains that in production and influence he is the greatest Arabic-speaking mystic Islam has ever produced. It has been said that he has annulled religion in the orthodox sense in which it is usually understood. This is not altogether true. He has done away with a good many concepts which were so narrowly understood by Muslim jurists and theologians, and offered in their place other concepts which are much deeper in their spirituality and more comprehensive than those of any of his Muslim predecessors. His ideas about the universality of everything - being, love, religion - may be considered land-marks in the history of human thought.

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Part 3: The Philosophers

(Those who were mainly interested in philosophy and science and were greatly influenced by Greek thought)

Chapter 21: Al-Kindi

Chapter 22 : Muhammad Ibn Zakariya Al-Razi

Chapter 23: Al-Farabi

Chapter 24: Miskawaih

Chapter 25: Ibn Sina

Chapter 26: Ibn Bajjah

Chapter 27: Ibn Tufail

Chapter 28: Ibn Rushd

Chapter 29: Nasir Al-Din Tusi

Chapter 21: Al-Kindi

By Ahmed Fouad El-Ehwany

Life

Al-Kindi (c. 185/801- c. 260/873) was the first Muslim philosopher. Philo-sophical studies in the second/eighth century were in the hands of Christian Syriacs, who were primarily physicians. They started, through encourage-ment by the Caliph, to translate Greek writings into Arabic. Being the first Arab Muslim to study science and philosophy, al-Kindi was rightly called “the Philosopher of the Arabs.”

His full name is: Abu Yusuf Ya`qub ibn Ishaq ibn al-Sabbah ibn `Imran ibn Isma`il ibn al-Ash`ath ibn Qais al-Kindi. Kindah was one of the great Arab tribes before Islam. His grandfather al-Ash`ath ibn Qais adopted Islam and was considered one of the Companions (Sahabah) of the Prophet. Al-Ash`ath went with some of the pioneer Muslims to al-Kufah, where he and his descend-ants lived. Ishaq ibn al-Sabbah, al-Kindi's father, was Governor of al-Kufah during the reign of the `Abbasid Caliphs al-Mahdi and al-Rashid. Most probably al-Kindi was born in the year 185/801,¹ a decade before the death of al-Rashid.

Al-Kufah and al-Basrah, in the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries, were the two rivalling centres of Islamic culture. Al-Kufah was more inclined to rational studies; and in this intellectual atmosphere, al-Kindi passed his early boyhood. He learnt the Qur'an by heart, the Arabic grammar, literature, and elementary arithmetic, all of which formed the curriculum for all Muslim children. He, then, studied Fiqh and the new-born discipline called Kalam. But it seems that he was more interested in sciences and philo-sophy, to which he consecrated the rest of his life, especially after he went to Baghdad.

A complete knowledge of Greek science and philosophy required proficiency in Greek and Syriac languages into which latter many Greek works had already been translated. It seems that al-Kindi learnt Greek, but certainly he mastered the Syriac language from which he translated several works. He also revised some of the Arabic translations, such as al-Himsi's translation of Plotinus' Enneads, which passed to the Arabs as one of the writings of Aristotle. Al-Qifti, the biographer, says that “al-Kindi translated many philosophical books, clarified their difficulties, and summarized their deep theories.”²

In Baghdad he was connected with al-Ma'mun, al-Mu'tasim, and the latter's son Ahmad. He was nominated tutor of Ahmad ibn al-Mu'tasim, to whom he dedicated some of his important writings. Ibn Nabatah says: “Al-Kindi and his writings embellished the empire of al-Mu'tasim.”³ He flourished also under the reign of al-Mutawakkil (r. 232-247/847-861). A story related by Ibn Abi Usaibi'ah indicates the great fame of al-Kindi at that time, his advanced knowledge, and his famous private library.

This is the full account: “Muham-mad and Ahmad, the sons of Musa ibn Shakir, who lived during the reign of al-Mutawakkil, were conspiring against everyone who was advanced in know-ledge. They sent a certain Sanad ibn 'Ali to Baghdad so that he might get al-Kindi away from al-Mutawakkil. Their conspiracies succeeded to the point that al-Mutawakkil

ordered al-Kindi to be beaten. His whole library was confiscated and put in a separate place, labelled as the 'Kindian Library.'⁴

Al-Kindi's notoriety for avarice was equal to his fame for knowledge. This bad repute was due to al-Jahiz's caricature of him in his *Kitab al-Bukhala'*. However, al-Kindi lived a luxurious life in a house, in the garden of which he bred many curious animals. It seems that he lived aloof from society, even from his neighbours.

An interesting story related by al-Qifti shows that al-Kindi lived in the neighborhood of a wealthy merchant, who never knew that al-Kindi was an excellent physician. Once the merchant's son was attacked by sudden paralysis and no physician in Baghdad was able to cure him. Some-one told the merchant that he lived in the neighborhood of the most brilliant philosopher, who was very clever in curing that particular illness. Al-Kindi cured the paralyzed boy by music.

Works

Most of his numerous works (numbering about 270) are lost. Ibn al-Nadim and following him al-Qifti classified his writings, most of which are short treatises, into seventeen groups: (1) philosophical, (2) logical, (3) arithmetical, (4) globular, (5) musical, (6) astronomical, (7) geometrical, (8) spherical, (9), medical, (10) astrological, (11) dialectical, (12) psychological, (13) political, (14) causal (meteorological), (15) dimensional, (16) on first things, (17) on the species of some metals, chemicals, etc.

This account shows to what extent al-Kindi's knowledge was encyclopedic. Some of his scientific works were translated by Gerard of Cremona into Latin and influenced very much the thought of medieval Europe. Cardano considered him to be one of the twelve greatest minds.

Scholars studied al-Kindi, until his Arabic treatises were discovered and edited, merely on the basis of the extant Latin translations. His *De Medici-narum Compositarum Gradibus* was published in 938/1531. Albino Nagy⁵ in 1315/1897 edited the medieval translations of these treatises: *De intellectu*; *De Somno et visione*; *De quinque essentiis*; *Liber introductorius in artem logicae demonstrationis*.

Since the discovery of some of his Arabic manuscripts, a new light has been thrown on al-Kindi's philosophy. A compendium containing about 25 treatises was found by Ritter in Istanbul. Now they have all been edited by different scholars, Walzer, Rosenthal, Abu Ridah, and Ahmed Fouad El-Ehwany.⁶ There are other short treatises discovered in Aleppo, but they have not yet been edited. It has become possible, to a certain extent, to analyse al-Kindi's philosophy on more or less sure grounds.

Philosophy

It was due to al-Kindi that philosophy came to be acknowledged as a part of Islamic culture. The early Arab historians called him "the Philosopher of the Arabs" for this reason. It is true that he borrowed his ideas from Neo-Platonic Aristotelianism, but it is also true that he put those ideas in a new context. By conciliating Hellenistic heritage with Islam he laid the foundations of a new philosophy. Indeed, this conciliation remained for a long time the chief feature of this philosophy. Furthermore, al-Kindi,

specializing in all the sciences known at his time - of which his writings give sufficient evidence - -made philosophy a comprehensive study embracing all sciences.

Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd were first scientists and then philosophers. For this reason Ibn al-Nadim placed al-Kindi in the class of natural philosophers. This is his full account: "Al-Kindi is the best man of his time, unique in his knowledge of all the ancient sciences. He is called the Philosopher of the Arabs. His books deal with different sciences, such as logic, philosophy, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, etc. We have connected him with the natural philosophers because of his prominence in science."⁷

Philosophy is the knowledge of truth. Muslim philosophers, like the Greek, believed that truth is something over and above experience; that it lies immutable and eternal in a supernatural world. The definition of philosophy in al-Kindi's treatise on "First Philosophy" runs like this: "Philosophy is the knowledge of the reality of things within man's possibility, because the philosopher's end in his theoretical knowledge is to gain truth and in his practical knowledge to behave in accordance with truth."

At the end of the treatise, God is qualified by the term "truth," which is the objective of philo-sophy. "The True One (al-Wahid al-Haq) is, then, the First, the Creator, the Sustainer of all that He has created. ..." This view is borrowed from Aristotle's metaphysics, but the Unmovable Mover of Aristotle is substituted by the Creator. This difference constitutes the core of the Kindian system.

Philosophy is classified into two main divisions: theoretical studies, which are physics, mathematics, and metaphysics; and practical studies which are ethics, economics, and politics. A later writer, quoting al-Kindi, gives the classification as follows: "Theory and practice are the beginning of the virtues. Each one of the two is divided into the physical, mathematical, and theological parts. Practice is divided into the guidance of one's self, that of one's house, and that of one's city."⁸

Ibn Nabata, quoting also al-Kindi, mentions only the theoretical divisions. "The philosophical sciences are of three kinds: the first in teaching (ta`lim) is mathematics which is intermediate in nature; the second is physics, which is the last in nature; the third is theology which is the highest in nature."⁹ The priority of mathematics goes back to Aristotle, but the final sequence of the three sciences beginning with physics came from the later Peripatetics. Most probably al-Kindi was following Ptolemy, who gave a division of sciences in the beginning of *Almagest*.¹⁰ Mathematics was known to the Arabs from that time on as the "first study."

The definition of philosophy and its classification, as mentioned above, remained traditional in Muslim philosophy. As Mustafa 'Abd al-Raziq puts it: "This attitude in understanding the meaning of philosophy and its classification according to subject-matter directed Muslim philosophy from its very outset."¹¹

First philosophy or metaphysics is the knowledge of the First Cause, be-cause all the rest of philosophy is included in this knowledge.¹² The method followed in the study of first philosophy is the logic of

demonstration. From now on, logic will be the instrument of the philosophers in their quest for truth.

Al-Kindi's value as a philosopher was debated in ancient times because of the lack of logical theory in his system. Sa'id al-Andalusi says: "Al-Kindi wrote on logic many books which never became popular, and which people never read or used in the sciences, because these books missed the art of analysis which is the only way to distinguish between right and wrong in every study. By the art of synthesis, which is what Ya`qub meant by his writings, no one can profit, unless he has sure premises from which he can make the synthesis."

It is difficult for us to give an exact idea concerning this charge until his logical treatises are discovered. But the fact that al-Farabi was called the "Second Master" because of his introducing logic as the method of thinking in Islamic philosophy¹³ seems to corroborate the judgment of Sa'id just mentioned.

Harmony Between Philosophy And Religion

Al-Kindi directed Muslim philosophy towards an accord between philosophy and religion.¹⁴ Philosophy depends on reason, and religion relies on revelation. Logic is the method of philosophy; faith, which is belief in the realities mention-ed in the Qur'an as revealed by God to His Prophet, is the way of religion. From the very outset, men of religion mistrusted philosophy and the philo-sophers. Philosophers were attacked for being heretics.

Al-Kindi was obliged to defend himself against the accusation of religious spokesmen that "the acquisition of the knowledge of the reality of things is atheism (kufr)."¹⁵ In his turn, al-Kindi accused those religious spokesmen for being irreligious and traders with religion. "They disputed with good men in defence of the untrue position which they had founded and occupied without any merit only to gain power and to trade with religion."¹⁶

The accord between philosophy and religion is laid down on the basis of three arguments: (1) that theology is part of philosophy; (2) that the pro-phet's revelation and philosophical truth are in accord with each other, and (3) that the pursuit of theology is logically ordained.

Philosophy is the knowledge of the reality of things, and this knowledge comprises theology (al-rububiyyah), the science of monotheism, ethics, and all useful sciences.

Furthermore, the prophets have ordained the pursuit of truth and practice of virtue. "The totality of every useful science and the way to attain it, the getting away from anything harmful and taking care against it - the acquisition of all this is what the true prophets have proclaimed in the name of God

The prophets have proclaimed the unique divinity of God, the practice of the virtues accepted by Him, and the avoidance of the vices which are contrary to virtues-in-themselves."

Again, the pursuit of philosophy is necessary for it "is either necessary or it is not necessary. If theologians (those who oppose its pursuit) say that it is necessary, they should study it; if they say that it is not necessary, they have

to give the reason for this, and present a demonstration. Giving the reason and demonstration is part of the acquisition of the knowledge of reality. It is necessary then that they should have this knowledge and realize that they must obtain it.”¹⁷

In his treatise on “The Number of the Works of Aristotle,” al-Kindi makes a sharp distinction between religion and philosophy. The fact that he discussed this point in this particular treatise proves that he was comparing the religion of Islam with Aristotle's philosophy. The divine science, which he distinguished from philosophy, is Islam as revealed to the Prophet and recorded in the Qur'an.

Contrary to his general view that theology is a part of philosophy, here we find (1) that theology occupies a rank higher than philosophy; (2) that religion is a divine science and philosophy is a human one; (3) that the way of religion is faith and that of philosophy is reason; (4) that the knowledge of the prophet is immediate and through inspiration and that of the philosopher is by way of logic and demonstration. We quote in full this interesting and very important passage:

“If, then, a person does not obtain the knowledge of quantity and quality, he will lack knowledge of the primary and secondary substances, so that one cannot expect him to have any knowledge of the human sciences which are acquired by man through research, effort, and industry. These sciences fall short in rank of the divine science (al-'ilm al-ilahi)¹⁸ which is obtained without research, effort, and industry, and in no time.

This latter knowledge is like the knowledge of the prophets, a knowledge bestowed by God; unlike mathematics and logic, it is received without research, effort, study, and industry, and requires no period of time. It is distinct in being obtained by the will of God, through the purification and illumination of souls, so that they turn towards truth, through God's support, assistance, inspiration, and His messages.

This knowledge is not a prerogative of all men, but only of the prophets. This is one of their miraculous peculiarities, the distinctive sign which differentiates them from other human beings. Men who are not prophets have no way of attaining knowledge of the secondary substances or that of the primary sensible substances and their accidents without research and industry through logic and mathematics, and without any period of time.

“Hence, men of intelligence draw the evident conclusion that since this¹⁹ (knowledge) exists, it comes from God; whereas (ordinary) men are unable by their very nature to attain to a similar knowledge, because it is above and beyond their nature and the devices they use. Thus, they submit themselves in obedience and docility to it and faithfully believe in the truth of the message of the prophets.”²⁰

The Muslims follow the Word of God stated in the Qur'an and are convinced by its sure arguments. Philosophers refer to logical demonstration, i, e., their reason. Philosophical arguments depend on the self-evident first principles of demonstration. In al-Kindi's view, the Qur'anic arguments, being divine, are more sure, certain, and convincing than the philosophical arguments which are human. The Qur'an gives

solutions of some very important problems, such as the creation of the world from nothing, and resurrection.

Al-Kindi holds that the Qur'anic arguments are "beliefs, clear and comprehensive." Thus, they lead to certainty and conviction. Hence, they are superior to the philosopher's arguments. An example of such sure arguments is to be found in the answer to the infidels who asked, "Who will be able to give life to bones when they have been reduced to dust?" The answer is: "He who produced them originally will give life to them."

Thus, al-Kindi opened the door for the philosophical interpretation of the Qur'an, and thereby brought about an accord between religion and philosophy. In his treatise "The Worship (sujud) of the Primum Mobile," the verse: "Stars and trees are worshipping" is interpreted by reference to the different meanings of the word "sajdah." It means: (1) prostration in praying; (2) obedience; (3) change from imperfection to perfection; (4) following by will the order of a person. It is this last meaning that applies to the worship of the stars. The heavenly sphere is animated and is the cause of life in the world of generation and corruption. The movement of the primum mobile is called worship (sujud) in the sense that it obeys God.

To sum up, al-Kindi was the first philosopher in Islam to effect an accord between religion and philosophy. He paved the way for al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd. Two quite different views are given by him. The first follows the way of the logicians and reduces religion to philosophy. The second, considering religion a divine science, raises it above philosophy. This divine science can be known by a prophetic faculty. However, through philosophic interpretation religion becomes conciliated with philosophy.

God

An adequate and sure knowledge of God is the final objective of philosophy. Philosophy by its very name was a Greek study. For this reason, al-Kindi made a great effort to transmit Greek philosophy to the Arabs. As Rosenthal rightly puts it: "Al-Kindi himself states that he considered it his task to serve as an Arab transmitter and interpreter of the ancient heritage."²¹ In Theon's commentary on the Almagest of Ptolemy, we find God described as immutable, simple, of invisible nature, and the true cause of motion.

Al-Kindi in his treatise al-Sina'at al-'Uzma²² paraphrases the same idea. He says: "For God, great is His praise, is the reason and agent of this motion, being eternal (qadim), He cannot be seen and does not move, but in fact causes motion without moving Himself. This is His description for those who understand Him in plain words: He is simple in that He cannot be dissolved into something simpler; and He is indivisible because He is not composed and composition has no hold on Him, but in fact He is separate from the visible bodies, since He ... is the reason of the motion of the visible bodies."²³

Simplicity, indivisibility, invisibility, and causality of motion are the divine attributes stated by Theon. When al-Kindi mentions them he is simply a transmitter of the Hellenistic conception of God. The originality of al-Kindi lies in his conciliation of the Islamic concept of God with the philosophical ideas which were current in the later Neo-Platonism.

The basic Islamic notions concerning God are His unicity, His act of creation from nothing, and the dependence of all creatures on Him. These attributes are stated in the Qur'an in a manner which is neither philosophical nor dialectical. Al-Kindi qualifies God in new terms. God is the true one. He is transcendent and can be qualified only by negative attributes. "He has no matter, no form, no quantity, no quality, no relation; nor is He qualified by any of the remaining categories (al-maqlat).²⁴ He has no genus, no differentia, no species, no proprium, no accident. He is immutable.... He is, therefore, absolute oneness, nothing but oneness (wahdah). Everything else is multiple."²⁵

To understand the position of al-Kindi, we must refer to the Traditionalists and the Mu'tazilites. The Traditionalists - Ibn Hanbal was one of their chief representatives - refused to interpret the attributes of God. They simply called them "the names of God." When, for example, Ibn Hanbal was asked whether the Qur'an, being the Word of God, is eternal (qadim) or created (makhluq), he gave no answer. His only answer was that the Qur'an is the Word (kalam) of God. The Traditionalists accepted the literal meaning of the Scripture, i. e. without any further interpretation.

The Mu'tazilites, such as were the contemporaries of al-Kindi, rationally interpreted the attributes of God to establish His absolute unicity. They solved the problem on the basis of the relation between the essence (dhat) of God and His attributes (sifat). The main attributes in their view amount to three: knowledge, power, and will. These they negate, for, if affirmed of God, they would entail plurality in His essence. The Mu'tazilites and the philosophers shared this denial of the divine attributes. Al-Ghazali rightly says in the Tahafut al-Falasifah that "the philosophers agree exactly as do the Mu'tazilites that it is impossible to ascribe to the First Principle knowledge, power, and will."²⁶

Al-Kindi, the first philosopher in Islam, followed the Mu'tazilites in their denial of the attributes. But his approach to the solution of the problem is quite different. First, it is not the essence of God and His attributes with which he is concerned; it is rather the predicability of the categories - as we have seen above - to the substance of God. Secondly, all things can be defined, hence known, by giving their genera and differentiae, except God who has neither genus nor differentia. In other terms, al-Kindi follows in his quest the "way of the logicians."

The Kindian arguments for the existence of God depend on the belief in causality. Everything that comes to be must have a cause for its existence. The series of causes are finite, and consequently there is a prime cause, or the true cause, which is God. Causes, enumerated by Aristotle, are the material, the formal, the efficient, and the final. In al-Kindi's philosophy, as repeated in many of his treatises, God is the efficient cause.

There are two kinds of efficient causes; the first is the true efficient cause and its action is creation from nothing (ibda'). All the other efficient causes are intermediate, i.e., they are produced by other causes, and are themselves the causes of other effects. They are called so by analogy; in fact, they are not true causes at all. Only God is the true efficient cause. He acts and is never acted upon.

Given that the world is created by the action of *ibda'* in no time, it must be in need of a creator, i.e., God. Nothing which is created is eternal; God alone is eternal. Beings come to be and pass away. This is clear in the case of corporeal sensibles which are in perpetual flux and change. Also the world as a whole, the celestial bodies, and the universals, such as genera and species, are not eternal, because they are finite and composed. Everything which is finite in space and time is not eternal. The notion of infinity occupies an important place in the philosophy of al-Kindi, and will be discussed later in detail.

Another proof for the existence of God is the order observed in all natural beings. The regularity inherent in the world, the hierarchical degrees of its parts, their interactions, the most perfect state in every being realizing its highest goodness - all this is a proof that there is a Perfect Being who manages everything according to the greatest wisdom²⁷

Beings are in continuous need of God. This is so because God, the Creator *ex nihilo*, is the sustainer of all that He has created, so that if anything lacks His sustainment and power, it perishes.²⁸

Infinity

The world in Aristotle's system is finite in space but infinite in time, because the movement of the world is co-eternal with the Unmovable Mover. Eternity of the world was refuted in Islamic thought, since Islam holds that the world is created. Muslim philosophers, facing this problem, tried to find a solution in accord with religion. Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd were accused of atheism because of their pro-Aristotelianism; they assumed that the world is eternal. In fact, this problem remained one of the important features of Islamic philosophy, and al-Ghazali mentioned it at the beginning of his twenty points against the philosophers in the *Tahafut al-Falasifah*.

Al-Kindi, contrary to his great successors, maintained that the world is not eternal. Of this problem he gave a radical solution by discussing the notion of infinity on mathematical grounds.

Physical bodies are composed of matter and form, and move in space and time. Matter, form, space, movement, and time are the five substances in every physical body. (*Res autem quae sunt in omnibus substantiis sunt quin-que, quarum una est hyle, et secunda est forma, et tertia est locus, et quarta est motus, et quinta est tempus.*)²⁹

Being so connected with corporeal bodies, time and space are finite, given that corporeal bodies are finite; and these latter are finite because they cannot exist except within limits.

Time is not movement; it is the number which measures the motion (*Tempus ergo est numerus numerans motum*) for it is nothing other than the prior and posterior. Number is of two kinds: discrete and continuous. Time is not of the discrete kind but of the continuous kind. Hence, time is definable as the supposed instants which continue from the past to the future. In other words, time is the sum of anterior and posterior instants. It is the continuum of instants.

Time is part of the knowledge of quantity. Space, movement, and time are quantities. The knowledge of these three substances and also the other two is subordinate to the knowledge of quantity and quality. As mentioned

above, he who lacks the knowledge of quantity and quality will lack knowledge of the primary and secondary substances. Quality is the capacity of being similar and dissimilar; quantity, of being equal and unequal. Hence, the three notions of equality, greater, and less are basic in demonstrating the concepts of finitude and infinity.

The arguments against infinity are repeated in a number of al-Kindi's treatises. We give from his treatise "On the Finitude of the Body of the World" the four theorems given as proofs for finitude: -

(1) Two magnitudes³⁰ of the same kind are called equal if one is not greater than the other.³¹

(2) If a magnitude of the same kind is added to one of the two magnitudes of the kind, they will be unequal.

(3) Two magnitudes of the kind cannot be infinite, if one is less than the other, because the less measures the greater or a part of it.

(4) The sum of two magnitudes of the kind, each of which is finite, is finite.

Given these axioms, every body, being composed of matter and form, limited in space, and moving in time, is finite, even if it is the body of the world. And, being finite it is not eternal. God alone is eternal.

Soul And Intellect

Al-Kindi was confused by the doctrines of Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus concerning the soul, especially because he revised the parts translated from Plotinus' *Enneads*, a book which was wrongly ascribed to Aristotle. He borrowed from Plotinus the doctrine of the soul, and followed the model of Aristotle in his theory of the intellect. In a short treatise "On the Soul," he summarizes, as he says, the views of "Aristotle, Plato, and other philo-sophers." In fact, the idea expounded is borrowed from the *Enneads*.

The soul is a simple entity and its substance emanates from the Creator just as the rays emanate from the sun. It is spiritual and of divine substance and is separate and distinct from the body. When it is separated from the body, it obtains the knowledge of everything in the world and has vision of the supernatural. After its separation from the body, it goes to the world of the intellect, returns to the light of the Creator, and sees Him.

The soul never sleeps; only while the body is asleep, it does not use the senses. And, if purified, the soul can see wonderful dreams in sleep and can speak to the other souls which have been separated from their bodies. The same idea is expounded in al-Kindi's treatise: "On Sleep and Dreams," which was translated into Latin. To sleep is to give up the use of the senses. When the soul gives up the use of the senses and uses only reason, it dreams.

The three faculties of the soul are the rational, the irascible, and the appeti-ve. He who gets away from the pleasures of the body and lives most of his life in contemplation to attain to the reality of things, is the good man who is very similar to the Creator.

Another treatise on the intellect played an important role in medieval philosophy, both Eastern and Western. It was translated into Latin under the title *De Intellectu*. The purpose of this treatise is to clarify the different meanings of the intellect (ʿaql) and to show how knowledge is obtained.

Aristotle in his *De Anima* distinguished between two kinds of intellect, the possible and the agent. The possible intellect receives intellection and the agent intellect produces intelligible objects. The latter intellect is described by Aristotle as separate, unmixed, always in actuality, eternal, and uncorrupted.

Alexander of Aphrodisias in his *De Intellectu* holds that there are three kinds of intellect : the material, the habitual, and the agent, thus adding a new intellect which is the *intellectus habitus* or *adeptus*. The *intellectus materialis* is pure potentiality and is perishable. It is the capacity in man to receive the forms. The intellect in habitu is a possession, which means that the intellect has acquired knowledge and possessed it, i. e., has passed from potentiality into actuality. To bring a thing from potentiality to actuality needs something else to act as an agent. This is the third intellect, the agent intellect, also called the *intelligencia agens* and considered by some interpreters to be the divine intelligence which flows into our individual souls.

When we come to al-Kindi we find not three intellects but four. He divided the intellect in habitu into two intellects, one is the possession of knowledge without practising it and the other is the practising of knowledge. The first is similar to a writer who has learnt handwriting and is in possession of this art; the other is similar to the person who practises writing in actuality.

We quote the opening paragraph of his treatise:

“The opinion of Aristotle concerning the intellect is that it is of four kinds:

- (1) The first is the intellect which is always in act.
- (2) The second is the intellect which is potentially in the soul.
- (3) The third is the intellect which has passed in the soul from potentiality to actuality.
- (4) The fourth is the intellect which we call the second.”³²

What he means by the “second” is the second degree of actuality as shown above in the distinction between mere possession of knowledge and practising it.

A complete theory of knowledge is expounded in the rest of the treatise. There are two kinds of forms, the material and the immaterial. The first is the sensuous, because the sensibles are composed of matter and form. When the soul acquires the material form, it becomes one with it, i. e., the material form and the soul become one and the same. Similarly, when the soul acquires the rational forms which are immaterial, they are united with the soul. In this way, the soul becomes actually rational. Before that it was rational in potentiality. What we call the intellect is nothing other than the genera and species of things.

This intellectual operation is again illustrated in al-Kindi's treatise on “First Philosophy.” He says: “When the genera and species are united with the soul, they become intellectibles. The soul becomes actually rational after its unity with the species. Before this unity the soul was potentially rational. Now, everything which exists in potentiality does not pass to actuality save by something which brings it from potentiality to actuality. It is the genera

and species of things, i. e., the universals... which make the soul which is potentially rational to be actually rational, I mean, which get united with it.”³³

Al-Kindi abruptly passes from the above epistemological discussion to an ontological one concerning the oneness of the universals and their origin. The universals are the intellect in so far as they are united with the soul. Thus the question arises whether the intellect is one or many. It is one in one respect and many in another.

This is his full account: “And as universals are many, as shown above, so is the intellect. It seems to us that the intellect is the first plurality. But it is also one, because it is a whole, as shown above and oneness is applied to the whole. But the true oneness (wahdah)³⁴ is not of the intellect.”

Following the doctrine of Plotinus, al-Kindi passed on to the metaphysical plane of the One. As mentioned above, he confused Aristotle's metaphysics of Being with that of Plotinus.' For this reason he was unable to elaborate a coherent system of his own. This was what al-Farabi, the Second Master, was able to do.

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G. Flugel, Al-Kindi genannt “der Philosoph der Araber,” Abhdl. f. die Kunde des Morgenlandes, Leipzig, 1857.

Notes

1. Mustafa 'Abd al-Raziq, following de Boer, gives this date. On the biography of al-Kindi the best article is that of Mustafa 'Abd al-Raziq in *Failasuf al-'Arab w-al-Mu'allim al-Thani*, Cairo, 1945, pp. 7-50. See also Ahmed Fouad El-Ehwany's "Introduction" to the edition of al-Kindi's treatise on "First Philosophy," Cairo, 1948, pp. 3-49, and Abu Ridah's "Introduction" to *Rasa'il al-Kindi*, Cairo, 1950, pp. 1-80.
2. Al-Qifti, *Tarikh al-Hukama'*, Cairo ed., p. 241
3. Ibn Nabatah, *Sharh Risalah Ibn Zaidun*, Cairo, p. 113.
4. Ibn Abi Usaibi'ah, *Tabaqat al-Atibba'*, Cairo, Vol. I, p. 207.
5. Albino Nagy, *Die philosophischen Abhandlungen des al-Kindi*, 1897
6. Ahmed Fouad El-Ehwany edited his important and long treatise on "First Philosophy" in 1948; his *De Intellectu* with *Kitab al-Nafs* of Ibn Rushd in 1950; his treatise "On the Soul" in *al-Kitab*, 1949. Abu Ridah edited all the treatises in two volumes in Cairo, the first in 1950, the second in 1953. M. Guidi and R. Walzer edited in 1940 his treatise "On the Num-ber of Aristotle's Books," and translated it into the Italian, in *Real Academia Nazionale dei Lincei*, ser. VI, Vol. VI, fasc. 5. Rosenthal in 1956 edited in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. LXXVI, No. 1, pp. 27-31, his treatise "On Atmospheric Phenomena" (*Risalah fi Ahdath al-Jaww*).
7. Ibn Nadim, *al-Fihrist*, Cairo, p.255.
8. Rosenthal, *op.cit*, p.27.
9. Ibn Nabatah, *op. cit.*, p. 125
10. A full discussion of this question is found in the article of Rosenthal referred to above.
11. Mustafa 'Abd al-Raziq, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
12. El-Ehwany, Ed.. "First Philosophy," Cairo, 1948, p. 79
13. El-Ehwany, *Islamic Philosophy*, Cairo, 1957, pp. 35-36
14. Mustafa 'Abd al-Raziq, *op. cit.*, p. 47
15. "First Philosophy," p. 82.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. In *Oriens*, Vol. X, No. 2, 1957, "New Studies on al-Kindi," Walzer translates this term by "divine knowledge." We guess what is meant in this context is the divine science as compared with human science. Guidi and Walzer edited this manuscript and translated it into Italian: *Il Numero dei Libri di Aristotle*. In the Italian translation the term is *scienza divina* which corresponds to divine science.
19. "This" either refers to the divine science, the divine knowledge of the prophet, or the prophetic faculty. Walzer in his translation of this passage gives the latter interpretation. Cf. *Oriens*, p. 206.
20. M. Guidi and R. Walzer, *op. cit.*, p. 395. Except at some places, we follow in the main the translation given by Walzer in *Oriens*, p. 206.
21. Rosenthal, "Al-Kindi and Ptolemy," *Studi Orientalistici*, Vol. II, Roma, 1956, p. 455. The view that al-Kindi was not a true philosopher, but simply a translator, was held by some ancient writers. Madkour, in his book *La Place d'Al-Farabii dans l'Ecole Philosophique Musulmane*, considers him rather a mathe-matician. Abu Ridah, in his "Introduction" to *al-Rasa'il*, considers him to be a true philosopher in the full sense of the term. We rather adhere to Rosenthal's view. Cf. Ahmed Fouad El-Ehwany's "Introduction" to al-Kindi's "First Philosophy."
22. This treatise is not yet edited.. Rosenthal, in the above article on "Al-Kindi and Ptolemy," gave some excerpts and analysed it.
23. Rosenthal, "Al-Kindi and Ptolemy," *Studi Orientalistici*, p. 449. The author has compared Ptolemy's text with both Theon's commentary and al-Kindi's text
24. With Abu Ridah we understand this term to be intelligibles or concepts (*al-ma'qulat*), but categories is more suitable in this .context.
25. "First Philosophy," p. 141; in Abu Ridah's edition, p. 160. The term *wahdah* means either unity or oneness, but in this context it is oneness.
26. Van den Bergh, *The Incoherence of the Incoherence*, London, 1954, Vol. I, p. 186.
27. Abu Ridah, *Rasa'il*, "On the Efficient Cause of Generation and Corruption," p. 215.
28. "First Philosophy", p.143.

29. Liber de Quinque Essentiis. This treatise was translated into Latin in the Medieval Ages.

30. Magnitudes apply to lines, surfaces, or bodies. A magnitude of the same kind means one applying solely to one of the three kinds mentioned. Cf. Abu Ridah, Rasa'il, Vol. I, "Treatise on the Finitude of the Body of the World," p. 187.

31. We quote the example given by al-Kindi and the proof of this theorem as a specimen of his mathematical method. "Example: Given A and B are magnitudes of the same kind, and the one is not greater than the other, we say that they are equal. Proof: If they are unequal, then one is greater than the other, say A is greater than B. But since A is not greater than B, as mentioned above, this leads to a contradiction. It follows that they are equal." Ibid., p. 188.

32. El-Ehwany, Islamic Philosophy, Cairo, 1951, pp. 51-52

33. "First Philosophy." p. 134

34. The term wahdah means here oneness, not unity. At the beginning of this same paragraph he speaks about "the true one," and says it is not soul.

Chapter 22 : Muhammad Ibn Zakariya Al-Razi

By *Abdurrahman Badawi*

Life

According to al-Biruni,¹ Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Zakariya ibn Yahya al-Razi was born in Rayy on the first of Sha`ban in the year 251/865. In his early life, he was a jeweller (Baihaqi), money-changer (Ibn Abi Usaibi`ah), or more likely a lute-player (Ibn Juljul, Said, Ibn Khalikan, Usaibi`ah, al-Safadi) who first left music for alchemy, and then at the age of thirty or (as Safadi says) after forty left alchemy because his experiments in it gave him some eye disease (al-Biruni), which obliged him to search for doctors and medicine. That was the reason, they (al-Biruni, Baihaqi and others) say, he studied medicine.

He was very studious and worked day and night. His master was 'Ali ibn Rabban al-Tabari (al-Qifti, Usaibi`ah), a doctor and philosopher, who was born in Merv about 192/808 and died some years after 240/855.² With Ibn Rabban al-Tabari he studied medicine and perhaps also philosophy. It is possible to trace back al-Razi's interest in religious philosophy to his master, whose father was a rabbinist versed in the Scriptures.

Al-Razi became famous in his native city as a doctor. Therefore, he directed the hospital of Rayy (Ibn Juljul, al-Qifti, Ibn Abi Usaibi`ah), in the times of Mansur ibn Ishaq ibn Ahmad ibn Asad who was the Governor of Rayy from 290-296/902-908 in the name of his cousin Ahmad ibn Isma`il ibn Ahmad, second Samanian ruler.³ It is to this Mansur ibn Ishaq ibn Ahmad that Razi dedicated his *al-Tibb al-Mansuri*, as it is attested by a manuscript⁴ of this book, as against Ibn al-Nadim's assumption,⁵ repeated by al-Qifti⁶ and Ibn Abi Usaibi`ah,⁷ that this Mansur was Mansur ibn Ismail who died in 365/975.

From Rayy al-Razi went to Baghdad during the Caliph Muktafi's times⁸ (r. 289/901-295/907) and there too directed a hospital.

It seems that after al-Muktafi's death (295/907) al-Razi came back to Rayy. Here gathered round him many students. As Ibn al-Nadim relates in *Fihrist*,⁹ al-Razi was then a Shaikh "with a big head similar to a sack"; he used to be surrounded by circle after circle of students. If someone came to ask something in science, the question was put to those of the first circle; if they did not know the answer, it passed on to those of the second, and so on till it came to al-Razi himself if all others failed to give the answer. Of these students we know at least the name of one, i. e., Abu Bakr ibn Qarin al-Razi who became a doctor.¹⁰

Al-Razi was generous, humane towards his patients, and charitable to the poor, so that he used to give them full treatment without charging any fee, and even stipends.¹¹ When not occupied with pupils or patients he was always writing and study-ing.¹² It seems that this was the reason for the gradual weakening of his sight that finally brought blindness to his eyes. Some say¹³ that the reason for his blindness was that he used to eat too much of broad beans (*baqilah*). It began with cataract¹⁴ which ended in complete blindness.

They say that he refused to be treated for cataract saying that he "had seen so much of the world that he was fed up."¹⁵ But this seems to be more

of an anecdote than a historical fact. It was one of his pupils from Tabaristan that came to treat him, but, as al-Biruni says, he refused to be treated saying that it was useless as his hour of death was approaching.¹⁶ Some days after, he died in Rayy, on the 5th of Sha'ban 313/27th of October 925.¹⁷

Al-Razi's Masters and Opponents

We have already mentioned that al-Razi studied medicine under 'Ali ibn Rabban al-Tabari. Ibn al-Nadim says¹⁸ that he studied philosophy under al-Balkhi. This al-Balkhi, according to Ibn al-Nadim had travelled much, and knew philosophy and ancient sciences well. Some even say that al-Razi attributed to himself some of al-Balkhi's books on philosophy. We know nothing else about this al-Balkhi, not even his full name.

Al-Razi's opponents, on the contrary, are known better. They were the following:

1. Abu al-Qasim al-Balkhi, chief of the Mu'tazilah of Baghdad (d. 319/931), was a contemporary of al-Razi; he composed many refutations of al-Razi's books, especially his 'Ilm al-Ilahi.¹⁹ He had controversies with him especially on time.²⁰

2. Shuhaid ibn al-Husain al-Balkhi,²¹ with whom al-Razi had many contro-versies;²² one of these controversies was on the theory of pleasure.²³ His theory of pleasure is expounded in his Tafdil Ladhdat al-Nafs from which Abu Sulaiman al-Mantiqi al-Sijistani gives some extracts in Siwan al-Hikmah.²⁴ Al-Balkhi died before 329/940.

3. Abu Hatim al-Razi, the most important of all his opponents (d. 322/933--934) and one of the greatest Isma'ili missionaries.²⁵ He reproduced contro-versies between him and al-Razi in his A`lam al-Nubuwwah.²⁶ Thanks to this book, al-Razi's ideas about prophets and religion are preserved for us.

4. Ibn al-Tammar, whom Kraus believes to be perhaps Abu Bakr Husain al-Tammar.²⁷ He was a physician and had some controversies with al-Razi as is reported by Abu Hatim al-Razi in A`lam al-Nubuwwah.²⁸ Ibn al-Tammar refuted al-Razi's al-Tibb al-Ruhani and al-Razi answered this refutation.²⁹ In fact, al-Razi wrote two refutations: (a) refutation of al-Tammar's refutation of Misma'i concerning matter; (b) refutation of al-Tammar's opinion on the atmosphere of subterranean habitations.³⁰

5. Those of whom we know from the titles of the books written by al-Razi: (a) al-Misma'i, a Mutakallim who had written against the materialists and against whom al-Razi wrote a treatise;³¹ (b) Jarir the doctor who had a theory about the eating of black mulberry after water-melon;³² (c) al-Hasan ibn Mubarik al-Ummi, to whom al-Razi wrote two epistles;³³ (d) al-Kayyal, a Mutakallim, against whose theory of the Imam, al-Razi wrote a book;³⁴ (e) Mansur ibn Talhah, who wrote a book on "Being" refuted by al-Razi;³⁵ (f) Muhammad ibn al-Laith al-Rasa'ili whose writing against alchemists was answered by al-Razi.³⁶

6. Ahmad ibn al-Tayyib al-Sarakhsi (d. 286/899), an elder contemporary of al-Razi. Al-Razi refuted him on the question of bitter taste;³⁷ Al-Razi refuted also his master, Ya`qub ibn Ishaq al-Kindi, who had written against the alchemists.³⁸

7. We should add to all those known by names many others who were refuted by al-Razi, especially the Mu'tazilah and different Mutakallimin.³⁹

Works

Al-Razi's books are very numerous. He himself prepared a catalogue of his books, reproduced by Ibn al-Nadim.⁴⁰ Here we find: 118 books, 19 epistles, then 4 books, 6 epistles, and one maqalah, the total being 148 works.

After Ibn al-Nadim, al-Biruni wrote an epistle on the bibliography of al-Razi. This epistle, found in a unique manuscript in Leiden,⁴¹ was edited by Paul Kraus,⁴² and translated into German by J. Ruska in his article: "al-Biruni als Quelle fur das Leben and die Schriften al-Razi's."⁴³ This catalogue is preceded by a short note on al-Razi's life.

The books are classified as follows: (a) on medicine (1-56 books); (b) physics (57-89); (c) logic (90-96); (d) mathematics and astronomy (97-106); (e) commentaries, abridgments, and epitomes (107-13); (f) philosophy and hypothetical sciences (114-30); (g) metaphysics (131-36); (h) theology (137-50); alchemy (151-72); (i) atheistic books (173-74); (j) miscellaneous (175--84). In al-Nadim's and al-Biruni's lists, there are some common and some non-common titles.

Ibn Abi Usaibi`ah (Vol.I, pp.315-19) mentions 236 works of which some are certainly apocryphal.

The different titles given by al-Biruni, Ibn al-Nadim, al-Qifti, and Ibn Abi Usaibi'ah were assembled by Dr. Mahmud al-Najmabadi in his book: *Sharh Hal Muhammad ibn Zakariya* published in 1318/1900. He gave 250 titles.

As extant manuscripts of al-Razi's books, Brockelmann (Vol. I, pp. 268-71, Suppl., Vol. I, pp. 418-21) gives 59 titles.

Of his philosophical works, we have: -

1. *Al-Tibb al-Ruhani* (Brit. Mus. Add. Or. 25758; vat. Ar. 182 Cairo 2241 Tas).
2. *Al-Sirat al-Falsafiyah* (Brit. Mus. Add. Or. 7473).
3. *Amarat Iqbal al-Daulah* (Raghib 1463, ff. 98a-99b, Istanbul).

These three were published by Paul Kraus: "Abi Bakr Mohammadi Filu Zachariae Raghensis," *Opera Philosophica, fragmentaque quae supersunt, Collegit et edidit Paulus Kraus. Pars Prior. Cahirae MCMXXXIX*. In this edition Kraus published also fragments or exposes of the following books: -

4. *Kitab al-Ladhdhah*.
5. *Kitab al-'Ilm al-Ilahi*.
6. *Maqalah fi ma ba'd al-Tabi`ah*.

The last one is spurious; it is attributed falsely to al-Razi in a manuscript (Istanbul, Raghib 1463, f. 90a-98b). Kraus gives also the exposes of different authors of al-Razi's ideas on: (a) The five eternal (God, universal soul, first matter, absolute space, and absolute time); (b) matter; (c) time and space; (d) soul and world. At the end of the volume he gives extracts from *A'lam al-Nubuwwah* of Abu Hatim on prophecy, followed by extracts from *al-Aqwal al-Dhahabiyyah* of Ahmad ibn 'Abd Allah al-Kirmani on the same subject.

7. Besides these books and extracts contained in the first volume (the only one published by Kraus), Kraus published in *Orientalia* some other extracts concerning al-Razi's ideas on prophecy (Vol. V., Fasc. 3/4, Roma, 1936).

8. *Al-Shukuk 'ala Proclus* which was prepared by Kraus to be edited and was found among the papers he left after his suicide.

Nothing of these philosophical books was translated into Latin. All Latin translations of his works were confined to medicine and alchemy.

Philosophy

1. Method

Al-Razi is a pure rationalist. He believes in reason, and in reason alone. In medicine, his clinical studies reveal a very solid method of investigation based on observation and experimentation. In *Kitab al-Faraj ba'd al-Shiddah* by al-Tanukhi (d. 384/994) and *Chahar Maqalah* of Nizami `Arudi Samar-qandi written about 550/1155, we find a lot of cases attributed to al-Razi where he shows an excellent method of clinical investigation. E. G. Browne, in his *Arabian Medicine*, has translated a page supposed to be taken from al-Razi's *Hawi*⁴⁴ which shows this method. It runs as follows:

Al-Razi's exaltation of reason is best expressed on the first page of his *Tibb al-Ruhani*. He says: "God, glorious is His name, has given us reason in order to obtain through it from the present and future the utmost benefits that we can obtain; it is God's best gift to us.... By reason we perceive all that is useful to us and all that makes our life good - by it we know obscure and remote things, those which are hidden from us. .. by it, too, we succeed to the knowledge of God, which is the highest knowledge we can obtain.... If reason is so highly placed and is of such an important rank, we should not degrade it; we should not make it the judged while it is the judge, or con-trolled while it is the controller, or commanded while it is the commander; on the contrary, we should refer to it in everything and judge all matters by it; we should do according as it commands us to do."⁴⁵

Even the most rationalistic mind could not exalt reason so clearly and so highly. There is no place for revelation or mystic intuition. It is only logical reason which is the unique criterion of knowledge and conduct. No irrational force can be invoked. Al-Razi is against prophecy, against revelation, against all irrational trends of thought.

Men are born with equal dispositions for knowledge. It is only through cultivation of these dispositions that men differ, some cultivating them by speculation and learning, others neglecting them or directing them to a practical way of life.⁴⁶

2. Metaphysics

When one begins to expound al-Razi's metaphysics, one at first comes across a small treatise attributed to him: *Maqalah li Abi Bakr Muhammad Ibn Zakariya al-Razi fi ma ba`d al-Tabi'ah* (Raghib MS. No. 1463, ff. 90a-98b, in Istanbul). There is much doubt about the authenticity of this treatise, because its contents do not agree entirely with al-Razi's otherwise known doctrines. So, either it may belong to another period of al-Razi's intellectual development, as Pines supposes,⁴⁷ or it may contain only a systematic

historical expose of other people's ideas without reference to his own,⁴⁸ or it may not be by al-Razi at all.

Anyhow, the main points treated here are: (1) nature, (2) foetus, and (3) eternity of movement. The author refutes the partisans of the idea of nature as principle of movement, especially Aristotle and his commentators: John Philoponos, Alexander of Aphrodisias, and Porphyry.

At first he denies that there is no need to prove the existence of nature, because it is not evident by itself. If nature is one and the same, why does it produce different effects in stone and in man? If nature permeates the body, does not that mean that two things can occupy one and the same place? Why do those partisans say that nature is dead, insensible, impotent, ignorant, without liberty and choice, and at the same time attribute to it the same qualities as to God? Against Porphyry the author says: You admit that nature acts in view of something and not by hazard or mere chance; why then do you say that nature is dead and not a living agent?

It seems that the author wants to refute all doctrines which pretend that nature is the principle of movement and creation, by showing the contra-dictions to which these doctrines necessarily lead. His standpoint is that there is no place for admitting the existence of nature as principle of action and movement. But he does not define his attitude; his expose is negative and destructive.

As for the question of eternity of movement and time, the author discusses especially the ideas of Aristotle and Proclus.⁴⁹ He refers to his refutation of Proclus. We know that al-Razi has written a treatise entitled "Doubts about Proclus," and Kraus⁵⁰ thinks that this is an argument in favour of the authenticity of the attribution of the treatise to al-Razi, but we think that this is a weak argument, because Proclus' *de aeternitate mundi* was much discussed by Arab thinkers after it had been translated by Ishaq ibn Hunain.⁵¹

The author's idea is that time is finite and not eternal, that the world is also finite, that there is only one world, and, lastly, that outside that one world there is no element and nothing (except God). Here he reproduces the ideas of Metrodorus and Seleucus taken from pseudo-Plutarch's *Placita Philo-sophorum*.

The general trend of this treatise is polemical and dialectical. It cannot be reconciled with al-Razi's ideas on time, space, and Deity. Therefore, we think that it is spurious and cannot even belong to another period of al-Razi's spiritual development.

The real doctrine of al-Razi should be searched for in his *Kitab al-'Ilm al-Ilahi*. Unfortunately, that work is lost and we have only refutations of some passages from it collected by Kraus.⁵² We do not even have textual fragments of al-Razi's book. With all the inconveniences of adversaries' exposes, we have nothing more to do than to content ourselves with these refutations. What we can conclude from these is that al-Razi treated in this book: space, vacuum, time, duration, matter, metempsychosis, prophecy, pleasure, and Manichaeism.

Al-Razi's philosophy is chiefly characterized by his doctrine of the Five Eternals. Al-Biruni says⁵³ that "Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Razi has

re-ported from the ancient Greeks the eternity of five things: God, the universal soul, first matter, absolute space, and absolute time, on which he founded his doctrine. But he distinguished between time and duration by saying that number applies to the one and not to the other, because finiteness attains numerality; and, therefore, the philosophers have defined time as the duration of what has a beginning and an end, whereas duration (dahr) has neither beginning nor end.

He said also that in Being these five are necessary: the sensible in it is the matter formed by composition; it is spatial, so there must be a space; alternation of its modes is a characteristic of time, because some precede and others follow, and it is by time that oldness and new-ness, and older and newer and simultaneous are known; so time is necessary. In Being there are living things, so there must be soul; in it there are intelligibles and their constitution is absolutely perfect; there must be then a creator, wise, omniscient, doing things as perfectly as possible, and giving reason for the sake of salvation.”

Out of the Five Eternals, two are living and acting: God and soul; one is passive and. not living: matter from which all bodies are made; and two are neither living and acting, nor passive: vacuum and duration.⁵⁴ Sometimes we find vacuum (khala') instead of space (makan), and duration (dahr) instead of time (zaman) or duration in the limited sense (muddah).

This doctrine is attributed, in, some sources (al-Fakhr al-Razi, al-Shahras-tani, Nasir al-Din al-Tusi), to the so-called Harraniyyah. Who were these Harraniyyah? The word comes from Harran, the famous city of the Sabians and a centre of learning immediately before Islam and in the first four centuries of the Islamic era. Massignon⁵⁵ thinks that these Harraniyyah are fictitious persons, and that what we find about them in our sources is a mere “literary romance” (roman litteraire).

Kraus is also of the same opinion, and he gives his reasons⁵⁶ as follows: (a) before al-Razi we find no one who attributes the doctrine of the five eternal to al-Harraniyyah; (b) al-Razi, in his 'Ilm al-Ilahi has expounded the doctrines of the Sabian Harraniyyah and also his doctrine of the five eternal. But then Kraus gives a third reason which proves exactly the contrary of what the first two prove: al-Biruni, al-Marzuqi, al-Katibi, and al-Tusi say that al-Razi reported this doctrine from the ancient Greeks, that is to say, the early Greek philosophers, especially Pythagoras, Democritus, etc.

How can we then say that al-Razi attributed this doctrine to a fictitious school, Harraniyyah, when he said expressly in his 'Ilm al-Ilahi that it was the doctrine of the early Greek philosophers? He was not in need of inventing the Harraniyyah, when he already had declared that it was the doctrine of the early Greek philosophers. For this reason, we cannot admit Massignon's suggestion, nor Kraus' evidence which are very weak. It is not right to identify what is attributed in the different sources to the Harraniyyah with al-Razi's ideas unless this is expressly declared in the sources themselves.

We may now describe these Five Eternals.

(i) God

God's wisdom is perfect No inadvertence can be attributed to Him. Life flows from Him as light flows from the sun. He is perfect and pure Intelligence. From the soul life flows.⁵⁷ God creates everything, He is incapable of nothing, and nothing can be contrary to His will. God knows things perfectly well. But the soul knows only what it experiences. God knew that soul would tend to matter and ask for material pleasure. After that soul attached itself to matter; God by his wisdom arranged that this attachment should be brought about in the most perfect way.

God afterwards poured intelligence and perception upon the soul. That was the reason for the soul to remember its real world and the reason for it to know that so long as it is in the world of matter it will never be free from pain. If soul knows that, and also that in its real world it will have pleasure without pain, it will desire that world and, once separated from matter, it will remain there for ever in utmost happiness.

In that way all doubts can be removed about the eternity of the world and the existence of evil. Since we have admitted the wisdom of the Creator, we must admit that the world is created. If one asks why it was created in this or that moment, we say that it was because soul attached itself to matter in that moment. God knew that this attachment was a cause of evil, but after it had been brought about, God directed it to the best possible way. But some evils remained; being the source of all evils, this composition of soul and matter could not be completely purified.⁵⁸

(ii) Soul

God, according to al-Razi, has not created the world through any necessity, but He decided to create it after having at first no will to create it. Who determined Him to do so? There must be another eternal who made Him decide this.

This other eternal is the soul which was living but ignorant. Matter, too, was eternal. Owing to its ignorance, the soul was fond of matter and formed figures from it in order to get material pleasures. But matter was rebellious to forms; so God intervened in order to aid the soul. This aid was that He made this world and created in it strong forms wherein the soul could find corporeal pleasures. God then created man and from the substance of His divinity he created the intelligence of man to awaken the soul and to show to it that this world is not its real world.

But man cannot attain the real world except by philosophy. He who studies philosophy and knows his real world and acquires knowledge is saved from his bad state. Souls remain in this world till they are awakened by philosophy to the mystery and directed towards the real world.⁵⁹

(iii) Matter

The absolute or first matter is composed of atoms. Each atom has volume; otherwise by their collection nothing could be formed. If the world is destroyed, it too is dispersed into atoms. Matter has been there from eternity, because it is impossible to admit that a thing comes from nothing.

What is more compact becomes the substance of the earth, what is more rarefied than the substance of the earth becomes the substance of water,

what is still more rarefied becomes the substance of air, and what is still more and more rarefied becomes the substance of fire.

The body of the sphere is also composed of the particles of matter, but its composition differs from the compositions of other bodies. The proof of this is that the movement of the sphere is not directed to the centre of the world, but to its periphery. Its body is not very compact, as that of the earth, nor very rarefied as that of fire or air.

Qualities such as heaviness, levity, darkness, and luminosity are to be explained by the more or less vacuity which is within matter. Quality is an accident which is attributed to substance, and substance is matter.⁶⁰

Al-Razi gives two proofs to establish the eternity of matter. First, creation is manifest; there must then be its Creator. What is created is nothing but formed matter. Why then do we prove, from the created, the anteriority of the Creator, and not the anteriority of the created being? If it is true that body is created (or more exactly: made [masnu`]) from something by the force of an agent, then we should say that as this agent is eternal and immutable before: His act, what received this act of force must also have been eternal before it received that act. This receiver is matter. Then matter is eternal.

The second proof is based on the impossibility of creatio ex nihilo. Creating, that is to say, making something out of nothing is easier than composing it. God's creating men fully at one stroke would be easier than composing them in forty years. This is the first premise. The wise Creator does not prefer to do what is farther from His purpose to what is nearer, unless He is incapable of doing what is easier and nearer. This is the second premise. The conclusion from these premises is that the existence of all things should be caused by the Creator of the world through creation and not by composition. But what we see is evidently the contrary. All things in this world are produced by composition and not by creation. It necessarily follows that He is incapable of creatio ex nihilo and the world came to be by the composition of things the origin of which is matter.

Al-Razi adds, universal induction proves this. If nothing in the world comes to be except from another thing, it is necessary that natures are made from another thing, and this other thing is matter. Therefore, matter is eternal; it was originally not composed, but dispersed.⁶¹

(iv) Space

As it is proved that matter is eternal, and as matter should occupy space, so there is eternal space. This argument is nearly the same as that given by al-Iranshahri. But al-Iranshahri says that space is the manifest might of God. Al-Razi could not follow his master's vague definition. For him, space is the place where matter is.

Al-Razi distinguishes between two kinds of space: universal or absolute, and particular or relative. The former is infinite and does not depend on the world and the spatial things in it.

Vacuum is inside space, and, consequently, inside matter. As a proof of the infinity of space, the partisans (al-Iranshahri and al-Razi) say that a spatialized thing cannot exist without space, though space may exist without spatialized things.. Space is nothing but the receptacle for the spatialized

things. What con-tains the two is either a body, or a not-body. If it is a body, it must be in space, and outside this body there is space or no-space; if no-space, it is a body and finite. If it is not-body, it is space. Therefore, space is infinite. If someone says that this absolute space has an end, that means that its limit is a body. As every body is finite, and every body is in space, so space is infinite in every sense. What is infinite is eternal, so space is eternal.⁶²

Vacuum has the power of attracting bodies; therefore, water is conserved (or retained) in a bottle submerged in water with the opening turned down-wards.⁶³

(v) Time

Time, according to al-Razi, is eternal. It is a substance that flows (jauhar yajri). He is against those (Aristotle and his followers) who pretend-that time is the number of the movements of the body, because if it were so, it would not have been possible for two moving things to move in one time by two different numbers.

Al-Razi distinguishes between two kinds of time: absolute time and limited (mahsur) time. The absolute time is duration (al-dahr). It is eternal and moving. As for the limited time, it is that of the movements of the spheres and of the sun and stars. If you imagine the movement of duration, you can imagine absolute time, and this is eternity. If you imagine the movement of the sphere, you imagine the limited time.⁶⁴

Theology

Al-Razi was a theist, but he does not believe in revelation and prophecy. We content ourselves with giving a summary of his main ideas.

Al-Razi contests prophecy on the following grounds:

1. Reason is sufficient to distinguish. between good and evil, useful and harmful. By reason alone we can know God, and organize our lives in- the best way. Why then is there need for prophets?

2. There is no justification for privileging some men for guiding all men because all men are born equal in intelligence; the differences are not be-cause of natural dispositions, but because of development and education.

3. Prophets contradict one another. If they speak in the name of one and the same God, why this contradiction?

After denying prophecy, al-Razi goes on to criticize religions in general. He expounds the contradictions of the Jews, the Christians, the Manichaeans, and the Majusis. He gives the following reasons for the attachment of men to religion:

(a) Imitation and tradition.

(b) Power of the clergy who are in the service of the State.

(c) External manifestations of religions, ceremonials and rituals, which impose themselves upon the imagination of the simple and the naive.

He shows contradictions between religion and religion in detail.

Al-Razi subjects the revealed books, the Bible and the Qur'an, to systematic criticism. He tries to criticize the one by the aid of the other; for instance, he criticizes Judaism by means of Manichaeism, and Christianity by means of Islam; and then criticizes the Qur'an by means of the Bible.

He denies especially the miraculousness (i'jaz) of the Qur'an, either because of its style or its contents and affirms that it is possible to write a better book in a better style.

He prefers scientific books to all sacred books, because scientific books are more useful to men in their lives than all sacred books. Books on medicine, geometry, astronomy, and logic are more useful than the Bible and the Qur'an. The authors of these scientific books have found the facts and truths by their own intelligence, without the help of prophets. Science is drawn from three sources: reasoning, according to logic; tradition, from predecessors to successors according to sure and accurate testimony, as in history; and instinct which guides man without being in need of much reasoning.

After this negative criticism, he goes on to say that it would not even be reasonable of God to send prophets, because they do much harm. Every nation believes only in its own prophets and vehemently denies those of others, with the result that there have been many religious wars and much hatred between nations professing different religions.

These ideas of al-Razi were most audacious. No other Muslim thinker was so daring as he.

Moral Philosophy

Razi's moral philosophy is to be found in the only extant philosophical works of his, al-Tibb al-Ruhani and al-Sirat al-Falsafiyah. The latter work is a justification of his conduct of life, from the philosophical point of view, because he was blamed by some people for not living on the model of his master, Socrates. It is a curious and very interesting apologia pro vita sua.

He thinks that there should be moderation in a philosopher's life - neither much asceticism, nor too much indulgence in pleasures. There are two limits higher and lower. The higher limit beyond which a philosopher should not go is to abstain from pleasures that cannot be obtained except by committing injustice and doing things contrary to reason. The lower is to eat what does not harm him or cause illness, and to wear what is sufficient to protect his skin, and so on. Between the two limits, one can live without becoming unworthy of being called a philosopher.

Al-Razi claims that he in his practical life did not go beyond these two limits. He did not live in the service of a monarch as a minister or a man of arms, but as a doctor and counsellor. He was not greedy, nor in conflict with other people but, on the contrary, he was very tolerant as regards his own rights. He never exceeded in drinking, eating, or enjoying life. As for his love of science and study, it is all well known to everybody. From the theoretical point of view too, his works entitle him to be called a philosopher.-

In al-Tibb al-Ruhani he treats, in twenty chapters, the main points of ethics. He wants to expound what the vices are and how we are to get rid of them.

He begins with the exaltation of reason, in the manner we have seen above. Then he goes in *medius res* by treating the question of passions. He says that man should control his passions; he brings out the distinction

drawn by Plato between three aspects of the soul: reasonable, pugnacious, and appetitive; and shows how justice should reign among them.

It is necessary that a man should know his own defects. For this, he can appeal to a reasonable friend who will tell him about his defects. He should get information about what other people, neighbours, and friends, think of him. Here al-Razi depends on two treatises of Galen: "On Knowing One's Own Defects," and "How Good People Benefit from Their Enemies."

These are the contents of preliminary chapters. In the fifth, he expounds his theory of pleasure, a theory which he treats again in a special epistle. For him, pleasure is nothing but the return of what was removed by something harmful to the previous state, for example, one who leaves a shadowy place for a sunny and hot place gets pleasure on coming back to the shadowy place. For this reason, says al-Razi, natural philosophers have defined pleasure as a return to nature.

Al-Razi condemns love as an excess and submission to passions. He con-demns vanity; because it prevents one from learning more and working better. Envy is an amalgamation of misery and cupidity. An envious man is the man who feels sad when another obtains some good things, even when no harm comes to him at all. If he has been harmed, then the emotion is not envy but enmity. If a person contents himself with what is necessary for him, then there would be no place for envy in his soul.

Anger is aroused in animals to make it possible for them to take revenge on harmful things. If it is in excess, it does much harm to them.

Lying is a bad habit. It is of two sorts: for good, or for evil. If it is for good, then it merits praise; otherwise, it is blameworthy. So its value depends on the intention.

Misery cannot be wholly condemned. Its value depends on the reason for it. If it is due to the fear of poverty and fear of the future, then it is not bad. If it is for mere pleasure of acquisition, it is bad. There must be a justification for one's misery; if it is a reasonable one, it is not a vice; otherwise it is a thing to be combated.

Worry, when it is too much, is not a good thing, for its excess, without good reason, leads to hallucination, melancholy, and early withering.

Cupidity is a very bad state which brings pain and harm. Drunkenness leads to calamities and ills of body and mind.

Copulation, when in excess, is bad for the body; it causes early senility, weakness, and many other ills. One should indulge in it as little as one can, because excess in it leads to more excess.

Frivolity is also pernicious in some cases.

Acquisition and economy are good for living, but only in moderation. No more wealth should be acquired than is needed and spent, except a little saving for sudden calamities and bad future circumstances.

Ambition may lead to adventures and perils. It is well and good if we can get a better rank without adventure or peril; otherwise it is better to renounce it.

The last chapter treats a favourite theme in the Hellenistic and early medieval period, that of the fear of death. Here al-Razi contents himself by dealing with it from the point of view of those who think that when the body

is destroyed, the soul is also destroyed. After death, nothing comes to man, because he cannot feel anything. During his life, man is submerged in pains, whereas after death there would be no pain whatever. The best thing for a reasonable man to do is to get rid of the fear of death, because if he believes in another life, he must be joyful because, by death, he goes to a better world. If he believes there is nothing after death, there is no cause for worry. In any case, one should reject every kind of worry about death, because it is not reasonable to worry.

Conclusion

Al-Razi had no organized system of philosophy, but compared to his time he must be reckoned as the most vigorous and liberal thinker in Islam and perhaps in the whole history of human thought.

He was a pure rationalist, extremely confident in the power of reason, free from every kind of prejudice, and very daring in the expression of his ideas without reserve.

He believed in man, in progress, and in God the Wise, but in no religion whatever.

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Notes

1. Epitre de Beruni, contenant le repertoire des ouvryes de Muhammad ibn Zakariya ar-Razi, publiee par Paul Kraus, Paris, 1936, p. 4.
2. See on him: Fihrist, p. 296; al-Baihaqi, p. 22; Usaibi'ah, Vol. I, p. 309; Meyer-hof, ZDMG, 85, 38 et sqq.; Wustefeld, p. 55; Leclerc, Vol. I, p. 292; Brockelmann, GAL, Vol. I, p. 265, Suppl., Vol. I, pp. 414-15; Brockelmann (Suppl., Vol. I, p. 415) refutes the contention that al-Razi was Ibn Rabban's pupil, on the ground that the latter was in Rayy in 224/838. But this proof is not sufficient, because Ibn Rabban's life is not well known as to enable one to assert that he did not, go to Rayy much later, say between 265/878 and 270/883, especially when we know nothing about his later life till his death
3. Yaqut, Buldan, Vol.II, p.901.
4. In Dar al-Kutub al-Misriyyah in Cairo, Taimur 129, medicine.
5. Fihrist, pp.299-300.
6. Al-Qifti, p.272.
7. Ibn Abi Usaibi'ah, Vol. I, p. 310.
8. Ibn Juljul, p.78.
9. P. 299, Flugel; pp. 314-416, Cairo ed.
10. Ibn Abi Usaibi'ah, Vol.1, pg. 312.
11. Fihrist, p.416, Cairo ed.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibn Juljul, p.78.
15. Ibid.
16. Epitre de Beruni, p. 5
17. This is the date given by al-Biruni (ibid., p. 6). Other dates given are : (a) around 320/932 (Sa'id, Tabaqat, p. 83, Cairo ed., repeated by al-Qifti, p. 178, Cairo ed.; repeated by Ibn Abi Usaibi'ah, Vol. I, p. 314, but on the authority of Bal-muzaffar ibn Mu'arrif); (b) 295-300/907-912 and a fraction (Abu al-Khair al-Hasan ibn Suwar, in Usaibi'ah, Vol. I, p. 314); (c) 311/923 (Ibn al.'Imad, Shadharat al-Dhahab, Vol. II, p. 263); (d) 364/974 (History of Ibn Shiraz, quoted by Qifti, p. 178, Cairo ed.). Surely the most probable date is that given by al-Biruni.
18. Fihrist, p.416,Cairo ed.
19. Ibid., pp. 300, 301; Usaibi'ah, Vol. I, pp. 317, 320; al-Biruni, No. 117
20. Al-Biruni, No.62.
21. See on him: Qazwini on Chahar Maqalah (Gibb. Mem. Series XI), pp. 127-28; H, Ethe, Rudagi's Vorlaufer and Zeitgenossen, Morgenlandische Forschungen, Leipzig, 1875. p. 43; Yaqut, Udaba', Vol. I, p. 143.
22. Fihrist, p.416, Cairo ed.
23. Ibid., p. 416; p. 300, Flugel (Ed.); Usaibi'ah, p. 319.
24. Manuscript No. 1408 in Muhammad Murad in Istanbul, p.135.
25. Mentioned in Fihrist, pp. 188, 189; Nizam al-Mulk's Siyasat.Nameh, p. 186, Schefer (Ed.); 'Abd al-Qahir al-Baghdadi's Farq bain al-Firaq, p. 267; Ibn Hajar's Lisan al-Mizan, Vol. I, p. 164.
26. Ed. by Kraus, Opera Philosophica, Vol.. I, pp. 295-316 (Orientalia, Vol. V, 1926).
27. Ibid., p. 2, note 3.
28. Ibid., p. 312.
29. Fihrist, p. 301; Ibn Abi Usaibi'ah, Vol. I, p. 316.
30. Al-Biruni, p.79.
31. Fihrist, p.417.
32. Al-Biruni, p.37.
33. Ibid., pp. 129-30.
34. Ibid., p. 147
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36. Ibid., p.172.
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38. Ibid., p.171.
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60. Ibid., pp.73 et sqq.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, al-Mabahith al-Mashriqiyyah, Hyderabad, 1343/1924, Vol. 1, p. 246.
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Chapter 23: Al-Farabi

By Ibrahim Madkour

Abu Nasr al-Farabi was born in about 258/870 and he died in 339/950. Eminent founder of a philosophical system as he was, he devoted himself entirely to contemplation and speculation and kept himself aloof from political and social perturbations and turmoils. He left a considerable amount of literature. Besides his immediate pupils, there were many who studied his works after his death and became his followers. His philosophy set the standard for scholarly speculation both in the East and the West long after his death.

Since the last decades of the thirteenth/nineteenth century, several attempts have been made to write his biography, to collect his still unpublished works, and to elucidate some obscurities in his philosophy. In 1370/1950, on the occasion of the millennium of his death, some Turkish scholars discovered some of his works still in manuscript and removed certain difficulties concerning his thought. We cannot say if they have all been resolved. We do not even know if it is easy to resolve them unless we add further to our knowledge of his life and works. Public and private libraries still keep a considerable number of Islamic manuscripts behind closed doors; and we think it is time for these manuscripts to be brought to the light of the day.

In this chapter an attempt has been made to deal briefly with al-Farabi's life, his works, and his philosophy, with special reference to some of the lost links and misconceptions about or objections raised against his doctrine.¹

Life

Contrary to the usage among some of the Muslim scholars, al-Farabi did not write his autobiography, and no one among his disciples managed to give an account of his life as al-Juzjani did for his master Ibn Sina. Material for that in the works of the biographers is quite unsatisfactory and inadequate. The rather lengthy biography in Ibn Khallikan's *Wafayat al-A'yan*,² is open to criticism as regards its authenticity. Thus, in the life of al-Farabi, several obscure points and some unsolved problems are still to be investigated and settled.

His life falls into two distinct periods, the first being the time from his birth till about the age of fifty. The only information we have about this period is that he was born at Wasij, a village in the vicinity of Farab in Transoxiana, in about 258/870. In spite of the scanty information we have about his family, his childhood, and his youth, it has been believed that he was Turkish by birth, that his father was a general, and that he himself worked as a judge for some time.³ What is better known is the cultural and intellectual movement which flourished and spread with the introduction of Islam in Farab at the beginning of the third/ninth century, and that the reputed philologist al-Jauhari, the compiler of *al-Sihah*, was one of his eminent contemporaries.

Al-Farabi was able to draw largely on this movement. The basis of his early education was religious and linguistic: he studied jurisprudence, Hadith, and the exegesis of the Qur'an. He learnt Arabic as well as Turkish and Persian. It is doubtful whether he knew any other language, and what

has been stated by Ibn Khallikan about al-Farabi's mastery of "seventy tongues" is more akin to the fabulous than to exact history.⁴ From his interpretation of the word *safsafah* (sophistry), it is obvious that al-Farabi had no knowledge of the Greek languages.⁵

He did not neglect to benefit himself from the rational studies which were current in his time, such as mathematics and philosophy, although it appears that he did not turn to them until much later. Contrary to what has been held, it does not appear that he paid much attention to medicine.⁶ And when he became extremely interested in these rational studies, he did not remain content with what he had acquired in this respect in his native town. Spurred by intellectual curiosity, he had to leave his home and wander abroad in pursuit of more knowledge.

That marks the second period of his life, the period of old age and full maturity. Baghdad, as an outstanding centre of learning throughout the fourth/tenth century, was naturally his first destination where he encountered various scholars among whom were philosophers and translators. It was the study of logic which attracted him to that circle of distinguished logicians of Baghdad of whom the most renowned was Abu Bishr Matta ibn Yunus considered to be the foremost logician of his age. Al-Farabi studied logic under Ibn Yunus for some time. He surpassed his teacher and, on account of the eminent position he had gained in this field, he came to be called "The Second Teacher." Another famous logician, Yahya ibn 'Adi, was his disciple.

Al-Farabi remained twenty years in Baghdad and then his attention was engaged by another cultural centre in Aleppo. There, in the brilliant and scholarly Court of Saif al-Daulah, gathered the most distinguished poets, philologists, philosophers, and other scholars. In spite of the strong Arab sympathies of that Court, no racial bias or prejudice could mar the scholarly and cultural atmosphere in which Persians, Turks, and Arabs argued and disputed and agreed or differed in the name of disinterested pursuit of know-ledge.

In that Court al-Farabi lived, first and foremost, as a scholar and seeker after truth. The glamour and the glory of Court life never allured him, and, in the garb of a Sufi, he addressed himself to the hard task of a scholar and a teacher; and he wrote his books and his treatises among murmuring rivulets and the thick foliage of shady trees.

Except for several short journeys abroad, al-Farabi remained in Syria till his death in 339/950. Ibn Abi Usaibi'ah maintains that al-Farabi visited Egypt towards the end of his life.⁷ This is most probable, as Egypt and Syria have been closely linked for a long time in history, and cultural life in Egypt at the time of the Tulunids and the Ikhshidids had its attractions. However, the alleged report of the murder of al-Farabi by some highwaymen while he was travelling between Damascus and `Asqalan quoted by al-Baihaqi is in-credible.⁸ Al-Farabi had reached such an exalted position in the Court of Saif al-Daulah that the Amir in person, together with his immediate entourage, attended the funeral service in honour of the dead scholar.

Works

He left a considerable amount of literature; yet, if we accept the reports of some of the biographers, such as al-Qifti and Ibn Abi Usaibi'ah, the number of his writings is seventy, small compared with that of his contemporaries, namely, al-Kindi and al-Razi the physician. However, we must bear in mind that in the lists of the works of these scholars, the biographers have often mentioned the same book under two, maybe more, different titles, and that most of the works they have listed were mere articles or short treatises.

Al-Farabi's works may be divided into two equal parts, one dealing with logic and the other with other studies. The logical works are concerned with the different parts of Aristotle's Organon, either in the form of commentary or paraphrase. Most of these writings, however, are still in manuscript; and a great many of these manuscripts are not yet available.⁹

The second category of his works deals with the other branches of philosophy, physics, mathematics, metaphysics, ethics, and politics. A good part of it is available, and it gives a clear idea of the various aspects of al-Farabi's philosophy. But some of it is doubtful and his authorship of it is a subject of controversy, as in the case of *Fusus al-Hikam* (Gems of Sageness) or *al-Mufariqat* (Separateness).¹⁰ In this; category, no really scientific study was attempted; al-Farabi did not even mention medicine, and his discussion of chemistry was rather in the nature of a defence than in the form of elaboration and analysis.

Ibn Khallikan is probably right when he maintains that al-Farabi wrote most of his books in Baghdad and Damascus.¹¹ There is no evidence of his having written any of his books before the age of fifty, and even if he did write any, it is not certain whether it was theological or philosophical. The biographers have not reported anything contradictory.

Some scholars have attempted to make a chronological list of his works.¹² But one wonders what the value of such a list would be since all his works were written in the last thirty years of his life, when he began to write as a fully mature philosopher; and there was certainly no noticeable change or development in his thoughts or doctrine during this period.

The style of al-Farabi is characteristically concise and precise. He deliberately selects his words and expressions as he profoundly thinks of his ideas and thoughts. His aphorisms are pregnant with profound significance. That is why Max Horten has given a large commentary to explain the small treatise entitled *Fusus al-Hikam*.¹³ Al-Farabi has a particular, style; anyone accustomed to it can well recognize it. He avoids repetition and redundancy and prefers brevity and conciseness.

It seems that al-Farabi was in favour of esoteric teaching and believed that philosophy should not be made available to the uninitiated among the masses,¹⁴ and that philosophers should expound their ideas garbed in obscurity, mystification, and ambiguity.¹⁵ Even today, it is not an easy task to comprehend the meaning implied in some Farabian aphorisms..

His method is almost identical with his style. He collects and generalizes; he arranges and harmonizes; he analyses in order to compose; he divides and sub-divides in order to concentrate and classify. In some of his treatises, division and classification seem to be his only objective. His treatise entitled

“What Should Be Learnt Before Attempting Philosophy” is in the form of an index of the Greek schools of philosophy, the meanings of their titles and the names of their originators. He has been chiefly concerned with the study of the aims and the style of the works of Aristotle.¹⁶ His “Classification of Sciences” is the first attempt of its kind in the history of Islamic thought.¹⁷

Al-Farabi is fond of opposites; in fact, he gives the opposite of almost every term he uses: thus negation implies affirmation; and Being, Non-Being. He wrote a treatise in answer to the questions he had been asked. In this treatise he gives the proposition with which he is confronted and contrasts it with its opposite, in order to get an adequate solution. This reminds us of Plato's Parmenides.

His main concern has been to elucidate the basis of a theory and the foundation of a doctrine, to clear up obscurities, and to discuss controversial questions in order to arrive at the right conclusions. However, he pays scant attention to ordinary topics; and what he supposes to be self-evident is passed by without the slightest attempt at an explanation. A good example of this is his treatise, “The Aims of the Stagirite in Every Chapter of His Book Named the Alphabet.”¹⁸ This study is almost akin to our introduction to or criticism of a new book. It can be favourably compared to a similar work by a contemporary philosopher.¹⁹ No wonder, Ibn Sina found in this treatise the key to Aristotle's “Metaphysics”²⁰.

The works of al-Farabi became widespread in the East in the fourth and fifth/tenth and eleventh centuries, and they eventually reached the West where some Andalusian scholars became the disciples of al-Farabi.²¹ Some of his writings were also translated into Hebrew and Latin, and had their influence on Jewish and Christian scholasticism.²² These works were published in the last decades of the thirteenth/nineteenth century, and some of them were translated into various modern European languages. Yet there is still great need for their republication with meticulous editing, especially now that the libraries of Istanbul are much more available to us than before, and we can fill some gaps through them.

Philosophy

The philosophy of al-Farabi has its distinct features and clear-cut aims. He has adopted some of the doctrines of previous philosophers, reconstructed them in a form adaptable to his own cultural environment, and made them so closely knit that his philosophy has become most systematic and harmonious. Al-Farabi is logical both in his thinking and expression, in his argument and discussion, and in his exposition and reasoning.

His philosophy might have depended on some false presuppositions, and might have expounded some hypotheses which modern science has refuted, yet it played a very significant role and influenced several schools of thought in subsequent times. Beginning with his logical studies, we will briefly explain the characteristics and the chief elements of his philosophy

1. Logic

It has been already mentioned that a considerable part of the works of al-Farabi is devoted to the study of logic; but it is almost limited to the delineation of the Organon in the version known to the Arabic scholars of

that time. He holds that “the art of logic gives, in general, the rules which, if followed, can correct the mind and direct man to the right way to truth away from the pitfalls of error.²³ For him, logic stands in the same relation to intelligibles as grammar to words, and prosody to verse.²⁴ He emphasizes the practical and applied aspects of logic, indicating that intelligibles are to be tested by its rules, as dimensions, volumes, and masses are by measurement.²⁵

Logic also helps us in distinguishing truth from error and attaining the right way of thinking or in guiding other people along this way; it also indicates where to start our thoughts and how to conduct them necessarily to their final conclusions.²⁶ Practice in rhetoric and dialectical discourses, or in geometry and arithmetic, can never be a substitute for logic, in the same way as learning a considerable number of poems and speeches is of no avail to a man ignorant of grammar.²⁷ The art of logic - as is generally thought - is not an unnecessary ornament, because it can never be replaced by natural aptitude.²⁸

However, al-Farabi has always had in mind the difference between grammar and logic; for the former is concerned with words only, while the latter deals with meanings and is related to words in so far as they are the embodiments of meanings. Moreover, grammar is concerned with the laws of language, and languages are as diverse as peoples and races; but logic deals with the human mind which is always the same anywhere and everywhere.²⁹

The subject-matter of logic is its topics in which the laws of intelligibles are studied. They are classified under eight heads: (1) Categories, (2) Inter-pretations, (3) First Analytics, (4) Second Analytics, (5) Topics, (6) Sophistics, (7) Rhetorics, and (8) Poetics, all of which constitute the real aim of logic. The fourth part is the most significant and noble of all the others; what is anterior may be considered to be an introduction and what follows an appli-cation and comparison leading to the avoidance of error and confusion.³⁰

It is obvious that al-Farabi follows in the footsteps of Aristotle, although he considers rhetorics and poetics as branches of logic. The same error was committed by the Peripatetics, especially by those of the school of Alexan-dria.³¹ Some of them even claimed that Porphyry's Isagoge was a part of the Organon of Aristotle; but this claim is not supported by al-Farabi known as “The Second Teacher,” Aristotle having been taken to be the First.

Undoubtedly, “Demonstration” was regarded by Aristotle as important, but he was rather proud of his discovery of syllogism.

The contribution of al-Farabi to logic is two-fold. First, he has succeeded in properly and lucidly expounding the logic of Aristotle to the Arabic-speaking world. In the introduction of one of his recently published treatises, he indicates that he will explain the principle of syllogism after Aristotle in terms familiar to the Arabs; consequently, he substitutes examples from the daily life of his own contemporaries for the otherwise vague and unfamiliar examples originally cited by Aristotle. His process is in no way detrimental to the study of the logic of Aristotle, nor does it alter or vitiate the significance of his philosophy.³²

On the other hand, al-Farabi lays the basis for the quinary division of reason-ing, indicating that it is demonstrative if it leads to certainty; dialectical if it leads to a semblance of certitude through good intention; sophistical if it leads to a semblance of certitude through bad intentions and falsity; rhetorical if it leads to a probable opinion; and poetical if it leads to imagery giving pleasure or pain to the soul.³³ These different kinds are used according to the situation and the standard of the audience.

Philosophers and scholars make use of demonstrative reasoning, theologians resort only to dialectic syllogisms, and politicians take refuge in rhetorical syllogisms. It is obvious that the way of addressing any group of people should be adapted to the standard of their understanding; and, thus, to use demonstrative syllogisms when addressing the populace and the masses is absurd.³⁴

2. The Unity of Philosophy

Al-Farabi maintains that philosophy is essentially one unit. Thus, it is imperative for great philosophers to be in accord, the pursuit of truth being their one and only aim. Plato and Aristotle, “being the originators of philosophy and the creators of its elements and principles and the final authority as regards its conclusions and branches,”³⁵ are closely in accord in spite of some of their apparent and formal differences.

Thus, al-Farabi believes in the existence of only one school of philosophy, the school of truth. Therefore, the terms Peripatetics, Platonists, Stoics, and Epicureans denote only names of groups of philosophers; all constitute one single school of philosophy. Parties and cliques are a nuisance in philosophy as well as in politics.

Al-Farabi, as a philosopher and historian; has been fully aware of the danger of partisanship in philosophy. This partisanship was caused more or less by the fanatics among the disciples of the great philosophers. Instead of attempting to harmonize the doctrines of various philosophers, these disciples managed to widen the gap between two masters by stressing shades of difference and sometimes even by altering and misrepresenting their doctrines.³⁶ This attitude of al-Farabi is identical with the attitude of the twelfth/eighteenth-century philosophers towards the disputes and dissension of the Renaissance philosophers.

There is no novelty in this doctrine of al-Farabi; it has been previously held by the philosophers of the later Greek schools, especially those of the school of Alexandria. When Porphyry speaks about his master, he points out that he has found the ideas of the Peripatetics and the Stoics fused in Plo-tinus' works.³⁷ In fact, Porphyry has devoted several treatises to the attempt of reconciling the philosophy of Plato with that of Aristotle;³⁸ and a number of scholars of the school of Alexandria followed in his footsteps;³⁹ but none of these scholars ever thought of combining all the philosophers in a single school. This has been an omission, and al-Farabi has been profuse in his writings in an attempt to point this out.

Religious truth and philosophical truth are objectively one, although for-mally different. This idea rendered possible the accord between philosophy and the tenets of Islam. Al-Farabi undoubtedly has been the first scholar to raise a new edifice of philosophy on the basis of this accord; later

philo-sophers have followed the lines chalked out by him; Ibn Sina has been to a certain extent occupied in the exposition and delineation of its Platonic aspects, while Ibn Rushd has been busy indicating the accord between Aristo-telian philosophy and religion.

This doctrine of reconciliation has been based on two main points: first, revising the Peripatetic philosophy and garbing it in a Platonic form, in order to make it more consonant with Islamic tenets; and, secondly, giving a rational interpretation of religious truths. In fact, al-Farabi expounds phi-losophy in a religious way and philosophizes religion, thus pushing them in two converging directions so that they may come to an understanding and co-exist.

This revision of the Peripatetic philosophy has been concerned with two theories, one cosmological and the other psychological, viz., Theory of the Ten Intelligences and that of the Intellect. His rational explanation depends on two other theories; the first is concerned with prophecy and the second with the interpretation of the Qur'an. The whole philosophy of al-Farabi is summed up in these four theories which are inter-related and all of which aim at one end.

3. Theory of the Ten Intelligences

This theory constitutes a significant part in Islamic philosophy; it offers an explanation of the two worlds: heaven and earth; it interprets the phenomena of movement and change. It is the foundation of physics and astronomy. Its chief concern is the solving of the problem of the One and the many and the comparing of the mutable and the immutable.

Al-Farabi holds that the One, i. e., God, is the Necessary by Himself; hence, He is not in need of another for His existence or His subsistence. He is an intelligence capable of knowing Himself; He is both intelligent and intelligible. He is quite unique by His essence. Nothing is like Him. He has no opposite or equivalent.⁴⁰

If the above premises are admitted, what would be God's influence on the universe and the relationship between Him and the many? Only through a kind of emanation has al-Farabi laboured to elucidate these problems. He holds that from the Necessary One flows or emanates only one other by virtue of Its self-knowledge and goodness. This emanent is the first intelligence. Thus, knowledge equals creation, for it is enough for a thing to be conceived in order to exist. The first intelligence is possible by itself, necessary by an-other; and it thinks the One as well as itself. It is one-in-itself, and many by virtue of these considerations.

From this point al-Farabi starts the first step towards multiplicity. From thinking by first intelligence of the One flows another intelligence. By virtue of its thinking of itself as possible in itself flow the matter and form of the "first heaven," because every sphere has its specific form which is its soul. In this way, the chain of emanations goes on so as to complete the ten intelligences, and nine spheres and their nine souls. The tenth and last intelligence, or agent intelligence, is that which governs the sublunary world. From this intelligence flow the human souls and the four elements.⁴¹

These intelligences and souls are hierarchical. The first intelligence in this hierarchy is the most transcendent, and then follow the souls of the

spheres and then the spheres themselves. The last in order is the earth and the world of matter, which falls in the fourth rank.⁴²

The ancient Greeks held that any-thing celestial is sacred and anything terrestrial is impure. The tenets of Islam categorically assert that heaven is the qiblah of prayer, the source of revelation, the destination of the “ascension.” Everything in heaven is pure and purifying. Al-Farabi here conforms to both the religious tenets and the philosophical teachings; but his main difficulty lies in maintaining that the impure earthly world has evolved from the sacred celestial one.

The number of intelligences is ten consisting of the first intelligence and the nine intelligences of the planets and spheres, because al-Farabi adopts the same theories as held by the Greek astronomers, especially by Ptolemy according to whom the cosmos is constituted of nine encircling spheres all of which move eternally and circularly around the earth. Intelligences and souls are the originators of this movement. Every sphere has its own intelligence and soul.

The tenth intelligence manages the affairs of the terrestrial world. The soul is the immediate mover of sphere: However it acquires its power from the intelligence. It moves through its desire for the intelligence; and pursuit of perfection moves its sphere. Thus, its desire is the source of its movement. Intelligence in its turn is in a state of perpetual desire. The lower desires the higher and all desire the One which is considered the Prime Mover although It is immovable.⁴³

The movement of the spheres is effected by a kind of spiritual attraction: the inferior sphere is always attracted towards the superior. This process is a spiritual dynamism similar to that of Leibniz in spite of its dependence on unequal spiritual powers. It seems that al-Farabi, the musician, is attempting to introduce into the world of spheres the system of musical harmony.

However, al-Farabi's conclusions about physics are closely connected with his theories of astronomy. From the tenth intelligence flows the prime matter, or hyle, which is the origin of the four elements, and from the same intelligence flow the different forms which unite with the hyle to produce bodies. The terrestrial world is only a series of different kinds of forms united with matter or separated from it. Generation is the result of the unity of form and matter, and corruption is the result of their separation. The movement of the sun produces hotness and coldness necessary for change. All the separate intelligences provide the movements appropriate to the terrestrial world. In this way physics is fused with cosmology and the terrestrial world is subjected to the heavenly world.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, al-Farabi repudiates astrology which was prevalent at his time, and which had been cherished by the Stoics and the Alexandrian schol-ars before him.

Al-Farabi does not deny the law of causality and the connection between causes and effects. For causes may be either direct or indirect; and if it is an easy matter to discover the former, the latter are more difficult to detect. Hence happens chance or coincidence; and there is no way of controlling coincidence. For how could an astrologer associate the death of an Amir with an eclipse? Or how could the discovery of a new planet have any

connection with a war? However, belief in fortuitous happenings is essential in politics and in religion, because it imbues men with fear and hope, and stimulates obedience and endeavour.⁴⁵

It is, thus, through the doctrine of the ten intelligences that al-Farabi solves the problem of movement and change. He has made use of the same theory in his attempt at solving the problem of the One and the many, and in his reconciliation of the traditional Aristotelian theory of matter and the Islamic doctrine of creation. Matter is as old as the ten intelligences, but it is created because it has emanated from the agent intelligence. To vindicate the unicity of God, al-Farabi has resorted to the mediacy of these ten intelligences between God and the terrestrial world.

Some of the elements of the Theory of the Ten Intelligences can be traced to the different sources they have been derived from. Its astronomical aspect is closely identical with Aristotle's interpretation of the movement of the spheres. The Theory of Emanation has been borrowed from Plotinus and the school of Alexandria. But, in its entirety, it is a Farabian theory, dictated and formulated by his desire for showing the unity of truth and his method of grouping and synthesis. He reconciles Plato and Aristotle and religion and philosophy.

This theory met with some success among the philosophers of the East and those of the West in the Middle Ages. Yet reconciliation necessitates, from one side or the other, some concessions; and if it pleases some, others are sure to resent it. Hence, this theory has been fervently embraced by Ibn Sina who has given it a concise and elaborate exposition, while al-Ghazali is loud in denouncing it. Among the Jewish scholars, Ibn Gabriol does not give it even the slightest notice, while Maimonides enthusiastically subscribes to it. And in spite of the objections of Christian scholars to this theory, it has always elicited their respect and esteem.

4. Theory of the Intellect

The psychology of Aristotle has long been reputed for its conciseness and precision; and as an objective study it has not been less noteworthy. Aristotle's classification of the faculties of the soul is the first of its kind. He has emphasized its unity in spite of the plurality of its faculties and explained its relationship with the body. He has but inadequately dealt with the Theory of the Intellect, and in consequence stirred a problem which has puzzled the moderns as well as the ancients. However, his treatise "On the Soul" is the best of its kind among ancient works on psychology, and it even surpasses some of the modern works. In the Middle Ages it was as much in vogue as the Organon.

This book was introduced to the Arabs through translations from Syriac and Greek, together with ancient commentaries, especially those of Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius, and Simplicius.⁴⁶ It was the subject of extensive study with Muslim philosophers, who in their turn commented on it and paraphrased it. Influenced by Aristotle and drawing on his work, these philo-sophers wrote various theses and treatises on psychology. They were chiefly concerned with the question of the intellect which stood out among all the problems studied by the scholastic philosophers.

Al-Farabi has been fully aware of the significance of this problem, and has recognized in it an epitome of the whole Theory of Knowledge. He has closely identified it with his own philosophy; for it is related to the Theory of the Ten Intelligences, and it is also the foundation of the Theory of Prophecy. He has dealt with the problem of the intellect in several places in his works; and he has devoted to its elaboration a whole treatise, "On the Different Meanings of the Intellect." This treatise had a wide circulation among the scholars of the East and the West in the Middle Ages, and it was translated into Latin at an early date.

He classifies the intellect into practical intellect which deduces what should be done, and theoretical intellect which helps the soul to attain its perfection. The latter is again classified into material, habitual, and acquired.⁴⁷

The material intellect, or the potential intellect as al-Farabi sometimes calls it, is the soul; or is a part of the soul, or a faculty having the power of abstracting and apprehending the quiddity of beings. It can be almost compared to a material on which the forms of beings are imprinted, just like wax which becomes one with the inscriptions carved on it. These inscriptions are nothing but perceptions and intelligibles.

Thus, the intelligible exists in potentiality in sensible things; and when it is abstracted from the senses, it exists in the mind in actuality.⁴⁸ That explains perception and abstraction, the important operations of the mind which bring the intelligibles from potentiality to actuality; and when these intelligibles are conveyed to the mind, the intellect in its turn is transformed from an intellect in potency to an intellect in action.

Therefore, the intellect in act, or the habitual intellect as it is sometimes called, is one of the levels of the ascension of the mind in the acquisition of a number of intelligibles. Since the mind is incapable of comprehending all the intelligibles, it is intellect in action with regard to what it perceives, and intellect in potency with regard to what it has not yet perceived. The intelligibles themselves exist in potency in the sensibles. Once they are stripped of them, they become intelligibles in action. And once man has attained to this level of the intellect in action, he can comprehend himself. This kind of comprehension has no relation with the external world; it is a mental, abstract comprehension.⁴⁹

Once the intellect becomes capable of comprehending abstractions, it is raised again to a higher level, that of the acquired intellect, or the level where human intellect becomes disposed to conceive abstract forms which have no connection with matter.

The difference between this rational conception and sense-perception is that the former is a kind of intuition and inspiration; or, in other words, it is a kind of immediate apprehension. This is the noblest level of human apprehension, and it is reached only by the few and the select who attain to the level of the acquired intellect, where the hidden is unveiled, and come in direct communion with the world of the separate intelligences.⁵⁰

Thus, the intellect is capable of rising gradually from intellect in potency to intellect in action, and finally to acquired intellect. The two consecutive levels are different from each other, though the lower always serves as a

prelude to the higher. While the intellect in potency is just a receiver of sensible forms, intellect in action retains the intelligibles and comprehends the concepts. The acquired intellect rises to the level of communion, ecstasy, and inspiration. Conceptions are of different levels: originally, they are intelligibles in potency existing in matter; once abstracted from matter they become intelligibles in action. Still higher are the abstract forms which can never exist in matter.⁵¹

However, this gradual elevation is not spontaneous; for its initial stage is the intelligibles and the intellect in potency, and its transition from potentiality to actuality can never be effected except through the influence of a prior actuality whose action is appropriate to it. This actuality is the agent intelligence, the last of the ten intelligences.

Human knowledge depends on a radiation from the separate intelligences; and agent intelligence stands in the same relation to human intellect as the sun to our eyes: our eyes depend on daylight for sight, and in the same way our intellect is capable of comprehension only, when it is unveiled by the agent intelligence which illuminates its way.⁵² Thus, mysticism is fused with philosophy, and rational knowledge coincides with ecstasy and inspiration.

The above-mentioned theory of al-Farabi concerning the intellect is obviously based on Aristotle. Al-Farabi himself declares that his theory depends upon the third part of De Anima of Aristotle,⁵³ but he has his own contribution to add. His conception of the acquired intellect is alien to Aristotle; for it is almost identified with the separate intelligences, and serves as the link between human knowledge and revelation. Thus, it is different from the acquired intellect, as found in the theory held by Alexander of Aphrodisias and al-Kindi; and it is the outcome of al-Farabi's mystic tendency and his leaning towards Plotinus' system.

This fact becomes clearer if we consider the influence of the agent intelligence in the acquisition of knowledge, since it is the outcome of vision and inspiration; it offers also to the mind the abstract forms and enlightens the way for it. This theory helps in fusing psychology with cosmology, but it underestimates the activity of the human mind, since it is made: capable of comprehension only when it is illuminated by heaven; but would the Sufis care about this deficiency of the human mind?

The general acceptance of this theory in the Middle Ages is clear from the fact that Ibn Sina has not only embraced it, but has also added to it vigour and clarity; and in spite of Ibn Rushd's strict adherence to the teachings of Aristotle, he has also come under its influence. Among the Jews, Maimonides has copied it almost to the letter. With the Christians, this theory has stood at the top of the problems of philosophy, because it is concerned with the theory of knowledge and is closely connected with the doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

This theory has also given rise to different schools, some favouring and the others opposing it. To sum up, al-Farabi's Theory of the Intellect has been the most significant of all theories developed by Muslim thinkers, and it has exercised a great influence on Christian philosophy.

5. Theory of Prophecy

The basis of every revealed religion is revelation and inspiration. A prophet is a man endowed with the gift of communion with God and the ability of expressing His will. Islam, as well as all the great Semitic religions, has Heaven as its authority. The Qur'an says: "It is naught but revelation that is revealed - the Lord of mighty power has taught him." (liii, 4-5).

It is most imperative for a Muslim philosopher to give due reverence to prophethood, to conciliate rationality with traditionalism, and to identify the language of the earth with the words of Heaven. This has been the endeavour of al-Farabi. His theory of prophethood may be considered to be one of the most significant attempts at the reconciliation of philosophy and religion. It may also be considered to be the noblest part of his system; it has its foundation both in psychology and metaphysics; and it is also closely related with politics and ethics.

Influenced by his political and social environment, al-Farabi has stressed the theoretical study of society and its needs. He has written several treatises on politics, the most renowned of which is his "Model City." He visualizes his city as a whole of united parts, similar to bodily organism; if any part of it is ill, all the others react and take care of it. To each individual is allotted the vocation and the task most appropriate for his special ability and talents. Social activities differ according to their aims; the noblest of these activities are those allotted to the chief, for he stands in the same relation to the city as the heart to the body and is the source of all activities and the origin of harmony and order. Hence, certain qualifications are the prerequisite of his station. The chief must be stout, intelligent, lover of knowledge, and supporter of justice, and he must also rise to the level of the agent intelligence through which he gets revelation and inspiration.⁵⁴

These attributes remind us of the attributes of the philosopher-king in Plato's Republic, but al-Farabi adds to them the ability of communion with the celestial world, as if the city is inhabited by saints and governed by a prophet. Communion with the agent intelligence is possible through two ways contemplation and inspiration. As already mentioned, the soul rises through study and quest to the level of the acquired intellect when it becomes recipient of the divine light. This level can be attained only by the sacred spirits of the philosophers and sages, those who can penetrate through the unseen and perceive the "world of light."

The sacred soul, preoccupied with what is above, gives no heed to what is below; and its external sensation never over-whelms its internal sensation; and its influence may go beyond its own body affecting other bodies and everything in this world. It receives knowledge direct from the High Spirit and angels without any human instruction.⁵⁵ Thus, through continuous speculative studies, the sage gets into communion with the agent intelligence.

This communion is also possible through imagination, as happens to the prophets, for all their inspiration or revelation is caused by imagination. Imagination occupies an important place in al-Farabi's psychology. It is closely connected with inclinations and sentiments, and is involved in rational operations and volitional movements. It creates the mental images

which are not imitations of sensibles and are the source of dreams and visions.

If we could have a scientific interpretation of dreams, it would help to give us an interpretation of revelation and inspiration, for prophetic inspirations take the form either of true dreams in sleep or of revelation in waking- The difference between these two forms is relative; they are distinct only as regards their degree. In fact, a true dream is but one aspect of prophecy.

When imagination gets rid of conscious activities as in sleep, it is wholly occupied with some of the psychological phenomena. Influenced by some bodily sensations and feelings, or by some emotions and conceptions, it creates new images or composes, from retained mental images, their new forms. Thus, we dream of water or swimming when our temperament is humid, and dreams often so represent the fulfilment of a desire or the avoidance of fear that the sleeper may move in his bed responding to a certain emotion, or leave his bed and beat a person unknown to him, or run after him.⁵⁶ It is needless to point out that these views in spite of their simplicity are similar to the ideas of modern psychologists, such as Freud, Horney, and Murray.

It is within the power of imagination to create mental images after the pattern of the spiritual world. The sleeper may, thus, behold the Heaven and its inhabitants, and may feel its enjoyments and pleasures. Imagination may also rise to the celestial world and commune with the agent intelligence from which it can receive the heavenly judgments relating to particular cases and individual happenings. Through this communion which may occur by day or at night, prophecy can be explained, since it is the source of true dreams and revelation.

According to al-Farabi: "If the faculty of imagination is so power-ful and perfected in a certain person, and is not completely overwhelmed by external sensations ... it gets into communion with the agent intelligence from which images of the utmost beauty and perfection are reflected. He who sees those images would testify to the sublime and wonderful majesty of God.... Once the imaginative faculty in man is completely perfected, he may receive, when awake, from the agent intelligence the pre-vision of the present and future events ... and thus he would, through what he has received, prophesy divine matters. This is the highest level to which imagination may be raised, and which man can attain through this faculty."⁵⁷

Thus, the chief characteristic of a prophet is to have a vivid imagination through which he can commune with the agent intelligence during waking time and in sleep, and can attain to vision and inspiration. And revelation is but an emanation from God through the agent intelligence.

Some persons, although in a lower degree than the prophets, have a powerful imagination through which an inferior kind of vision and inspiration can be achieved. In this way al-Farabi places the saints in a degree lower than the prophets. The imagination of the populace and the masses is so weak that it does not admit of rising to union with the agent intelligence, neither at night nor by day.⁵⁸

Al-Farabi's attempt at reconciliation was not the only motive behind this theory. In the third and fourth/ninth and tenth centuries a wave of scepticism refuting prophecy and prophets was prevalent. Its spokesmen copied some of the arguments held by the unbelievers in prophecy. At the head of these sceptics was Ibn al-Rawandi who was once one of the Mu'tazilites but later rejected their doctrine, and Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Razi the physician, a tough and powerful adversary. The latter, in particular, refuted any attempt to reconcile philosophy and religion, assumed that philosophy is the only way to reform both the individual and society and that religions are the source of conflict and strife.⁵⁹

This attack aroused all the various Islamic centres to defend their dogmas. Al-Farabi had to contribute to that defence. He explained prophecy on rational grounds and gave it a scientific interpretation.

He borrowed his explanation from Aristotle's theory of dreams, which had already been introduced to the Arab world. Al-Kindi,⁶⁰ the forerunner of al-Farabi, adhered to that theory. It assumes that dreams are images produced by the imagination the capacity of which increases during sleep after getting rid of the activities of wakefulness.⁶¹

Aristotle, however, denies that dreams are revealed by God, and never admits of prophetic predictions through sleep, otherwise the populace and the masses - who have so many dreams-would claim foretelling the future.⁶² Here, al-Farabi diverges from his master, and asserts that man through imagination can commune with the agent intelligence, but this is available only to the privileged and the chosen.

The agent intelligence is the source of divine laws and inspirations. It is, in al-Farabi's view, almost similar to the Angel charged with revelation, as in the tenets of Islam. It is within the capacity of the prophet or the philosopher to commune with the agent intelligence - the former through imagination and the latter by way of speculation and contemplation. This is understandable for the two draw together upon the same source and get their knowledge from high above. In fact, religious truth and philosophic truth are both the radiation of divine illumination through imagination or contemplation.

The Farabian theory of prophecy had an obvious impact not only on the East and the West, but on medieval and modern history. Ibn Sina adhered faithfully to it. His elaboration of that theory is closely similar to that of al-Farabi. Ibn Rushd, admitting its validity, was much astonished at al-Ghazali's criticism of it; for it corroborates the religious tenets and affirms that the spiritual perfection can be attained only through man's communion with God.⁶³

When the theory was introduced into the Jewish philosophic thought, Maimonides subscribed to it and showed much interest in it.⁶⁴ It is noticeable that Spinoza in his Tractatus theologico-politicus expounds a similar theory which he most probably borrowed from Maimonides.⁶⁵ It continued to be echoed by some of the modern philosophers in Islam, such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and the Imam Muhammad `Abduh.

6. Interpretation of the Qur'an

Some of the religious tenets are traditional (sam`iyyat); they are matters indemonstrable by way of reason, such as miracles; and the Day of Judgment comprising the Doomsday and Resurrection, the Path and the Balance, the Judgment and the Punishment. Acceptance of these sam`iyyat is one of the pillars of religion. The believers have but to accept them and remain content with the veracity of their source.

But some thinkers in their attempt at giving a rational explanation interpret them in a certain way or reduce them to certain natural laws. The Mu`tazilites made a noticeable endeavour in this field, for they went so far in the way of inter-pretation that they refuted the Transfigurists who qualified God with certain attributes contradictory to His transcendence and uniqueness.

Al-Farabi attempts a different interpretation. He admits the validity of miracles since they are the means of proving prophecy. He holds that miracles although supernatural do not contradict natural laws. For the source of these laws is to be found in the world of spheres and its intelligences which manage the terrestrial world; and once we get in communion with that world, matters other than those of the habitual course happen to us.

A prophet, as mentioned above, has a spiritual power by means of which he is associated with the agent intelligence. It is through this communion that he causes rain to fall, the moon to split asunder, the stick to be transformed into a snake, or the blind and leprous to be healed.⁶⁶ In this way al-Farabi tries - as the Stoics had done before - to reduce to causality matters beyond the habitual course of nature and even contradictory to it.

The Qur'an points to various sam`iyyat, such as the Tablet and the Pen. Al-Farabi holds that these should not be understood literally, for the Pen is not an instrument to write with, nor the Tablet a page on which sayings are registered,⁶⁷ but they are mere symbols for precision and preservation. The Qur'an is also full of extensive stories about the hereafter, Day of Judgment, and reward and punishment. No believer could deny these matters without undermining the principle of divine sanction and individual responsibility.

Although al-Farabi fully admits the eternal bliss or the painful suffering of the hereafter, yet he reduces them to spiritual matters having no relationship with the body and material properties, because the spirit, not the body, is that which enjoys or suffers, is happy or unhappy.⁶⁸

This interpretation conforms to the Farabian tendency towards spiritualism. Ibn Sina borrowed it and widely applied it. In Ibn Sina's view the Throne and the Chair are symbols of the world of spheres. Prayers are not mere bodily movements, but aim at imitating the celestial world.⁶⁹ It is as if these two philosophers wanted to lay the foundation of a philosophical religion and a religious philosophy.

However, al-Ghazali was dissatisfied with this attempt and he attacked it, taking the text of the Scripture literally. Ibn Rushd, although advocating accord between religion and philosophy, was also dissatisfied, because he claimed that for the sake of their security religion and philosophy should be kept separate. If combined, they would not be understood by the ordinary man and might lead astray even some of those capable of deep thinking.⁷⁰

Conclusion

We can now conclude that al-Farabi's doctrine is so fully harmonious and consistent that its parts are completely inter-related. From the One, the First Cause, al-Farabi gets on to ten intelligences from which the two worlds of heaven and earth have flowed. His spheres are moved by the managing intelli-gences, and nature with its generation and corruption is subjected to these intelligences. The soul is governed by one of these intelligences which is the agent intelligence. Politics and ethics are no exceptions, for happiness pursued by men is but the communion with the celestial world. His "Model City" only aims at this end.

This doctrine is at the same time spiritualistic and idealistic, for al-Farabi reduces almost everything to spirit. His God is the Spirit of the spirits, his astronomical spheres are governed by celestial spirits, and the prince of his city is a man whose spirit transcends his body. This spiritualism is rooted in ideas and concepts, and is given wholly to speculation and contem-plateation. The One is the Idea par excellence and is the Intellect that intellects Itself. The other beings are generated by this Intellect. Through speculation and contemplation man can commune with the celestial world and attain the utmost happiness. No spiritualism is so closely related to idealism as that of al-Farabi.

Although al-Farabi's doctrine is a reflection of the Middle Ages, it comprises some modern and even contemporary notions. He favours science, advocates experimentation, and denies augury and astrology. He so fully believes in causality and determinism that he refers to causes even for those effects which have no apparent causes. He elevates the intellect to a plane so sacred that he is driven to its conciliation with tradition so that philosophy and religion may accord.

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Chapter 24: Miskawaih

By *Abdurrahman Badawi*

Life

Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ya`qub, surnamed Miskawaih, is also called Abu 'Ali al-Khazin. It is yet undecided whether he was himself Miskawaih or the son of (ibn) Miskawaih. Some like Margoliouth and Bergstrasser accept the first alternative; others, like Brockelmann,¹ the second.

Yaqut says that he was first a Magi (majusi) and was later converted to Islam. But this might be true of his father, for Miskawaih himself, as his name shows, was the son of a Muslim father, Muhammad by name.

He studied history, particularly al-Tabari's "Annals," with Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Kamil al-Qadi (350/960). Ibn al-Khammar, the famous commentator of Aristotle's, was his master in philosophical disciplines. Miskawaih engaged himself too much in the study of alchemy, together with Abu al-Tayyib al-Razi, the alchemist. From certain statements of Ibn Sina² and al-Tauhidi,³ it seems that they had a poor opinion of his aptitude for speculative philo-sophy. Iqbal, on the other hand, regarded him as one of the most eminent theistic thinkers, moralists, and historians of Persia.⁴

Miskawaih lived for seven years in the company of Abu al-Fadl ibn al-'Amid as his librarian. After the death of Abu al-Fadl (360/970) he served under his son Abu al-Fath `Ali ibn Muhammad ibn al-'Amid, surnamed Dhu al--Kifayatain. It seems that he also served 'Adud al-Daulah, one of the Buwai-hids, and later some other princes of that famous family.

Miskawaih died on the 9th of Safar 421/16th of February 1030. The date of his birth is uncertain. Margoliouth gives it to be 330/941, but we think it should be 320/932 if not earlier, because he used to be in the company of al-Muhallabi, the vizier, who rose to the office in 339/950 and died in 352/963, by which time he must have been at least nineteen.

Works

Yaqut⁵ gives a list of thirteen books attributed to Miskawaih. These are:

1. Al-Fauz al-Akbar.
2. Al-Fauz al-Asghar.
3. Tajarib al-Umam (a history from the Deluge down to 369/979).
4. Uns al-Farid (a collection of anecdotes, verses, maxims, and proverbs).
5. Tartib al-Sa`adah (on ethics and politics).
6. Al-Mustaufa (selected verses).
7. Jawidan Khirad (a collection of maxims of wisdom).
8. Al-Jami`.
9. Al-Siyar (on the conduct of life).

Of the above works al-Qifti⁶ mentions only 1, 2, 3 and 4 and adds the following:

10. "On the Simple Drugs" (on medicine).
11. "On the Composition of the Bajats" (on culinary art).
12. Kitab al-Ashribah (on drinks).
13. Tahdhib al-Akhlaq (on ethics).

Numbers 2, 3, 13 are now extant and have been published. We also have five others which are not mentioned by Yagiiit and al-Qifti. These are:

14. Risalah fi al-Ladhdhat w-al-Alam fi Jauhar al-Nafs (MS. in Istanbul, Raghīb Majmu`ah No. 1463, f. 57a-59a).

15. Ajwibah wa As'ilah fi al-Nafs w-al-'Aql (in the above-mentioned Majmu`ah in Raghīb, Istanbul).

16. Al-Jawab fi al-Masa'il al-Thalath (MS. in Teheran - Fihrist Maktabat al-Majlis, II, No, 634[31]).

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Muhammad Baqir ibn Zain al-'Abidin al-Khawansari attributes to him also some treatises written in Persian (Raudat al-Jannah, Teheran, 1287/1870, p. 70).

As to the chronological order of his works, we know only from Miskawaih himself that al-Fauz al-Akbar was written after al-Fauz al-Asghar, and that Tahdhib al-Akhlaq was written after Tartib al-Sa`adah.⁷

Miskawaih's Personality

Miskawaih was essentially a historian and moralist. He was also a poet. Tauhidi blames him for his miserliness and hypocrisy. He indulged in alchemy not for the sake of science, but in search of gold and wealth, and was most servile to his masters. But Yaqut mentions that in later years he subjected himself to a fifteen-point code of moral conduct.⁸ Temperance in appetites, courage in subduing the ferocious self, and wisdom in regulating the irrational impulses were the highlights of this code. He himself speaks of his moral transformation in his Tahdhib al-Akhlaq,⁹ which shows that he practised a good deal of what he wrote on ethics.

Philosophy

First Philosophy

The most important part of Miskawaih's philosophical activity is dedicated to ethics. He is a moralist in the full sense of the word. Three important books of his on ethics have come down to us: (1) Tartib al-Sa`adah, (2) Tahdhib al-Akhlaq, and (3) Jawidan Khirad.

Miskawaih's al-Fauz al-Asghar is a general treatise similar in conception to the earlier part of al-Farabi's Ara' Ahl al-Madinat al-Fadilah. It is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the proofs of the existence of God, the second with soul and its modes, and the third with prophethood.

For his treatment of philosophy, he owes much to al-Farabi, particularly in his effort to conciliate Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus. His historical turn of mind has been of benefit to him, for he generally refers precisely to his sources. For instance, at the end of Chapter V of the first part of al-Fauz al-Asghar¹⁰ he expressly acknowledges his indebtedness to Porphyry. He also quotes the commentators of Plato¹¹ and Aristotle.¹² His is the best expose (pp. 53-55) of Plato's proof concerning the immortality of the soul. He benefits especially from the book of Proclus entitled Kitab Sharh Qaul Flatun fi al Nafs Ghair Maitah.¹³

The first part of Fauz al-Asghar dealing with the demonstration of the existence of God is clear, terse, and solid. His argument here is that of the First Mover, which was most popular at the time. In that he is thoroughly

Aristotelian. The fundamental attributes of God are: unity, eternity, and immateriality. Miskawaih devotes the whole of Chapter VIII to the problem of defining God affirmatively or negatively, and concludes that the negative way is the only possible way. He also shows Neo-Platonic tendencies noticeably in Chapter IX.

He says that the first existent which emanates from God is the first intelligence which (so says Miskawaih rather strangely) is the same as the active intellect. It is eternal, perfect in existence, and immutable in state, because “emanation is connected with it in a continuous way eternally, the source of emanation being eternal and wholly generous.” It is, perfect in comparison with beings inferior to it, imperfect in comparison with God.

Then comes the celestial soul inferior to intelligence; it needs motion as expression of desire for perfection in imitation of intelligence. But it is perfect in relation to natural bodies. The sphere comes into being through the celestial soul. In comparison with the soul, it is imperfect and so needs the motion of which the body is capable, i. e., the motion in space. The sphere has the circular motion which assures it of the eternal existence assigned to it by God. Through the sphere and its parts our bodies come into being. Our being is very weak because of the long chain of intermediaries between God and us. For the same reason it is changeable and not eternal. All classes of beings come to be through God, and it is His emanating being and permeating might which conserve order in the cosmos. If God abstains from this emanation, nothing will come into existence.

As a true religious thinker, Miskawaih tries to prove that creation comes ex nihilo. He mentions that Galen said something against this view, but was refuted by Alexander of Aphrodisias in a special treatise.¹⁴ The argument given by Miskawaih is as follows: Forms succeed each other, the substratum remaining constant. In this change from one form to another, where do the preceding forms go?

The two forms cannot remain together because they are contrary. Secondly, the first form cannot go elsewhere, because motion in place applies only to bodies, and accidents cannot go from one place to another. There remains only one possibility - the possibility that the first form goes into nothing. If it is proved that the first form goes to Non-Being, then the second form comes and so the third, the fourth, and so on also from nothing. Therefore, all things generated are generated from nothing.

Aristotle conceived of the universe as a process of becoming. The “nature” of each thing is a potentiality which moves through a process of development to an actuality which is its final nature. The movement is towards an end immanent from the first in the subject of movement. An altogether different theory appears in the fiftieth “Epistle” of the Brethren of Purity (Ikhwan al-Safa), where the process of evolution has been shown to advance from the mineral to the human stage under the guidance of the spiritual urge for return to God.¹⁵

The Brethren of Purity used this theory to determine the status of prophet-hood. Miskawaih goes further and finds in it a stable basis for his moral theory as well.¹⁶ Like Aristotle he does regard happiness (sa`adah) as the chief human good, but unlike him he identifies it in the end with the

realization of the vicegerency of God, the place which man occupies in the cosmic evolution by virtue of his specific attribute of rationality.

Miskawaih's theory of evolution is basically the same as that of the Brethren of Purity. It consists of four evolutionary stages: the mineral, the vegetable, the animal, and the human. Coral (marjan), date-palm, and ape (qird) mark the transition from the mineral to the vegetable, from the vegetable to the animal, and from the animal to the human kingdom, respectively. The prophet, in the end, completes the circle of Being by imbibing the celestial soul within him.

Psychology

Miskawaih's psychology is based on the traditional spiritual-istic doctrine laid down by Plato and Aristotle, with a predominant Platonic tendency. He treats the subject in al-Fauz al-Asghar and Tahdhib al-Akhlaq. In the first of these works he discusses the problems more thoroughly. But he repeats himself on many points in both the books; in both we have the same arguments, the same examples, and nearly the same words.

Against the materialists he proves the existence of the soul on the ground that there is something in man which admits different and even opposed forms at the same time. This something cannot be material, for matter accepts only one form in a determinate moment.

The soul perceives simple and complex things, present and absent, sensible and intelligible. But does it perceive them through one and the same faculty, or through many faculties? Soul has no parts; divisibility applies only to matter. Does the soul, in spite of being one and indivisible, perceive different things with different faculties and in different ways? In answering this question, Miskawaih gives two different solutions: that of Plato, who says that similar perceives similar, and that of Aristotle who says that soul has one faculty that perceives complex material things and simple non-material things, but in different ways. In this connection Miskawaih mentions Themistius and his book "On Soul."

On the question of the immortality of the soul, Miskawaih gives at first¹⁷ Aristotle's doctrine. Then he gives (Chapter VI) three arguments of Plato; referring first to Plato himself, then to Proclus' "Commentary on Plato's Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul,"¹⁸ and finally to something that Galen said on this question.

Miskawaih says that Plato's doctrine is too long and needs a commentary; therefore, he attempts to summarize it as clearly as possible, with the help of Proclus' "Commentary." In this and the following chapters (VII, VIII) he is a thorough Platonist and makes a special mention of Plato's Laws and Timaeus.

Plato says that the essence of the soul is motion, and motion is the life of the soul. Miskawaih explains and says: This motion is of two kinds: one towards intelligence, the other towards matter; by the first it is illuminated, by the second it illuminates. But this motion is eternal and non-spatial, and so it is immutable. By the first kind of motion, the soul comes near to intelligence which is the first creation of God; by the second it descends and comes out of itself. Therefore, the soul comes nearer to God by the first

motion, and goes farther by the second. The first leads to its salvation, the second to its perdition.

Quoting Plato¹⁹ he says that philosophy is an exercise of voluntary death. There are two kinds of life: life according to intelligence, which is “natural life,” and life according to matter, which is voluntary life. The same applies to death; therefore, Plato says. If you die by will, you live by nature. Here “will” is taken in the sense of “passion.”

But Miskawaih at once corrects himself by saying that this voluntary death does not mean renunciation of the world; that would be the attitude of those who know nothing about the objects of this world and ignore that man is civil by nature and cannot live without the help and service of others. Those who preach renunciation are iniquitous, because they want the services of others without rendering any service to them and this is complete injustice. Some pretend that they need very little, but even this very little needs the services of a great number of people. Therefore, it is the duty of every human being to serve others fairly: if he serves them much he can demand much; and if he serves them little, he can ask for little.

This is an important aspect of Miskawaih's philosophical view, and explains his great interest in ethics.

Moral Philosophy

Moral philosophy is so connected with psychology that Miskawaih begins his big treatise on ethics *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq*, by stating his doctrine of the soul. Here his expose is less philosophical but richer in detail.

The point of transition from psychology to ethics is given on pages 18 to 21 where, following Plato, he draws a parallel between the faculties of the soul and the corresponding virtues.²⁰ The soul has three faculties: rational, courageous, and appetitive, and correspondingly three virtues: wisdom, courage, and temperance. By the harmony of these three virtues, we have a fourth one, namely, justice. The Greek temperament being theoretical and speculative,²¹ Plato could go no farther than this.

Equipped with a personal code of moral conduct, Miskawaih determined seven species of wisdom, viz., acuteness of intelligence, quickness of intellect, clearness of understanding, facility of acquirement, precision of discrimination, retention, and recollection; eleven species of courage, viz., magnanimity, collectedness, loftiness of purpose, firmness, coolness, stateliness, boldness, endurance, condescension, zeal, and mercy; twelve species of temperance, viz., shame, affability, righteousness, conciliatoriness, continence, patience, contentment, sedateness, piety, regularity, integrity, and liberality (which is further divided into six sub-species) ; and nineteen species of justice, viz., friendship, union, faithfulness, compassion, brotherhood, recompense, good partnership, fair-dealing, cordiality, sub-mission, resignation, devotion to God, forgetting of enmity, abstention from speaking ill of others, discussing the character of the just, ignoring the account of the unjust, and abstention from trusting the ignoble, the mischief-monger, and the flatterer.²²

We, however, cannot determine exactly whether these sub-divisions and distinctions are all Miskawaih's own. Surely he benefited himself much from his predecessors, and especially from the school of Abu Sulaiman al-

Sijistani al-Mantiqi, the echo of whose works we find in Tauhidi's Muqabasat.

So far Miskawaih has been Platonic, but from page 29 onward he begins to be Aristotelian, and takes virtue as a mean between two vices. He applies this doctrine of the mean to the four cardinal virtues, and with this he ends the first chapter.

In the second chapter, Miskawaih goes on to discuss the question of human nature and its original state: whether it is born good or bad. He states the opinion of the early Greeks who say that nature can never be changed, but rejects it. Then he takes up the view of the Stoics who think that men are created good but become bad by their inclination to bad appetites and by keeping bad company. There is also a third opinion that men are created bad and they become good only by education. Galen rejects the last two views and says that men are of three kinds: some are good by nature, others are bad by nature, and a third class is intermediate between the two.

Finally, Miskawaih states the opinion of Aristotle as given in the Nicomachean Ethics, and gives his own view that “the existence of the human substance depends on God's will, but the amelioration of it is left to man and depends on man's will” (p. 46).

Perfection attainable by man is of two kinds: the first is theoretical and the second practical. By the first he attains perfect science, by the second perfect character. Human faculties are three; the highest is reason, the lowest is appetite, and between the two lies courage. Man is man by the first. There-fore, perfection belongs especially to the rational soul. In each faculty there are many degrees, which Miskawaih enumerates in detail. Here (pp. 67-78) we find a long chapter on the education of children and youth.

The essential part of Miskawaih's ethics begins from the third chapter (pp. 90 et sqq.). In the first place he follows Aristotle as commented upon by Porphyry. It seems that he depends entirely on the commentary of Porphyry on Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics, which was translated into Arabic by Ishaq ibn Hunain, in twelve books.²³ Unfortunately, this commentary is lost both in Greek and its Arabic translation. But we can gather something of its form from Miskawaih's Tahdhib al-Akhlaq.

Following Aristotle, Miskawaih says (p. 90) that the good is that at which all things aim. This definition, which is supposed to be perhaps that of Eudoxus (c. 25 B. C.), is given in the very beginning of the Nichomachean Ethics.²⁴ Miskawaih goes on then to say that what is useful to this end may also be called good, i. e., the means as well as the end can be called good. But happiness or well-being is a relative good - good for an individual person. It is only a kind of good and has no distinctive and autonomous essence.

Miskawaih, like Aristotle,²⁵ gives a classification of happiness but adds more details, perhaps taken from Porphyry's commentary. This classification com-prises (1) health, (2) wealth, (3) fame and honour, (4) success, and (5) good thinking.

After giving Aristotle's doctrine of happiness, Miskawaih states the views of Hippocrates, Pythagoras, Plato, the Stoics, and some physicians who believed that body is a part and not an instrument of man, and so held that

happiness of the soul is incomplete if it is not accompanied by happiness of the body.

Miskawaih discusses these different doctrines and concludes by saying that we should reject the doctrine according to which happiness can come only after death and affirm that it is possible also in this world. No happiness is possible except by searching for the good in this world and the world to come. Here he affirms anew his two-fold *Anschauung*. But as a true religious man he gives preference to the next world.

In support of this, he refers to the translation by Abu `Uthman al-Dimashqi of a treatise called "Virtues of the Soul" attributed to Aristotle. We find this treatise attributed to Aristotle nowhere else. There are two kinds of happiness, one according to this world, the other according to the next, but no one can have the second without passing through the first (p. 111), because, as Aristotle said, divine happiness, notwithstanding being higher and nobler, is yet in need of worldly happiness; otherwise, it would remain hidden.

The fourth chapter deals mainly with justice and explains in detail what is meant by it. Here again he follows the corresponding parts in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.²⁶

In the fifth chapter he goes on to speak about friendship and love. A striking passage in this part is about two kinds of love: (a) love of man for God, and (b) love of disciple for master. The first is too high to be attained by mortal beings, and is reserved only for a few. As to the second kind of love, Miskawaih draws a parallel between the son's love for his parents and the disciple's love for his master, and says that the latter is nobler and more generous, because masters educate our souls and by their guidance we obtain real happiness. The master is a "spiritual father and a human lord; his goodness for the disciple is divine goodness, because he brings him up on virtues, feeds him with high wisdom, and conducts him to everlasting life in eternal blessing" (p. 175).

Friendship, in general, is most sacred and useful to all human beings. He who betrays it is more wicked than a counterfeiter of coins. A good man is a friend to himself and other people are also friends to him; he has no enemy except the bad. The happy man is he who gains friends and tries his best to be of use to them.

Miskawaih quotes Aristotle saying that man is in need of friends in good as well as in bad circumstances. Even a king is in need of friends because he cannot know his people's needs except through sincere friends, especially because they supply him information and help in execution of his orders. Man should do his best to please his friends and to be always on good terms with them without hypocrisy and flattery.

Miskawaih's treatment of justice ('adl) is largely Aristotelian, although for him this virtue is a shadow of divine unity,²⁷ the true equipoise. The knowledge of the mean or the limit that moderation would set in each particular case is a prerequisite of justice, but, unlike Aristotle, he assigns this function to the divine code rather than to reason or prudence.²⁸ The king as the deputy of God can exercise royal discretion in minor details according

to the exigencies of time and place, without violating the spirit of the divine code.

Aristotle recognized benevolence vaguely in the imperfect form of liberality which for him meant giving to “proper persons, in right proportion, at right times.” With Ibn Miskawaih, it is such an excess over the just award as would eliminate all possibility of under-estimation in justice, provided that its prejudicial effects are confined to the rights of the benevolent person himself only and the recipient himself is a worthy choice for it. Charity, thus, is a form of justice which is safe from disturbance.²⁹

Similarly, love, according to him, is not an extension of self-love, as held by Aristotle, but a limitation of it and love for another. He regards affection (mahabbah) as an inborn capacity for associating with mankind in general, but confines friendship (sadaqah) to a few individuals, basing it on the considerations of profit, pleasure, or good as conceived by Aristotle. Love (ishq) being the excessive desire for pleasure or good - the consideration of profit is alien to love - cannot extend beyond two individuals.³⁰

The object of animal love is pleasure and that of the spiritual love is virtue or goodness. The former is condemnable, the latter praiseworthy. He makes a specific mention of the love of man for God, of disciple for teacher, and of son for his parents in a graded series, as pointed out earlier. Justice, he concludes, is brought about through fear and force, but affection is a natural source of unity, so that justice is not required where affection reigns supreme. Affection, thus, is the sovereign; justice is the vicegerent.

As in al-Fauz al-Asghar, so in Tahdhib al-Akhlaq (pp. 195-96) Miskawaih is against all forms of ascetic life, because ascetics “sever themselves from all the moral virtues mentioned above. How can he who retires from men and lives in isolation be temperate, just, generous, or courageous? Is he anything other than something inorganic and dead?”³¹ Divine happiness is the ultimate goal and the good of man. It belongs to man's divine part. It is pure good, while reason is the first good.

Spiritual Medicine

The last two chapters of Tahdhib al-Akhlaq are devoted to what may be called spiritual medicine, a phrase which we find for the first time as the title of Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Razi's famous book: al-Tibb al-Ruhani. Miskawaih uses the phrase Tibb al-Nufus (p. 205), but the re-semblance in the general treatment of the subject is, obvious. This implies that Miskawaih is undoubtedly acquainted with al-Razi's treatise, although he does not mention him by name.

The two begin by saying that the master-ing of one's passion is the essential foundation of spiritual hygiene. Both refer to Galen's book “On Knowing One's Own Defects.” (This work was translated into Arabic by Thuma and revised by Hunain.³²) But, whereas al-Razi contents himself with what Galen says in this respect, Miskawaih contends it by saying that there does not exist a friend who can find for you your defects, and that an enemy is more useful in this respect than a friend (p. 200) because he is more aware of your vices and would have no hesitation in revealing them to you.

In this connection Miskawaih recommends the study of another of Galen's treatise: "That Good People Benefit from Their Enemies," which deals with this topic and is also mentioned by al-Razi.³³ Miskawaih then refers to al-Kindi, who, in effect, said that the man who is in search of virtue should realize that the images of his acquaintances are mirrors in which are reflected the evils arising out of pains and passions.

In the end, Miskawaih speaks of remedies for the diseases of the soul. He enumerates the most important diseases - anger, vanity, contentiousness, treason, cowardice, vainglory, fear, and sadness - and deals with their treatment. Some of his chapters correspond with some chapters in al-Razi's *Tibb*, namely, those on vanity, sadness, and fear of death. He also reproduces some passages from al-Kindi's treatise "On the Rejection of Sadness" (p. 256).

Why does not Miskawaih mention Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Razi? It is because al-Razi's conclusions and method of treatment were quite contrary to his own. Al-Kindi, on the other hand, was a kindred spirit. Al-Razi was bold, rationalistic, and abstruse, whereas al-Kindi was moderate, pious, and more accessible.

We have all along been showing what Miskawaih owes to his Greek pre-decessors, but we should not forget that Islamic culture also has an important influence on him. In supporting some ideas which he expounds, he very often quotes the Qur'an, traditions (ahadith) of the Prophet, sayings of Ibn Abi Talib and al-Hasan al-Basri, besides Arabic poetry.

Philosophy of History

Miskawaih is essentially a historian and moralist. His ethics is genetic³⁴ (being based on the place and position of man in the cosmic evolution), religious, and practical in character. He even felt it necessary to reform himself morally before writing his *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq*.³⁵ In history, his point of view is philosophical, scientific, and critical. Anticipating the modern outlook, he determines both the function of history and the duties of the historian as follows.

History is not an amusing tale about the royal personages, but a mirror of the politico-economic structure of society in a particular age. It is a record of the rise and fall of civilizations, nations, and States.³⁶

In order to realize this end, the historian should scrupulously guard himself against the common tendency of mixing up facts with fiction or pseudo-events. He should not only be factual but also critical in collecting his data.³⁷

Above all, he should not be content with the mere descriptions of facts, but, with a philosophic insight, should interpret them in terms of the underlying "human interests," their immediate causal determinants.³⁸ In history as in nature, there is no room for chance or accident.

History, thus, is no longer a collection of static and isolated facts, but a dynamic process of creative human hopes and aspirations. It is a living and growing organism, whose structure is determined by the basic ideals and the ideals of nations and States. It not only binds together the facts of the past into an organic whole, but also determines the shape of things to come. The very title of his monumental work, *Tajarib al-Umam* (The Experiences of

the Nations) is itself suggestive of its aims and method, which, in the words of Leon Caetani, are “much akin to the principles followed by Western and more modern historians.”³⁹

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Chapter 25: Ibn Sina

By Fazlur Rahman

In the history of philosophical thought in the Medieval Ages, the figure of Ibn Sina (370/980-428/1037)¹ is, in many respects, unique, while among the Muslim philosophers, it is not only unique but has been paramount right up to modern times. He is the only one among the great philosophers of Islam to build an elaborate and complete system of philosophy - a system which has been dominant in the philosophical tradition of Islam for centuries, in spite of the attacks of al-Ghazali, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, and others.

This ascendancy has been possible, however, not merely because he had a system but because that system had features of remarkable originality displaying a type of genius-like spirit in discovering methods and arguments whereby he sought to reformulate the purely rational and intellectual tradition of Hellen-ism, to which he was an eminent heir, for and, to an extent, within the religious system of Islam.

The exact terms of this reformulation and their relation to Islam we shall discuss presently in this chapter; it is only to be noted at the outset that it was this kind of originality which rendered him unique not only in Islam but also in the medieval West where the reformulations of the Roman Catholic theology at the hands of Albert the Great, and, especially, of Thomas Aquinas, were fundamentally influenced by him.

Since in this chapter we are mainly concerned with Ibn Sina's interpretation of Greek philosophical doctrines, we need not give an account of his sources in the Greek and Muslim philosophers. To be sure, the elements of his doctrines are Greek, and certain reformulations of Greek doctrines in his writings are also to be found in al-Farabi (to whom Ibn Sina's debt is immense) in varying degrees of development; but our task here is to state, analyse, and appreciate Ibn Sina's teaching. And, indeed, Ibn Sina's system, taken as a whole, is such that it is his, bearing the unmistakable impress of his personality. This is proved by the fact that he states his cardinal doctrines over and over again in his different works and often gives cross references, which are unmistakable signs of systematic thinking and not of random borrowing from heterogeneous sources.

The most fundamental characteristic of Ibn Sina's thought is that of arriving at definitions by a severely rigorous method of division and distinction of concepts. This lends an extraordinary subtlety to his arguments. It can often give his philosophical reasoning a strongly scholastic complexity and intricacy of structure which can annoy the modern temperament, but it is doubtlessly true that it is also this method which has resulted in almost all the original doctrines of our philosopher.

It has enabled him to formulate his most general and basic principle, viz., to every clear and distinct concept there must correspond a *distinctio in re*, a principle on which later Descartes also based his thesis of the mind-body dualism. The fecundity and importance of this principle of analysis in Ibn Sina's system are indeed striking: he announces it recurrently and at all levels, in his proof of the mind-body dualism, his doctrine of universals, his theory of essence and existence, etc. Examples of this principle are: "that

which is affirmed and admitted is different from that which is not affirmed and admitted,”² and “a single conceptual (lit. specific) entity cannot be both known and unknown at the same time except with regard to different aspects.”³

This chapter will deal mostly with those concepts and doctrines of Ibn Sina which are not only capital and bring out the nature of his system, but have also both been influential and originally elaborated by him to a greater or lesser extent.

The Doctrine Of Being

Ibn Sina's doctrine of Being, like those of earlier Muslim philosophers, e. g., al-Farabi, is emanationistic. From God, the Necessary Existent, flows the first intelligence alone, since from a single, absolutely simple entity, only one thing can emanate. But the nature of the first intelligence is no longer absolutely simple since, not being necessary-by-itself, it is only possible, and its possibility has been actualized by God. Thanks to this dual nature which henceforth pervades the entire creaturely world, the first intelligence gives rise to two entities: (i) the second intelligence by virtue of the higher aspect of its being, actuality, and (ii) the first and highest sphere by virtue of the lower aspect of its being, its natural possibility.

This dual emanatory process continues until we reach the lower and tenth intelligence which governs the sublunary world and is called by the majority of the Muslim philosophers the Angel Gabriel. This name is applied to it because it bestows forms upon or “informs” the matter of this world, i.e., both physical matter and the human intellect. Hence it is also called the “Giver of Forms” (the dator formarum of the subsequent medieval Western scholastics). We shall return later to these intelligences and these spheres to examine more closely their nature and operations; meanwhile we must turn to the nature of Being.

The procession of the immaterial intelligence from the Supreme Being by way of emanation was intended to supplement, under the inspiration of the Neo-Platonic Theory of Emanation, the meagre and untenable view of God formulated by Aristotle according to whom there was no passage from God, the One, to the world, the many. According to Muslim philosophers, although God remained in Himself and high above the created world, there were, nevertheless, intermediary links between the absolute eternity and necessity of God and the world of downright contingency. And this theory, besides, came very close to satisfying the Muslim belief in angels.

This is the first occasion to remark how Muslim philosophers, by a re-elaboration of the Greek tradition of philosophy, not only sought to build a rational system, but a rational system which sought to integrate the tradition of Islam. But what about the Theory of Emanation itself? Would it not destroy the necessary and all-important gulf between the Creator and the creation and lead to a downright pantheistic world-view - tat tvam Asi - against which Islam, like all higher religions, had warned so sternly?

No doubt, this type of pantheism, being dynamic, is different from the absolutist and static forms of pantheism; yet it could lead to anthropomorphism, or, by a reverse process of ascent, to the re-absorption

of the creature's being into the being of God. Now, the guarantee against any such danger shall be Ibn Sina's doctrine of essence and existence. This celebrated theory again is designed to fulfil equally both religious and rational needs and, once again, to supplement Aristotle.

Early in this section we said that God and God alone is absolutely simple in His being; all other things have a dual nature. Being simple, what God is and the fact that He exists are not two elements in a single being but a single atomic element in a single being. What God is, i.e., His essence, is identical with His existence. This is not the case with any other being, for in no other case is the existence identical with the essence, otherwise whenever, for example, an Eskimo who has never seen an elephant, conceives of one, he would ipso facto know that elephants exist.

It follows that God's existence is necessary, the existence of other things is only possible and derived from God's, and that the supposition of God's non-existence involves a contradiction, whereas it is not so with any other existent.⁴ It will be seen that the germs of the ontological argument exist in a fairly developed form in this argument. A cosmological argument, based on Aristotle's doctrine of the First Cause, would be superfluous in establishing God's existence.

Ibn Sina, however, has not chosen to construct a full-fledged ontological argument. His argument, which, as we shall see later, became the cardinal doctrine of the Roman Catholic dogmatic theology after Aquinas, is more like the Leibnizian proof of God as the ground of the world, i. e., given God, we can understand the existence of the world. Here cause and effect behave like premises and conclusion. Instead of working back from a supposed effect to its cause, we work forward from an indubitable premise to a conclusion.

Indeed for Ibn Sina, God creates through a rational necessity. On the basis of this rational necessity, Ibn Sina also explains the divine pre-knowledge of all events, as we shall see in his account of God. The world, as a whole, is then contingent, but, given God, it becomes necessary, this necessity being derived from God. This is Ibn Sina's principle of existence stated in brief; we shall now analyse it according to the complex materials which Ibn Sina has left us. It involves more than one point of view.

From the metaphysical point of view, the theory seeks to supplement the traditional Aristotelian analysis of an existent into two constituent elements, as it were, viz., form and matter. According to Aristotle, the form of a thing is the sum total of its essential and universalizable qualities constituting its definition; the matter in each thing is that which has the potentiality of receiving these qualities - the form - and by which the form becomes an individual existent.

But there are two major difficulties in this conception from the point of view of the actual existence of a thing. The first is that the form is universal and, therefore, does not exist. Matter too, being pure potentiality, does not exist, since it is actualized only by the form. How then shall a thing come into existence by a non-existent form and an equally non-existent matter?

The second difficulty arises from the fact that, although Aristotle generally holds that the definition or essence of a thing is its form, he

nevertheless says in certain important passages (e.g., *De Anima*, Vol. I, Chap. I, 403 a, 27 ff.) that matter is also to be included in the essence of a thing, otherwise we shall have only a partial definition of it. If, then, we regard both form and matter as constitutive of definition, we can never arrive at the actual existence of a thing. This is the rock against which the whole scheme of Aristotle to explain Being threatens to break.

This is why Ibn Sina⁵ holds that from form and matter alone you would never get a concrete existent, but only the essential and accidental qualities. He has analysed at some length the relation of form and matter in *K. al-Shifa'*, ("Met." II, 4 and "Met." VI, 1), where he concludes that both form and matter depend on God (or the active intellect) and, further, that the composite existent also cannot be caused by form and matter alone but there must be "something else."

Finally, in "Met." VIII, 5, he tells us, "Every-thing except the One who is by His essence One and Existent acquires existence from something else. . . . In itself it deserves absolute non--existence. Now, it is not its matter alone without its form or its form alone without its matter which deserves non-existence but the totality (of matter and form)."

This is why Ibn Sina substitutes a three-term analysis of the existent material objects instead of the traditional Greek dyadic formula. It must be noted that it is Aristotle's doctrine which is being developed here. Many scholars have held that Ibn Sina is here following a Neo-Platonic line instead of the Aristotelian one, but, from this point of view, the Neo-Platonic doctrine is the same as that of Aristotle, viz., the dyadic scheme of form and matter, except that, according to Plotinus, under the influence of Plato, the forms have a higher ontological status and exist in God's mind who then proceeds to make them existent in matter.

It should also be borne in mind that existence is not really a constituent element of things besides matter and form; it is rather a relation to God: if you view a thing in relation to the divine existentializing agency, it exists, and it exists ne-cessarily and, further, its existence is intelligible, but when out of relation with God, its existence loses its intelligibility and meaning. It is this relational aspect which Ibn Sina designates by the term "accident" and says that existence is an accident.

Ever since the criticism of Ibn Sina's doctrine by Ibn Rushd who, among other things, accused Ibn Sina of having violated the definition of substance as that which exists by itself, and of Aquinas who, although he adopts the distinction between essence and existence under the direct influence of Ibn Sina, nevertheless follows Ibn Rushd in his criticism, the unanimous voice of the Western historians of medieval philosophy has been to the effect that existence, according to Ibn Sina, is just an accident among other accidents, e. g., round, black, etc.

We have said that when Ibn Sina talks of existence as an accident with relation to objects (as distinguished from essence) he just means by it a relation to God; it is, therefore, not an ordinary accident. Further, if existence were an accident, one could think it away and still go on talking of the object just as one can do in the case of other accidents and, indeed, in that case Ibn Sina would have been forced to hold something like the

Meinongian view held by many Muslim Mutakallims that non-existents must also “exist” in some peculiar sense of that word. But this is the very doctrine which Ibn Sina ridicules. The whole discussion on this point can be found in the article referred to in note No. 5 of this chapter.

Here we give only one passage where our philosopher criticizes the view of those who hold that a non-existent “thing” must, nevertheless, “exist” in some sense so that we can talk about it. He says (K. al-Shifa', “Met.” I, 5), “Those people who entertain this opinion hold that among those things which we can know (i. e., be acquainted with) and talk about, are things to which, in the realm of non-being, non-existence belongs as an attribute. He who wants to know more about this should further consult the nonsense which they have talked and which does not merit con-sideration.”

Indeed, according to Ibn Sina, the ideas of existence and unity are the primary ideas with which we must start. These underived concepts are the bases of our application of other categories and attributes to things and, therefore, they defy definition since definition must involve other terms and concepts which are themselves derived (ibid., I, 5).

It will be seen that this problem now is not a metaphysical one but has to do with logic. Ibn Sina has attempted to give his own answer to the question: How is it possible that we can talk of non-existents and what do these latter mean? His answer is that we can do so because we give to these objects “some sort of existence in the mind.” But, surely, our individual images cannot constitute the meanings of these entities for the obvious reason that when we talk, e. g., of a space-ship, it must have an objective meaning.

It is, neverthe-less, true that Ibn Sina has seen the basic difficulty of the logic of existence. And our modern logic itself, despite its superior techniques and some valuable distinctions, seems nowhere nearer the solution. It has tried hard to contend that whenever I talk of a space-ship, although none exists, I am not talking of a “thing,” of an individual object, but only of a generic object or a conglome-ration of properties. But is this really so ? Is it absurd to say that the “individual space-ship I am talking of now has this and this property”? Besides, the crux is the phrase “conglomeration or set of properties” - what is it to which they belong and of which I profess to be talking?

Besides this meaning of “accident” as a peculiar and unique relation of an existent to God, the term “accident” in Ibn Sina has another unorthodox philosophic meaning. This concerns the relationship of a concrete existent to its essence or specific form, which Ibn Sina also calls accidental. This use of the term “accident” is quite pervasive in Ibn Sina's philosophy and, without knowing its correct significance, one would be necessarily led to misinterpret some of his basic doctrines.

Now, whenever two concepts are clearly distinguishable from each other, they must refer to two different ontological entities, as we said above, and, further, whenever two such concepts come together in a thing, Ibn Sina describes their mutual relationship as being accidental, i. e., they happen to come together, although each must be found to exist separately. This is the

case, for example, between essence and existence, between universality and essence.

According to Ibn Sina, essences exist in God's mind (and in the mind of the active intelligences) prior to the individual existents exemplifying them in the external world and they also exist in our minds posterior to these individual existents. But these two levels of the existence of an essence are very different. And they differ not only in the sense that the one is creative, and the other imitative.

In its true being, the essence is neither universal nor particular, but it is just an essence. Hence he holds (K. al-Shifa', "Isagoge to Logic," Cairo, 1952, pp. 65-69; also *ibid.* "Met." V, 1) that both particularity and universality are "accidents" which happen or occur to the essence. Universality occurs to it in our minds only, and Ibn Sina takes a strictly functional view of the universals: our mind abstracts universals or general concepts whereby it is enabled to treat the world of infinite diversity in a summary and scientific manner by relating an identical mental construction to a number of objects.

In the external world the essence does not exist except in a kind of metaphorical sense, i. e., in the sense in which a number of objects allow themselves to be treated as being identical. Existents in the external world are the individual concrete objects, no two of which are exactly the same.

He says, "It is impossible that a single essence should exist identically in many" ("Met." V, 2), and again, "It (i. e. absolute manness) is not the manness of 'Amr; it is different from it, thanks to the particular circumstances. These particular circumstances have a role in the individual person of Zaid ... and also a role in the 'man' or 'manness' inasmuch as it is related to him" ("Met." V, 1). It is clear especially from this last statement that the "essence" virtually undergoes a change in each individual. That is why we must say that if we regard essence as a universal, that concrete determinate existence is something over and above the essence; it is something added to the essence, or it is an "accident" of the essence.

Two things must be specially noted here. First, that existence is something added not to the existent objects - this would be absurd - but to the essence. This is because everything whether it exists or not - indeed whether it is existable or not - in fact every concept is "something" of which assertions can be made, whether positive or negative. Indeed, even non-existence is "something," since one can talk about it. But a positive individual existent is more than just "something." (This distinction between "something" and an existent, treated by Ibn Sina ["Met." 1, 5] which has confusedly returned in present-day logic, was originally made by the Stoics [see, e.g., *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, Vo. II, p. 117].)

Hence Ibn Sina says that when existence is attributed to essences, this existence is equivalent to "is something" and, therefore, such statements are not "profitable." But statements about existents are informative and profitable, since they add to the essence something that is new.

Secondly, we must note that although Ibn Sina speaks in several places of matter as the principle of multiplicity of forms or essences, he never says that matter is the principle of individual existence. The sole principle of

individual existence is God - the Giver of existence; matter is the occasional cause of existence, supplying external attributes of multiplicity.

We have given a considerable number of quotations from Ibn Sina in the treatment of this problem not only because it is of capital importance for Ibn Sina's philosophy, but also because there has been such a great deal of fundamental confusion in the traditional treatment of the subject that a clarification of the terms "existence," "accident" in this relation, and "essence" is absolutely necessary.

The Body-Mind Relationship

With Aristotle, Ibn Sina stresses the intimate connection of mind and body; but whereas Aristotle's whole trend of thought rejects a two-substance view, Ibn Sina holds a form of radical dualism. How far these two aspects of his doctrine are mutually compatible is a different question: Ibn Sina certainly did not carry his dualism through to develop a parallelistic, occasionalistic account of mind-body relationship. His remarks, nevertheless, on either side are both interesting and profound. We shall first state his arguments for the two-substance view and then discuss their close inter-connection.

To prove that the human soul is a substance capable of existing independently of the body, our philosopher employs two different arguments. One appeals to direct self-consciousness, the other seeks to prove the immateriality of the intellect. We can postpone his teaching on the intellect till we discuss his theory of knowledge; here we shall state and discuss his first argument. Indeed, according to him, this is the more direct way of proving the incorporeal substantiality of the soul acting not as an argument but as an eye-opener (K. al-Shifa', "Psychology," V 7).

The argument is stated by Ibn Sina in the first chapter of the psychological book of the K. al-Shifa' and then re-stated and discussed in the last but one chapter of the same book. Let us suppose, as he says, that a person is created in an adult state, but in such a condition that he is born in a void where his body cannot touch anything and where he cannot perceive anything of the external world. Let us also suppose that he cannot see his own body and that the organs of his body are prevented from touching one another, so that he has no sense-perception whatsoever.

Such a person will not affirm anything of the external world or even the existence of his own body but will, neverthe-less, affirm the existence of his self as a purely spiritual entity. Now, that which is affirmed is certainly not the same as that which is not affirmed. The mind is, therefore, a substance independent of the body. Our philosopher is here describing an imaginary case impossible of realization, but his real point, as of Descartes, is that we can think away our bodies and so doubt their existence, but we cannot think away our minds.

The affinity of Ibn Sina's argument with that of Descartes' cogito ergo sum has been justly pointed out by historians of philosophy. Actually, this whole trend of thought is inspired by the argument of Plotinus for the separateness of the mind from the body.⁶ But there is an important difference between Ibn Sina's and Descartes' formulations. With regard to Descartes, the question can be and has been raised: Is the existence of the

self a matter of inference or an immediate datum of consciousness? Whatever the answer to this question may be, there is no doubt that consciousness or “I think” is constitutively and necessarily involved in Descartes' “I am.” This is so much so that “I think” and “I am” have the same meaning in Descartes .⁷

This being the position, it is obvious that in this case the consciousness of the self and its existence cannot be logically disengaged from each other. In Ibn Sina, however, although the element of consciousness is present since one can “affirm one's own existence,” it is nevertheless present only as a way of locating the self: it is a contingent fact and not a logical necessity. In fact, Ibn Sina presents a medial position between Descartes and Plotinus, for, according to the latter, consciousness, being a relation, signifies not utter self-identity but a kind of otherness; in complete self-identity, consciousness must cease altogether.

This argument, which seeks to establish dualism by doubting or denying the existence of the body, may be called the argument from abstraction in that it abstracts psychical functions from the total functions of the organism. Its fundamental weakness obviously is to insist that by thinking away the body, the body ceases to play a role in one's total consciousness. If the problem could be solved by a simple inspection of the self in this manner, nothing would be easier.

Ibn Sina seems to be aware that the position is liable to objections. He says (“Psychology,” V, 7): (If my self were identical with any bodily members) “say, the heart or the brain or a collection of such members and if it were their separate or total being of which I were conscious as being my self, then it would be necessary that my consciousness of my self should be my very consciousness of these members, for it is not possible that the same thing should be both cognized and uncognized in the same sense.”

He then goes on to say that “in fact I do not know by self-consciousness that I have a heart and a brain but I do so either by sense-perception (experience) or on authority.” “I mean by what I know to be my self that which I mean when I say: ‘I perceived, I intellected, I acted,’ and all these attributes belong to me.” But, Ibn Sina pauses to consider the possible objection: if you are not aware of your self being a bodily member, you are neither directly aware that it is your soul or mind.

Ibn Sina's answer to this objection is: “Whenever I present bodily attributes to this something which is the source of my mental functions, I find that it cannot accept these attributes,” and thus this incorporeal entity must be the soul.

Here we clearly see that the argument has taken a new turn and the phenomenon of direct consciousness is being supplemented by a further consideration to the effect that the disparateness between the mental and physical qualities is such that both cannot belong to one substance. And this is the perennial argument for the two-substance theory, viz. that the mental and the physical attributes are of qualitatively disparate genre.

From the acceptance of the view, that the mind is a substance, the conclusion that the mind is a unity follows tautologically and Ibn Sina lays great stress on it. Indeed, once again, both doctrines, viz., the reality of

faculties and the unitary nature of the soul, are stated with equal emphasis by him. The reality of mental faculties was established by Aristotle but was further pursued by his commentators, notably Alexander of Aphrodisias.

Ibn Sina has devoted a special chapter to the question ("Psychology," I, 4) where he bases the multiplicity of faculties on the qualitative differences among mental operations. Nevertheless, he repeatedly stresses the necessity of an integrative bond (ribat) for the diverse operations.⁸ Indeed, he declares that even the vegetative and perceptual functions in man, for example, are specifically different from those in plants and animals, thanks to the rationality present in man which pervades and changes the character of all his functions. This integrative principle is the mind itself.

The soul in its real being is then an independent substance and is our transcendental self. We shall return to its transcendence when we discuss Ibn Sina's theory of knowledge in the next section. Here we shall note only that Ibn Sina's arguments for the immortality of the soul are based on the view that it is a substance and that it is not a form of the body to which it is attached intimately by some kind of mystical relation between the two.

There is in the soul which emerges from the separate substance of the active intelligence simultaneously with the emergence of a body with a definite temperament, a definite inclination to attach itself to this body, to care for it, and direct it to the mutual benefit. Further, the soul, as being incorporeal, is a simple substance and this ensures for it indestructibility and survival, after its origination, even when its body is destroyed.

But if at the transcendental level the soul is a pure spiritual entity and body does not enter into its definition even as a relational concept, at the phenomenal level the body must be included in its definition as a building enters into the definition of a (definite) builder. That is why Ibn Sina says that the study of the phenomenal aspect of the soul is in the field of natural science, while its transcendental being belongs to the study of metaphysics.

Now, since at the phenomenal level there exists between each soul and body a mystique which renders them exclusively appropriate for each other - whether we understand this mystique or not - it follows that the transmigration of souls is impossible. (Transmigration is rejected by Aristotle who does not hold the two-substance view.) Indeed, this mystique is both the cause and the effect of the individuality of the self. Ibn Sina, therefore, totally rejects the idea of the possible identity of two souls or of the ego becoming fused with the Divine Ego, and he emphasizes that the survival must be individual.

It is a primary fact of experience that each individual is conscious of his self-identity which cannot be shaken by any kind of argument. Indeed, our philosopher is so keen to affirm the individuality of personality that he says ("Psy-chology," V, 3) that even the qualitative nature of the intellectual operations in different individuals may be different - a statement which would have shocked not only the Platonists and Neo-Platonists, but even perhaps Aristotle, since, according to the universal Greek doctrine, the intellect represents, at least, the qualitative identity of mankind, a doctrine which was later pushed to its logical extremes by Ibn Rushd.

The relationship, then, between soul and body is so close that it may affect even the intellect. It goes without saying that all the other psychophysical acts and states have both aspects - mental and physical. This was emphasized by Aristotle himself. But Aristotle's doctrine, even if it is not outright material-istic, is quasi-materialistic and, whereas it either emphasizes the double aspect of each state or operation, or tends strongly to point out the influence of the body on the mental phenomena, exactly the reverse is the case with Ibn Sina. Indeed, his insistent stress on the influence of the mind on the body constitutes an outstanding and one of the most original features of his philosophy.

Whereas in Aristotle, life and mind give a new dimension to the material organism, in Ibn Sina, under the inspiration of the Neo-Platonic thought and the influence of his own metaphysically spiritual predilections, this no longer remains a mere dimension. The material side of nature is both pervaded and over-shadowed by its mental and spiritual side, even though, as a medical man, he is keen to preserve the importance of the physical constitution, especially in the case of the character of the emotions and impulses. Indeed, as we shall see, his medical art helped him to gauge the extent of mental influence on apparently bodily states.

At the most common level, the influence of the mind on the body is visible in voluntary movement: whenever the mind wills to move the body, the body obeys. In his detailed account of animal motion, Ibn Sina has enumerated four stages instead of Aristotle's three. The three stages according to Aristotle are: (1) imagination or reason, (2) desire, and (3) movement of the muscles. Ibn Sina has split up the second into (1) desire and (2) impulsion (ijma') for, he says, not every desire can move to action but only when it is impulsive, whether consciously or unconsciously.

The second, and more important difference between Ibn Sina and the traditional view is that according to the latter the initiation of bodily movement must always lie in a cognitive state, whether it is imagination or reason. Ibn Sina holds that, while in most cases the cognitive act precedes the affective and the conative ones, this is not true of all cases.

We read ("Psychology," IV, 4): "All (the appetitive and conative) faculties also follow imaginative faculties.... But sometimes it happens, e.g., in cases of physical pain, that our natural impulse tries to remove the cause of pain and thus initiates the process of stirring up imagination. In this case, it is these (appetitive) faculties which drive the imagination to their own purpose, just as, in most cases, it is the imaginative faculty which drives the (appetitive and conative) faculties towards the object of imagination."

Thus, according to Ibn Sina, the initiation of the animal motion can lie in the affections as well as in the cognitive states. Psychologically, this is of great significance and marks an advance over the purely and one-sidedly intellectual accounts of traditional philosophy.

Here we reach the second level of the influence of the mind on the body, viz., that of emotions and of the will. Ibn Sina tells us from his medical experience that actually physically sick men, through sheer will-power, can become well and, equally, healthy men can become really ill under the influence of sickness-obsession. Similarly, he says, if a plank of wood is

put across a well-trodden path, one can walk on it quite well, but if it is put as a bridge and down below is a chasm, one can hardly creep over it without an actual fall. "This is because he pictures to himself a (possible) fall so vividly that the natural power of his limbs accords with it" ("Psychology," IV, 4).

Indeed, strong emotions like fear can actually destroy the temperament of the organism and result in death, through influencing the vegetative functions: "This happens when a judgment takes place in the soul; the judgment, being pure belief, does not influence the body, but rather when this belief is followed by joy or grief" ("Psychology," I, 3). Joy and grief too are mental states, Ibn Sina goes on, but they affect the vegetative functions.

Again, "We do not regard it as impossible that something should occur to the soul, in so far as it is embodied, and be then followed by affections peculiar to the body itself. Imagination, inasmuch as it is knowledge, is not in itself a physical affection, but it may happen that, as a result, certain bodily organs, sexual for example, should expand.... Indeed, when an idea becomes firmly established in the imagination, it necessitates a change in the temperament...." (ibid., IV, 4). Just as, we are told, the ideas of health present in the doctor's mind produce actual health in a patient, so the soul acts on the body; only the doctor produces cure through media and instruments, but the soul does it without any instruments.

If, indeed, the soul were strong enough, it could produce cure and illness even in another body without instruments. And here Ibn Sina produces evidence from the phenomena of hypnosis and suggestion (*al-wahm al-'amil*). He uses these considerations in order to show the possibility of miracles which are a part of the discussion of the question of prophethood.

Here we will recall what we said before that, according to Ibn Sina, a soul becomes exclusively attached to one body. Our newer consideration shows that it can transcend its own body to affect others. This would become possible only when the soul becomes akin to the universal soul, as it were.

It is on these grounds that Ibn Sina accepts the reality of such phenomena as the "evil eye" and magic in general. We may note that the influence of the emotions on the body was known and discussed in later Hellenism. Especially since the Stoic conception of the principle of "Sympathy" in nature and Plotinus' elaboration of that principle, the mind-body interaction was explained on these lines. What is scientifically new in Ibn Sina is that he also explains phenomena like magic, suggestion, and hypnosis, and, in general, the influence of one mind on other bodies and minds on these lines, i. e., by referring them to the properties of the influencing mind.

In Hellenism, these phenomena were accepted, but were regarded as exceptionally occult. And in the mystery-mongering superstition of later Hellenism, "Sympathy" was given an occult twist. Magical properties were assigned to special objects: metals, animals, etc., through which the magician or the hypnotizer worked or pretended to work on the gods or spirits to intervene in the realm of nature and to produce occult effects.

But the only principle which Ibn Sina will accept - and here he strikes a very modern note - is to refer efficacy to the special constitution of the mind

itself. This rests on the premise that it is of the nature of mind to influence matter and it belongs to matter to obey the mind, and Ibn Sina will have no theurgic magic:

“This is because the soul is (derived from) certain (higher) principles which clothe matter with forms contained in them, such that these forms actually constitute matter.... If these principles can bestow upon matter forms constitutive of natural species... it is not improbable that they can also bestow qualities, without there being any need of physical contact, action, or affection.... The form existing in the soul is the cause of what occurs in matter” (“Psychology,” IV, 4).

The reason for this great change is that in later Hellenism the human soul had lost its dignity and people relied more and more for the explanation of the “para-natural” phenomena on the intervention of the gods.

Theory Of Knowledge

In accordance with the universal Greek tradition, Ibn Sina describes all knowledge as some sort of abstraction on the part of the cognizant of the form of the thing known. His chief emphasis, elaborated most probably by himself, is on the degrees of this abstracting power in different cognitive faculties. Thus, sense-perception needs the very presence of matter for its cognitive act; imagination is free from the presence of actual matter but cannot cognize without material attachments and accidents which give to the image its particularity, whereas in intellect alone the pure form is cognized in its universality.

It is very probable too that Ibn Sina elaborated this theory “of the grades of abstraction” to avoid the objection to which Aristotle's doctrine of cognition (according to which all cognition is the abstraction of form “without its matter”) was liable, viz., if perception is the knowledge of form alone, how do we know that this form exists in matter? Or, indeed, how do we know that matter exists at all?

Ibn Sina's position on perception is generally that of naive realism, like that of Aristotle and his commentators, holding a representational view of perception. But under criticism from scepticism and relativism which point out the relativity of perceived qualities, this representational view becomes seriously modified and Ibn Sina finally accepts a quasi-causal or, rather, relational view of perceptual qualities, i.e., objects, which have certain real qualities in themselves, appear as such-and-such under such-and-such circum-stances and from such-and-such a position.

This is responsible for several subjectivist statements in Ibn Sina, who comes to distinguish between “pri-mary” and “secondary” perceptions: the “primary” perception being subjective or of the state of the percipient's own mind, the “secondary” perception being that of the external world. He did not clearly see, as we moderns do, the basic difficulties in this position. But his conception reappears in Western medieval philosophy as the distinction between the psychological or “inten-tional” object and the real object, a distinction which was much later developed by Locke into that of primary and secondary perceptual qualities.

But the great key-stone of Ibn Sina's doctrine of perception is his distinction between internal and external perception. The external

perception is the operation of the external five senses. Ibn Sina also divides the internal perception formally into five faculties, although he shows a great deal of hesitation on the subject (see "Psychology," IV, I). His chief aim is to separate the different functions or operations on a qualitative basis, and, of course, we once again remember his principle that to every clear idea there must correspond a distinction in reality. Indeed, his doctrine of the internal senses has no precedent in the history of philosophy.

The first internal sense is *sensus communis* which is the seat of all the senses. It integrates sense-data into percepts. This general sense must be internal because none of the external five senses is capable of this function. The second internal sense is the imaginative faculty in so far as it conserves the perceptual images. The third faculty is again imagination in so far as it acts upon these images, by combination and separation. In man this faculty is pervaded by reason so that human imagination can deliberate and is, therefore, the seat of the practical intellect.

The fourth and the most important internal faculty is called *wahm* which passed into the West as *vis estimativa*: it perceives immaterial motions like usefulness and harmfulness, love and hate in material objects, and is, in fact, the basis of our character, whether influenced or uninfluenced by reason. The fifth internal sense conserves in memory those notions which are called by him "intentions" (*ma'ani*).

The doctrine of *wahm* is the most original element in Ibn Sina's psycho-logical teaching and comes very close to what some modern psychologists have described as the "nervous response" of the subject to a given object. In Aristotle, this function is performed by imagination or perception itself, but Ibn Sina contends that perception and imagination tell us only about the perceptual qualities of a thing, its size, colour, shape, etc.; they tell us nothing about its character or "meaning" for us, which must be read or discerned by an internal faculty of the organism.

In the Stoics, again, we have the perceptual-moral theory of the *oikeiosis* or "appropriation," according to which whatever is perceived by the external senses is interpreted internally by the soul as the bearer of certain values. But the Stoics, in this doctrine, were primarily concerned with the development of a moral personality in man. Ibn Sina's doctrine of *wahm*, on the other hand, despite its moral significance, is primarily a purely psychological doctrine, explaining our instinctive and emotional response to the environment.

This "nervous response" operates at different levels. At one level it is purely instinctive as when a sheep perceives a wolf for the first time and flees from it, or as the mother instinctively feels love for her baby. This occurs without previous experience and hence through some kind of "natural inspiration" ingrained in the constitution of the organism.

Secondly, it also operates at a "quasi-empirical" level ("Psychology," IV, 3). This occurs through association of ideas or images of memory. A dog which has suffered pain in the past from being beaten by a stick or a stone, associates the image of the object and the "intention" of pain and, when it sees the object again, at once runs away. This phenomenon of direct association can also become indirect and irrational. This happens in the case

of animals and also in the case of less reasonable human beings. Some people who have irrationally associated the yellow colour of honey with both the colour and the bitter taste of gall, do not eat honey and in fact at its sight exhibit symptoms of gall-like taste.

This principle of association appeared later in Leibniz (Monadology, translated by R. Latta, p. 232); and the principle of irrational or automatic association has appeared more thoroughly worked out in recent experimental psychology under the name of the “conditioned reflex.” Since wahn makes perceptual predictions on the basis of association of ideas, for which, says Ibn Sina, there are innumerable causes (contiguity, similarity, etc.), its perceptual judgments may sometimes be false. Aristotle had noticed this failure of perception but could not explain it since he did not discern the influence of past experience on present perceptual judgments.

We come next to the doctrine of the intellect which Ibn Sina has elaborated in great detail. He has taken over in his doctrine the theory of the development of human intellect announced by Aristotle very briefly and rather obscurely and then elaborated by Alexander of Aphrodisias and later by Farabi. But he has added quite new and original interpretations of his own.

The doctrine, in brief, distinguishes between a potential intellect in man and an active intellect outside man, through the influence and guidance of which the former develops and matures. Basically, the problem is that of the origin of human cognition and it is explained on the assumption of a supra-human transcendent intellect which, when the human intellect is ready, bestows knowledge upon it.

As against Alexander, al-Farabi, and probably Aristotle, Ibn Sina holds that the potential intellect in man is an indivisible, immaterial, and indestructible substance although it is generated at a definite time and as something personal to each individual. This has important religious consequences, for, where, according to al-Farabi only men of developed intellect survive and others perish for ever at death, Ibn Sina holds the immortality of all human souls (According to Alexander of Aphrodisias, even the actualized intellect is perishable so that no soul is immortal.) The immateriality of the intellect is proved by Ibn Sina in an unprecedented, elaborate, and scholastic manner, the basic idea being that ideas or “forms,” being indivisible, cannot be said to be localized in any material organ.

But it is in his account of the intellectual operation and the manner of the acquisition of knowledge that the most original aspect of his doctrine of the intellect lies. Whereas, according to the Peripatetic doctrine, accepted by Farabi, the universal, which is the object of the intellectual act, is abstracted from the particulars of sense-experience, for Ibn Sina it issues directly from the active intellect.

The Peripatetic tradition has given the following account of the rise of the universal from perceptual experience: First, we perceive several similar individuals; these are stored up in memory and after this constant operation the light of the active intellect “shines” upon them so that the essential nature common to all the particulars emerges from them. This theory is neither nominalistic nor realistic: it does say that the universal is more than

what the instances of experience have given to the mind, but it holds that the universal lies somehow in these instances.

For Ibn Sina, the universal cannot emerge from the images of sense because it does not lie there. Further, as we have seen already, the essence, according to Ibn Sina, is not really a universal: it only behaves as such when it is in our minds. Besides, no amount of particular instances would actually suffice to produce the universal essence which is applicable to infinite instances. He, therefore, declares that the task of our minds is to “consider” and reflect upon the particulars of sense-experience. This activity prepares the mind for the reception of the (universal) essence from the active intellect by an act of direct intuition. The perception of the universal form, then, is a unique movement of the intellective so not reducible to our perceiving the particulars either singly or totally and finding the common essence among them, for if so, it would be only a spurious kind of universal.

There is, besides, another vital consideration which leads to this view. If the perception of the individual instances and the noting of their resemblance (which latter, indeed, itself presupposes the possession of the universal by the mind) were sufficient to cause the universal, then acquisition of knowledge would become mechanical and this mechanism would operate necessarily.

It is, however, in fact not true that cognition can be so mechanically and deterministically produced. The origin of knowledge is mysterious and involves intuition at every stage. Of all intellectual knowledge, more or less, it is not so much true to say “I know it” as to admit “It occurs to me.”

All seeking for knowledge, according to Ibn Sina (even the emergence of the conclusion from the premises), has this prayer-like quality: the effort is necessary on the part of man; the response is the act of God or the active intellect. We are, indeed, often not aware as to what it is we want to know, let alone go ahead and “know it.” A theory of knowledge which fails to notice this fundamental truth is not only wrong but blasphemous.

All ideas or forms then come from outside. The precise sense of the “outside” we shall try to work out in the next section. But in the meantime we should notice certain other important characteristics of our knowledge. The first is that it is piecemeal and discursive, not total; it is also mostly “receptive” in the sense noted just above. In our normal consciousness we are not fully aware of the whence and whither of our cognition.

True, there are people who are receptive in the ordinary sense of the word in that they do not discover either anything, or much that is new and original; they only learn for the most part; while there are others who discover new things. But even these latter are only “receptive” in the sense that, not being fully conscious of the whence and whither of their knowledge - not aware of the total context of reality - they do not know the full meaning of their discoveries. This is because, in the common run of thinkers ideas come and go in succession and, therefore, their grasp of reality is not total.

Hence Ibn Sina rejects the general and especially later Greek doctrine of the absolute identity of subject and object in intellectual operation, for, he argues, in the case of normal consciousness, there being a succession of

ideas, if the mind became identical with one object, how could it then become identical with another? In this connection he rebukes Porphyry for his “mystical and poetical statements.” Why he should single out the pupil of Plotinus, is not quite clear, for the doctrine is both Peripatetic and Neo-Platonic, although there are, it must be admitted, moderate representatives like Alexander of Aphrodisias just as there are extremist champions of the doctrine like most Neo-Platonists.

Ideas in this detailed, discrete, and discursive form of knowledge, as we have said, come into the mind and go out of it. Ibn Sina is insistent that when an idea is not actually being used in intellection, it does not remain in the mind, or, in other words, there is, properly speaking, no intellectual memory as there is a memory of sensible images. There is nothing in the mind which can conserve intelligibles just as there is a conservatory in the soul for sensibles for the existence of an intelligible in the mind means nothing else than the fact that it is actually being intellected.

Absolutely speaking, it should be remarked that the word memory, when applied to sensible objects and individual events of the past, is radically different from the memory of universals and universal propositions, for in the former case there is a reference to the past. Aristotle himself had indicated this doctrine in his *De Memoria et Reminiscentia* where he says that universals are remembered only per accidens.

The ordinary human thinking mind, says Ibn Sina, is like a mirror upon which there is a succession of ideas reflected from the active intellect. This does not mean that a truth once acquired, because it “goes out of the mind,” has to be learnt all over again when it is remembered. By our initial acquisition we acquire a skill to contact the active intellect and in remembering we simply use that skill or power. Resuming the analogy of the mirror, Ibn Sina says that, before acquisition of knowledge, the mirror was rusty; when we re-think the mirror is polished, and it only remains to direct it to the sun (i.e., the active intellect) so that it should readily reflect light.

Even so is the ordinary philosophic (or mystic) consciousness: it is mostly partial (in varying degrees) even when it is original and creative (again in varying degrees) and it is, therefore, obviously not in total contact with reality, or, as Ibn Sina puts it, “is not one with the active intellect.” But even in our ordinary cognitive processes, there are serious pointers to existence of a type of consciousness in which this partiality and discursiveness may be overcome and which may be wholly creative, with the pulse of the total reality in its grasp.

These pointers are illustrated by Ibn Sina by the example of a man who is confronted suddenly with a questioner who asks him a question which he has never asked himself before and, therefore, to which he cannot give a detailed answer on the spot. He is sure, however, that he can answer it because the answer has just “occurred” to him and lies within him. He then proceeds to the details and formulates the answer.

“The strange thing”, says Ibn Sina, “that when this man begins to teach the questioner the answer to his question, he is simultaneously teaching himself as well” the detail and elaborated form of knowledge even though

he previously possessed knowledge in a simple manner. This simple, total insight is the creator of the detailed, discursive knowledge which ensues. Now, this simple, total insight (the *scientia simplex* of the medieval Latin scholastics comes from Ibn Sina) is the creative reason (or the active intellect); the formulated and elaborate form is the “psychic” knowledge, not the absolutely intellectual cognition.

A person possessed of this simple creative agency, if such a one exists, may well be said to be one with the active intellect; and since he possesses a total grasp of reality, he is sure, absolutely sure, of the whence and whither of knowledge (Ibn Sina puts a great emphasis on this self-confidence, certainty, conviction, or faith); he alone is aware of the total context of truth and therefore, in him alone there is the full awareness of the meaning of each term in the process of reality; and, therefore, finally, only such a person can enter (and must enter) most significantly into temporal history, moulding it and giving it a new meaning. This is the prophet; but how to ascertain his existence?

Doctrine Of Prophecy⁹⁴⁵

The necessity of the phenomenon of prophethood and of divine revelation is something which Ibn Sina has sought to establish at four levels: the intel-lectual, the “imaginative,” the miraculous, and the socio-political. The totality of the four levels gives us a clear indication of the religious motivation, character, and direction of his thinking. Indeed, from our description and partial inter-pretation of his central philosophical theses so far, his deeply religious spirit has emerged very clearly.

His theory of “Being” has led to the dependence of every finite being, on God; and his doctrines of mind-body relationship and of the genesis and nature of knowledge have both culminated in the religious conception of miracles in the one case, and of a creative revelatory knowledge in the other. And there is not the slightest suggestion that religiosity is some-thing artificially grafted upon his purely rational thinking; on the contrary, it has organically grown out of a rigorous process of ratiocination, and goes down to the very kernel of his thought.

It may be said that Ibn Sina is a citizen of two intellectual-spiritual worlds; the Hellenic and the Islamic. In his own mind he has so intrinsically unified the two worlds that they are identical; the question of disloyalty to either, therefore, does not arise for him at all. Under this circumstance, both traditional Islam and the heritage of Hellenism were inevitably interpreted and modified to a greater or lesser extent. This is apparent in the whole of his philosophy which enters into the technically religious field, but is most palpably so in his doctrine of prophecy.

In this doctrine, Ibn Sina drastically modifies the Muslim dogmatic theology by declaring that the Qur'i.nic revelation is, by and large, if not all, symbolic of truth, not the literal truth, but that it must remain the literal truth for the masses (this does not mean that the Qur'an is not the Word of God; indeed, as we shall see, it is in a sense literally the Word of God); further, that the Law, although it must be observed by everyone, is also partly symbolic and partly pedagogical and, therefore, an essentially lower discipline than philosophic pursuits. (This again does not mean that we can

dispense with the Law at any stage of our individual or collective development, for to be social belongs to the essence of man.)

The interpretation and modification of Hellenism in this doctrine is obvious: although most elements of the Muslim philosophic doctrine of prophethood exist in Hellenism, they nevertheless exist in a nebulous and sometimes in a crude form; further, they are scattered. Indeed, the Greeks had no conception of prophethood and prophetic revelation as the Muslims knew it. In fact, the Muslim conception of prophethood is new and unique in the history of religion. For the Muslim philosophers (especially Ibn Sina, for although al-Farabi had pioneered the way, we do not find all the elements in him, notably, the intel-lectual and the miraculous), to have evolved out of these nebulous, crude, and disjointed elements an elaborate, comprehensive, and refined theory of pro-pheny to interpret the personality of Mutiammad, is nothing short of the performance of a genius.⁹

At the intellectual level, the necessity of the prophetic revelation is proved by an argument elaborated on the basis of a remark of Aristotle (Anal. Post, I, Chap. 34) that some people can hit upon the middle term without forming a syllogism in their minds. Ibn Sina constructs a whole theory of total intuitive experience on the basis of this scanty remark. Since, he tells us, people differ vastly with regard to their intuitive powers both in quality and quantity, and while some men are almost devoid of it, others possess it in a high degree, there must be a rarely and exceptionally endowed man who has a total contact with reality. This man, without much instruction from outside, can, by his very nature, become the depository of the truth, in contrast with the common run of thinkers who may have an intuitive experience with regard to a definite question or questions but whose cognitive touch with reality is always partial, never total.

This comprehensive insight then translates itself into propositions about the nature of reality and about future history; it is simultaneously intellectual and moral-spiritual, hence the prophetic experience must satisfy both the philosophic and the moral criteria. It is on the basis of this creative insight that the true prophet creates new moral values and influences future history. A psychologico-moral concomitant of this insight is also the deep and unalterable self-assurance and faith of the prophet in his own capacity for true knowledge and accurate moral judgment: he must believe in himself so that he can make others believe in him and thus succeed in his mission to the world.

This insight, creative of knowledge and values, is termed by Ibn Sina the active intellect and identified with the angel of revelation. Now, the prophet qua prophet is identical with the active intellect; and in so far as this identity is concerned, the active intellect is called `aql mustafad (the acquired intellect). But the prophet qua human being is not identical with the active intellect. The giver of revelation is thus in one sense internal to the prophet, in another sense, i.e., in so far as the latter is a human being, external to him.

Hence Ibn Sina says that the prophet, in so far as he is human, is “accidentally,” not essentially, the active intellect (for the meaning of the term “accidental,” see the first section of this chapter). God can and, indeed,

must come to man so that the latter may develop and evolve, but the meaning of God can at no stage be entirely exhausted in man.

But although the intellectual-spiritual insight is the highest gift the prophet possesses, he cannot creatively act in history merely on the strength of that insight. His office requires inherently that he should go forth to humanity with a message, influence them, and should actually succeed in his mission. This criterion leads the Muslim philosophers, although they admit the divine-ness of the leading Greek thinkers and reformers, to fix their minds upon Moses, Jesus, and, above all, Muhammad who, undoubtedly, possesses the requisite qualities of a prophet to the highest degree. These requisite qualities are that the prophet must possess a very strong and vivid imagination, that his psychic power be so great that he should influence not only other minds but also matter in general, and that he be capable of launching a socio-political system.

By the quality of an exceptionally strong imagination, the prophet's mind, by an impelling Psychological necessity, transforms the purely intellectual truths and concepts into lifelike images and symbols so potent that one who hears or reads them not only comes to believe in them but is impelled to action. This symbolizing and vivifying function of the prophetic imagination is stressed both by al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, by the latter in greater detail.

It is of the nature of imagination to symbolize and give flesh and blood to our thoughts, our desires, and even our physiological inclinations. When we are hungry or thirsty, our imagination puts before us lively images of food and drink. Even when we have no actual sexual appetite but our physical condition is ready for this, imagination may come into play and by stirring up suitable vivid images may actually evoke this appetite by mere suggestion.

This symbolization and suggestiveness, when it works upon the spirit and the intellect of the prophet, results in so strong and vivid images that what the prophet's spirit thinks and conceives, he actually comes to hear and see. That is why he "sees" the Angel and "hears" his voice. That is why also he necessarily comes to talk of a paradise and a hell which represent the purely spiritual states of bliss and torment. The revelations contained in the religious Scriptures are, for the most part, of the figurative order and must, therefore, be interpreted in order to elicit the higher, underlying, spiritual truth.

It is the technical revelation, then, which impels people to action and to be good, and not the purely intellectual insight and inspiration. No religion, therefore, can be based on pure intellect. However, the technical revelation, in order to obtain the necessary quality of potency, also inevitably suffers from the fact that it does not present the naked truth but truth in the garb of symbols. But to what action does it impel? Unless the prophet can express his moral insight into definite enough moral purposes, principles, and indeed into a socio-political structure, neither his insight nor the potency of his imagi-native revelation will be of much use.

The prophet, therefore, needs to be a Lawgiver and a statesman par excellence - indeed the real Lawgiver and statesman is only a prophet. This

practical criterion throws into still bolder relief the personality of Muhammad in the philosopher's mind. The Law (Shari'ah) must be such that it should be effective in making people socially good, should remind them of God at every step, and should also serve for them as a pedagogic measure in order to open their eyes beyond its own exterior, so that they may attain to a vision of the true spiritual purpose of the Lawgiver.

The Law is not abrogated at any stage for anybody, but only the philosophic vision of the truth gives to the Law its real meaning; and when that vision is attained, the Law seems like a ladder which one has climbed but which it would still be unwise to discard. For those relatively unfortunate souls which cannot see through the Law its philosophic truth, the technical revelation and the letter of the Law must remain the literal truth.

God And The World

We have learnt in the first section that God is unique in that He is the Necessary Being; everything else is contingent in itself and depends for its existence upon God. The Necessary Being must be numerically one. Even within this Being there can be no multiplicity of attributes - in fact, God has no other essence, no other attributes than the fact that He exists, and exists necessarily. This is expressed by Ibn Sina by saying that God's essence is identical with His necessary existence.

Since God has no essence, He is abso-lutely simple and cannot be defined. But if He is without essence and attributes, how can He be related to the world in any way? For Aristotle, who held this conception of the Deity, the world presented itself as a veritable other - it was neither the object of God's creation, nor of care, not even of knowledge. His God led a blissful life of eternal self-contemplation and the world organized itself into a cosmos out of love and admiration for Him, to become like Him.

The Muslim philosophical tradition finds the solution under the influence of the Neo-Platonic example which combines God's absolute simplicity with the idea that, in knowing Himself, God also knows in an implicit, simple manner the essences of things.

The system is worked out and systematized by Ibn Sina, who strives to derive God's attributes of knowledge, creation, power, will, etc., from His simple unchanging being, or, rather, to show that these attributes are nothing but the fact of His existence. This is done by an attempt to show that all the attributes are either relational or negative; they are, thus, identical with God's being and with one another.

The Deity is, therefore, absolutely simple. That God is knowing, is shown by the fact that being pure from matter and pure spirit, He is pure intellect in which the subject and object are identical.

But God's self-knowledge is ipso facto knowledge of other things as well, since, knowing Himself, He also inevitably knows the rest of the existents which proceed from Him. Here Ibn Sina strikes an original note. According to the philosophical tradition of Hellenism, God, at best, can know only the essences (or universals) and not the particular existents, since these latter can be known only through sense-perception and, therefore, in time; but

God, being supra-temporal and changeless and, further, incorporeal, cannot have perceptual knowledge.

This doctrine of the philosophers was especially re-pugnant to Islam, for it not only made God's knowledge imperfect, but it made God Himself useless for those whose God He is to be. Ibn Sina devises an argument to show that although God cannot have perceptual knowledge, He nevertheless knows all particulars "in a universal way," so that perceptual knowledge is superfluous for Him.

Since God is the emanative cause of all existents, He knows both these existents and the relations subsisting between them. God knows, for example, that after such a series of events a solar eclipse would occur, and knowing all the antecedents and consequences of this eclipse, He knows in a determinate manner its qualities and properties; He knows, therefore, what this particular eclipse will be, and can differentiate it completely from all other events even of the same species, viz., eclipse in general.

But when the particular eclipse actually occurs in time, God, not being subject to temporal change, cannot know it. But He also need not know it in this way, for He knows it already (see K. al-Najat, Cairo, 1938, pp. 247-49). Very ingenious though this theory is and, we think, successful in showing that sense-perception is not the only way to know the particulars, it is obvious that it cannot avoid the introduction of time factor, and, there-fore, change in divine knowledge.

Al-Ghazali's criticism of the theory in the thirteenth discussion of his *Tahafut al-Falasifah* certainly finds the target at this point, although his view that according to Ibn Sina, God cannot know individual men but only man in general, is obviously mistaken, for if God can know a particular sun-eclipse, why can He not know, in this manner, an individual person? Indeed Ibn Sina declares in the Qur'anic language (op. cit., p. 247) that "not a particle remains hidden from God in the heavens or on the earth."

As regards God's attributes of volition and creation, ibn Sina's emanationist account renders them really pointless as al-Ghazali has shown. In a thoroughly intellectualist-emanationist account of the Deity, will has no meaning. For Ibn Sina, God's will means nothing but the necessary procession of the world from Him and His self-satisfaction through this. Indeed, he defines it in purely negative terms, viz., that God is not unwilling that the world proceed from Him; this is very different from the positive attributes of choice and the execution of that choice.

Similarly, the creative activity of God, for Ibn Sina, means the eternal emanation or procession of the world, and since this emanation is grounded finally in the intellectual nature of God, it has the character of unalterable rational necessity.

Even though al-Ghazali's criticism which assimilates the divine activity of Ibn Sina to the automatic procession of light from the sun and, thus, rejects the appellation of "act" to God's behaviour, is not quite correct (since according to Ibn Sina, God is not only conscious of the procession of the world from Him, but is also satisfied with and "willing" to it), the term "creation" is nevertheless used only in a Pickwickian sense, and the term

“act” (in the sense of voluntary action) is also seriously modified, since as we have said, there is no question of real choice.

Rationally determined activity is, of course, compatible with will and choice and can also be said to be done with choice, but this choice has to be brought in as an additional element both initially and finally. For, suppose, a man chooses to think about a certain problem. Now, the initial choice is his own to think about this rather than that problem and then at any moment he can also choose or will to terminate this process of thinking.

What goes on between the beginning and the end will be a rationally determined process of thought, and not a series of choices, though the process as a whole is also chosen and voluntary. But in the philosophical account of God there is just no room for this additional factor either at the end or at the beginning.

The world, then, exists eternally with God, for both matter and form flow eternally from Him. But although this concept was abhorrent to Islamic orthodoxy, Ibn Sina's purpose in introducing it was to try to do justice both to the demands of religion and of reason and to avoid atheistic materialism.

For the materialists, the world has existed eternally without God. For Ibn Sina, too, the world is an eternal existent, but since it is in itself contingent in its entirety it needs God and is dependent upon Him eternally. We see here the double purpose of the doctrine of essence and existence. Unlike atheism it requires God who should bestow being upon existents; and in order to avoid pantheism, it further requires that the being of God should be radically differentiated from the being of the world.

The chief crux of the eternity of the world, which has been stressed by the opponents of the doctrine throughout the history of thought, is that it involves an actual infinite series in the past. In answer, it has been said, ever since Kant, that it is not impossible at all to imagine an infinite in the past, just as it is not impossible to imagine it in the future, i.e., there is no absurdity involved in starting from any given moment backwards and traversing the past and at no point coming to the beginning of the past.

The fallacy of this answer consists in assimilating the past to the future, for the past is something actual in the sense that it has happened and is, therefore, determinate one and for all. But the same fallacy, we think, is implied in the objection itself and it seems that the application of the term “infinite” is inappropriately used for the past: the term “infinite” is used either for a series which is endless or which is both beginningless and endless.

According to the thesis, the series is beginningless in the past, and endless in the future, whereas the objection seeks to put an end to the series at a given moment of time and then argue for an infinity in the past. Also, whereas beginning is a temporal concept, beginninglessness is a negation and need not be a temporal concept, but the objection obviously implies “infinity in the past” as a temporal concept.

Influence On The East And The West

The influence of Ibn Sina's thought has been enormous. In the East, indeed, his system has dominated the Muslim philosophical tradition right down to the modern era when his place is being given to some modern

Western thinkers by those who have been educated in modern universities. In the madrasahs run on traditional lines, Ibn Sina is still studied as the greatest philosopher of Islam. This is because no subsequent philosopher of equal originality and acuteness produced a system after him.

Ibn Rushd, the last great philosophical name in the medieval tradition of Muslim philosophy, did not formulate his thought systematically, but chose to write commentaries on Aristotle's works. These commentaries, because of their superb scholarliness and acuteness, had a tremendous impact on the medieval West (which received Aristotle first through him) but were not only not influential in the Muslim East, but most of them are even lost in the original Arabic. His comparative lack of influence, of course, is chiefly due to the destruction of his works.

For the rest, the sub-sequent philosophical activity was confined to the writing of commentaries on Ibn Sina or polemics against him. Rare exceptions, like Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi, who wrote works on systematic philosophy, became less philosophical and more mystical in their intellectual, if not spiritual, temper. Nevertheless, these commentaries and polemics against and for Ibn Sina and later systems have never yet been studied to any appreciable extent by modern students.

Now, let us determine more exactly the influence of Ibn Sina, within the Islamic tradition. To say that he has dominated the philosophical tradition in Islam is certainly not to say that he has dominated the Islamic tradition itself. On the contrary, the influence of Ibn Sina - which is equivalent to the influence of philosophy - within Islam suddenly and sharply dwindled after the polemics of al-Ghazali and later on of al-Razi and then declined and be-came moribund.

He continued to be read in the madrasahs merely as an intellectual training ground for theological students, not to philosophize anew but to refute or reject philosophy. The chief contributory factors to this situa-tion were the formal rigidity of dogmatic theology and the fact that human reason itself became suspect due to the incompatibility of certain tenets of Ibn Sina with this theology (besides, of course, social, political, educational, and economic causes).

Not only did the philosopher's concept of the eternity of the world give affront to orthodoxy but also to those doctrines of his own which were developed with an especial regard for Islam, like the doctrine of prophet-hood. But perhaps the greatest theological objection was to his rejection of the bodily resurrection. On this point, although he maintains in the K. al-Najat (and the Shifa') that the resurrection of the flesh, while not demonstrable by reason, ought to be believed on faith; in his expressly esoteric work called Risalat al-Adwiyyah he rejects it in totality and with vehemence.

Ibn Sina's works were translated into Latin in Spain in the middle of the sixth/twelfth century. The influence of his thought in the West has been pro-found and far-reaching. We have, while discussing Ibn Sina's individual theories, alluded time and again to certain definite influences of his. But as it is impossible to do justice to this aspect fully within the space at our disposal, we shall be content with certain general remarks.

Ibn Sina's influence in the West started penetrating palpably since the time of Albert the Great, the famous saint and teacher of St. Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas' own metaphysics (and theology) will be unintelligible without an understanding of the debt he owes to Ibn Sina. No one can fail to observe Ibn Sina's influence even in Aquinas' later and bigger works like the *Summa Theologica* and the *Summa contra Gentiles*.

But the influence of the Muslim philosopher in the earlier formative period of the Christian Saint is overwhelming; he is mentioned by the latter, e.g., on almost each page of his *De Ente et Essentia* which is, indeed, the foundation of Aquinas' metaphysics. No doubt, Ibn Sina is also frequently criticized by Aquinas and others, but even the amount of criticism itself shows in what esteem he was held in the West.

But the influence of Ibn Sina is not restricted to Aquinas,¹⁰ or, indeed, to the Dominican Order or even to the official theologians of the West. The translator of his *De Anima*, Gundisalvus, himself wrote a *De Anima* which is largely a wholesale transposition of Ibn Sina's doctrines. Similar is the case with the medieval philosophers and scientists, Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon. Duns Scotus and Count Zabarella, the finest of the late medieval commentators of Aristotle, also bear testimony to Ibn Sina's enduring influence. Dr. S. van den Bergh in his *Averroes' Tahafut al-Tahafut*, London, 1954 (Vol. II, *passim*) has traced the influence of certain of the ideas of the Shaikh al-Ra'is down to modern times.

But it would be futile to go on giving a mere catalogue of individual authors. In fact, the historic influence of this rich personality is a phenomenon which is being realized only now in the West and Professor Etienne Gilson has started it off notably by his articles: (1) "Avicenne et le point de depart de Duns Scot" and (2) "Les sources greco-arabes de l'augustinisme avicennisant" (in *Arch. Hilt. Doctr. Litt.*, 1927 and 1929, respectively).

Since then partial and not very determined efforts have been made on the subject, but there is still no comprehensive treatment. Still less satisfactory is the treatment of the historic influence of Ibn Sina's scientific thought, although again beginnings have been made, notably by Professor Sarton and Dr. Crombie's work (see also *Avicenna, Scientist & Philosopher*, edited by G. M. Wickens, London, 1952, Chaps. 4, 5, 6).

But the question of his influence on the West and East apart, a very small portion of his original works has ever been edited. In 1951, the Egyptian Government and the Arab League set up a Committee in Cairo to edit the encyclopaedia, *Kitab al- Shifa'*. Some parts of it have already been published.

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Besides the works mentioned in the body of this chapter, and the bibliography given by Father Anawati, an account of the works on Ibn Sina between 1945 and 1952 will be found in the *Philosophical Quarterly*, 1953, *Philosophical Surveys*, Vol. VIII, Part 1, "Medieval Islamic Philosophy" by R. Walzer, and in P. J. de O. P. Menasce's "Bibliographische Einfuhrungen in das Studium der Philosophie," 6, *Arabische Philosophie*, Bern, 1948.

Notes

1. Little can be added to the biography of Ibn Sina - a quasi-autobiography - -which is available in Arabic works, e.g., al-Qifti's and modern works based upon them. Here it is omitted because it is scarcely important for an appreciation of his philosophical thought.

2. K. al-Shifa' (Psychological part, henceforth cited as "Psychology").

3. "Psychology", V, 7.

4. K. al-Najat, Cairo, 1938, p. 224, II, .21ff.

5. This section has been drawn on F. Rahman's article "Essence and Existence in Avicenna," in *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies*, Oxford, 1958, although certain new considerations added here have changed the presentation to a certain extent.

6. A similar development took place in the West, beginning with Augustine, and, again, under Neo-Platonic influences.

7. *Meditations II*: "What of thinking? I find here that thought is an attribute that belongs to me; it alone cannot be separated from me. I am, I exist, that is certain. But how often? Just when I think; for it might possibly be the case, that if I ceased entirely to think, I should likewise cease entirely to exist ... to speak accurately I am not more than a thing which thinks."

8. An interesting question may be raised here about the unity of the mind. We have seen that the qualitative disparateness between the mental and physical phenomena has necessitated their attribution to different substances. This argument has been re-stated with great vigour in recent times by G. F. Stout who in his *Mind and Matter* lays down the "Principle of Generic Resemblance" for acts and operations if they are to fall in a single substance. C. D. Broad has rejected this dualism in his *Mind and Its Place in Nature* on the ground that no criterion can be laid down as to how great a qualitative difference there should be to warrant us to assign phenomena to different substances. However, Broad himself favours a "Compound Theory" of mind and body, thus implicitly giving force to the same principle of qualitative resemblance and difference which he seeks to refute. For, why else should there be the necessity for a "Compound" ?

Yet, if we accept the full consequences of the principle, what, we may ask, constitutes the resemblance between mental acts so as to attribute them to one substance? For, hoping, desiring, thinking are so mutually divergent phenomena. According to the modern traditional philosophy, consciousness may be a common quality satisfying the principle and, indeed, it has been regarded as the stuff of which mental phenomena are made. If we hold this, it will follow that unconscious desires, fears, and hopes are non-mental.

9. See F. Rahman's *Prophecy in Islam*, G. Allen & Unwin, London, 1958

10. Miss A. M. Goichon's *La Philosophie d'Avicenne et son Influence en Europe medievale*, Paris, 1944, may be consulted; in general, however, the author's know-ledge of Arabic and philosophy should be taken cautiously.

Chapter 26: Ibn Bajjah

By Muhammad Saghir Hasan al-Ma'sumi

Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Yahya al-Sa'igh, known as Ibn Bajjah or Avem-pace (d. 533/1138), hailed from the family al-Tujib and is, therefore, also known as al-Tujibi. Ibn Bajjah was born at Saragossa towards the end of the fifth/eleventh century, and prospered there. We have no knowledge of his early life, nor have we any idea of the teachers under whom he completed his studies. However, this much is clear that he finished his academic career at Saragossa, for when he travelled to Granada he was already an accomplished scholar of Arabic language and literature and claimed to be well versed in twelve sciences.

This is evident from the incident that occurred in the mosque of Granada as recorded by al-Suyuti: "One day Ibn Bajjah entered the mosque (jami'ah) of Granada. He saw a grammarian giving lessons on grammar to the students sitting around him. Seeing a stranger so close to them, the young students addressed Ibn Bajjah, rather by way of mockery: 'What does the jurist carry? What science has he excelled in, and what views does he hold?' 'Look here,' replied Ibn Bajjah, 'I am carrying twelve thousand dinar under my armpit.'

He thereupon showed them twelve valuable pearls of exquisite beauty each of the value of one thousand dinar. 'I have,' added Ibn Bajjah, 'gathered experience in twelve sciences, and mostly in the science of 'Arabiyyah which you are discussing. In my opinion you belong to such and such a group.' He then mentioned their lineage. The young students in their utter surprise begged his forgiveness."¹

Historians are unanimous in regarding him as a man of vast knowledge and eminence in various sciences. Fath ibn Khaqan, who has charged Ibn Bajjah of heresy and has bitterly criticized his character in his Qala'id al-'Iqyan,² also admits his vast knowledge and finds no fault with his intellectual excellence. On account of his wealth of information in literature, grammar, and ancient philosophy, he has been compared by his contemporaries with al-Shaikh al-Ra'is Ibn Sina.³

Due to his growing fame, Abu Bakr Sahrawi, Governor of Saragossa, appoint-ed him as his vizier. But when Saragossa fell into the hands of Alphonso I, King of Aragon, in 512/111⁸, Ibn Bajjah had already left the city and reached Seville via Valencia, settled there, and adopted the profession of a medical practitioner. Later on, he left for Granada, where occurred the incident referred to above. He then journeyed to north-west Africa.

On his arrival at Shatibah, Ibn Bajjah was imprisoned by Amir Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Yiisuf ibn Tashifin most probably on the charge of heresy, as Fath ibn Khaqan has it. But as Renan opines,⁴ he was set free, probably on the recommendation of his own disciple, father of the famous Spanish philosopher Ibn Rushd.

Later on, when Ibn Bajjah reached Fez, he entered the Court of the Governor, Abu Bakr Yahya ibn Yusuf ibn Tashifin, and rose to the rank of a vizier by dint of his ability and rare scholarship. He held this post for twenty years.

This was the time of great troubles and turmoils in the history of Spain and north-west Africa. The governors of towns and cities proclaimed their independence. Lawlessness and chaos prevailed all over the country. The rival groups and personalities accused one another of heresy to gain supremacy and to win the favour of the people. The enemies of Ibn Bajjah had already declared him a heretic and tried several times to kill him. But all their efforts proved a failure. Ibn Zuhr, the famous physician of the time, however, succeeded in killing him by poison during Ramadan 533/1138 at Fez, where he was buried by the side of Ibn al'Arabi the younger.

His Predecessors

There is no doubt that philosophy entered Spain after the third/ninth century. Some of the ancient manuscript copies of Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa available in Europe are ascribed to Maslamah ibn Abmad al-Majriti.⁵ Maslamah was a great mathematician in Spain. He flourished during the reign of Hakam II and died in 598/1003.⁶ Among his disciples, Ibn al-Safa, Zahrawi, Karmani, and Abu Muslim 'Umar ibn Abmad ibn Khaldun al-Hadrani were famous for mathematical sciences.

Karmani and Ibn Khaldun were also known as philosophers. Ibn Khaldun al-Hadrani hailed from Seville and died in 449/1054.⁷ Karmani, whose full name is Abu al-Hakam 'Amr ibn 'Abd al-Rabman ibn Ahmad ibn 'Ali, hailed from Cordova, journeyed to the Eastern countries and studied medicine and arithmetic at Harran. On his return to Spain he settled at Saragossa. According to the statement of Qadi Sa'id⁸ and Maqqari,⁹ he was the first man who took the Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa to Spain. Karmani died at Saragossa in 450/1063.

But philosophy had entered Spain long before the Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa were introduced in that region. Muhammad ibn 'Abdun al-Jabali¹⁰ travelled to the East in 347/952, studied logic with Abu Sulaim Muhammad ibn Tahir ibn Bahrain al-Sijistani, and returned to Spain in 360/965. Similarly, Ahmad and 'Umar, the two sons of Yunus al-Barrani, entered Baghdad in 330/935, studied sciences with Thabit ibn Sinan ibn Thabit ibn Qurrah, and after a considerable period returned to Spain in 351/956.¹¹

This is evident that philosophy was imported into the West from the East and that in the fourth/ tenth century Spanish students studied mathematics, Hadith, Tafsir, and Fiqh as well as logic and other philosophical sciences at Baghdad, Basrah, Damascus, and Egypt. But from the end of the fourth/tenth century, when philosophy and logic were condemned in Spain and the advocates of these sciences were persecuted, the common people stopped favouring these sciences as far down as the fifth and sixth/eleventh and twelfth centuries. This was the reason why Ibn Bajjah, Ibn Tufail, and Ibn Ruahd had to face persecution, imprisonment, and condemnation. Very few people in those days dared deal with rational sciences.

Among the predecessors of Ibn Bajjah, Ibn Hazm deserves special attention. Ibn Hazm occupies a very high place in theology and other religious sciences. His Kitab al-Fasl fi al-Milal w-al-Nihal is unique in that he has recorded the creeds and doctrines of the Christians, Jews, and others without displaying any prejudice. But in the domain of philosophy he has

never been mentioned by any Spanish scholar side by side with the philosophers. Maqqari records:¹² “Ibn Habban and others say, Ibn Hazm was a man of Hadlth, jurisprudence, and polemics. He wrote many books on logic and philosophy in which he did not escape errors.”

His Contemporaries

For throwing light on the contemporary thinkers of Ibn Bajjah we have no earlier authority than his own disciple ibn al-Imam, through whom we have received information about his writings. Al-Wazir Abu al- Hasan 'Ali ibn 'Abd al-`Aziz ibn al-Imam, a devoted disciple of Ibn Bajjah, preserved the latter's writings in an anthology to which he added an introduction of his own. That Ibn Bajjah was very fond of this disciple, a vizier, is apparent from the pre-amble of his letters addressed to him which are available in the said anthology as preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.¹³

In his introduction to the anthology, Ibn al-Imam says: “... the philosophical books were current in Spanish cities in the time of al-Hakam II (350/961-366/976), who had imported the rare works composed in the East and had got them made clear. He (Ibn Bajjah) transcribed the books of the ancients and others and carried on his investigation into these works. The way had not been opened to any investi-gator before him (Ibn Bajjah). Nor had anything except errors and alterations been recorded concerning these sciences of the ancients.

A number of errors for example, were committed by Ibn Hazm, who was one of the most exalted investigators of his time, while most of them had not ventured even to record their thoughts. Ibn Bajjah was superior to Ibn Hazm in investigation, and more penetrating in making distinctions. The ways of investigation in these sciences were opened only to this scholar (Ibn Bajjah) and to Malik ibn Wuhaib of Seville, both of whom were contemporaries. But except for a short account of the principles of logic nothing was recorded by Malik.

Then he gave up investigating these sciences and speaking about them openly, because of the attempts made on his life due to his discussing philosophical sciences, and due to the fact that he aimed at victory in all his conferences on scientific subjects. He turned to the religious sciences and became one of the leaders in them; but the light of philosophical knowledge did not shine upon his mind, nor did he record in philosophy anything of a private nature which could be found after his death.

As for Abu Bakr (may Allah show him mercy) his superior nature stirred him not to give up investigating into, inferring from, and reading all that had left its real impression on his mind on various occasions in the changing conditions of his time.”

The words of Ibn al-Imam are quite clearly appreciative of the merits of the contemporary Malik, and of predecessors like Ibn Hazm. Ibn al-Imam's praise of his teacher has been shared by a number of historians. Ibn Tufail, the famous author of the well-known philosophical romance, Hayy Ibn Yaqzan, and a younger contemporary of Ibn Bajjah, singles out Ibn Bajjah in the introduction to his immortal romance, and describes him as follows: “But none of them possessed a more penetrative mind, a more accurate view or a more truthful insight than Abu Bakr ibn al-Sa'igh.”

Al-Shaqandi (d. 629/1231), in his famous letter in which he enumerates the achievements of the Spanish Muslims as against the Africans, challenges the latter by saying: "Have you anybody among yourselves like Ibn Bajjah in music and philosophy?"¹⁴ Maqqari records the following statement: "As for the works on music, the book of Ibn Bajjah of Granada is sufficient by itself. He occupies in the West the place of Abu Nasr al-Farabi in the East."¹⁵

Another contemporary of Ibn Bajjah was al-Amir al-Muqtadir ibn Hud, who reigned over Saragossa (438/1046-474/1081). He has been mentioned by al-Shaqandi, who addresses the Africans in these words: "Have you any king expert in mathematics and philosophy like al-Muqtadir ibn Hud, the ruler of Saragossa?"¹⁶ His son al-Mu'tamin (d. 474/1085) was a patron of rational sciences."¹⁷

Works

We give below a list of Ibn Bajjah's works:

1. The Bodleian MS., Arabic Pococke, No. 206, contains 222 folios.¹⁸ It was written in Rabi' II 547/1152 at Qus. This MS. lacks the treatise on medicine, and Risalat al-Wada'.

2. The Berlin MS. No. 5060 (vide Ahlwardt : Catalogue), lost during World War II.

3. The Escorial MS. No. 612. It contains only those treatises which Ibn Bajjah wrote as commentaries on the treatises of al-Farabi on logic. It was written at Seville in 667/1307.

4. The Khediviah MS. Akhlaq No. 290. It has been published by Dr. Omar Farrukh in his Ibn Bajjah w-al-Falsafah al-Maghribiyyah. On comparison it has been established that this is an abridgment of Tadbir al-Mutawahhid-abridgment in the sense that it omits the greater part of the text but retains the very words of the original writer.

5. Brockelmann states that the Berlin Library possesses a unique ode of Ibn Bajjah entitled Tardiyyah.

6 Works edited by Asin Palacios with their Spanish translation and necessary notes. (i) Kitab al-Nabat, al-Andalus, Vol. V, 1940; (ii) Risalah Ittisal al-'Aql bi al-Insan, al-Andalus, Vol. VII, 1942; (iii) Risalah al-Wada', al-Andalus, Vol. VIII, 1943; (iv) Tadbir al-Mutawahhid entitled El Regimen Del Solitario, 1946.

7 Works edited by Dr. M. Saghir Hasan al-Ma'sumi: (i) Kitab al-Nafs with notes and introduction in Arabic, Majallah al-Majma' al-'Ilm al-'Arabi, Damascus; 1958; (ii) Risalah al-Ghayah al-Insaniyyah entitled Ibn Bajjah on Human End, with English translation, Journal of Asiatic Society of Pakistan, Vol. II, 1957.

Philosophy

Ibn Bajjah was skilled both in the theory and practice of the mathematical sciences, particularly astronomy and music, adept in medicine, and devoted to speculative studies like logic, natural philosophy, and metaphysics. In de Boer's opinion, he conforms entirely to al-Farabi in his logical writings and generally agrees with him even in his physical and

metaphysical doctrines.¹⁹ Let us examine how far this statement is correct in the light of the writings of Ibn Bajjah that have come down to us.

Ibn Bajjah has undoubtedly relied in philosophy and logic on the works of al-Farabi, but it is obvious that he has made considerable additions to them. Again, he has adopted an entirely different method of philosophical investigation. Unlike al-Farabi, he deals with the problems on the basis of reason alone.

He admires the philosophy of Aristotle on which he has founded his own system. But, he says, for understanding the speculative method of Aristotle it is of utmost importance to understand, first of all, his philosophy correctly. That is why Ibn Bajjah wrote his commentaries on the works of Aristotle. These commentaries bear clear evidence that he studied the texts of Aristotle very carefully. As in Aristotle's philosophy, Ibn Bajjah has based his metaphysics and psychology on physics, and that is why his writings abound in discourses on physics.

Matter And Form

De Boer writes: "Ibn Bajjah starts with the assumption that matter cannot exist without some form, while form may exist by itself, without matter." But this is erroneous. According to Ibn Bajjah, matter can exist without form. He argues that if matter is not formless then it will be divided. into "matter" and "form," and this will go on ad infinitum.²⁰ Ibn Bajjah claims that the "First Form" is an abstract form which exists in matter that is said to have no form.

Aristotle defines matter as what receives form and is in a way universal. His matter in this sense differs from the matter of Plato who, though agreeing with the above definition, maintains that form in itself is real and needs nothing to bring it into existence. The aim of Aristotle is not only to state that matter and form are dependent upon each other but also to distinguish the particular form of a species from that of another species. The form of a plant is different, for example, from the form of an animal, and the form of an inanimate object differs from the form of a plant, and so on.

In the writings of Ibn Bajjah the word form has been used to convey several different meanings: soul, figure, power, meaning, concept. In his opinion the form of a body has three stages: (1) the general spirit or the intellectual form, (2) the particular spiritual form, and (3) the physical form.

He has divided the spiritual form into the following types: -

- I. The forms of circular bodies have only this much connection with matter that they make the material intelligibles perfect.
2. The material intelligibles which exist in matter.
3. Those forms which exist in the faculties of the soul - common sense, imaginative faculty, memory, etc., and are the via media between spiritual forms and material intelligibles.

Those forms which are related to the active intellect are called by Ibn Bajjah general spiritual forms, and those which are related to the common sense are called particular spiritual forms. This distinction has been maintained because the general spiritual forms have only one relation and that with the recipient, whereas the particular spiritual forms have two

relations - one particular with the sensible, and the other general with the percipient.

A man, for example, recalls the form of the Taj Mahal; this form is not different from the form of the actual Taj Mahal when it is before the eyes - this form has, besides the aforementioned particular relation, a relation with the general body of percipients, since there are many individuals who enjoy the sight of the Taj Mahal.

Psychology

Ibn Bajjah, like Aristotle, bases his psychology on physics. He begins his discussion of the soul with its definition by stating that bodies, natural or artificial, are composed of matter and form, their form being the permanent acquisition or the entelechy of the body. Entelechy is of various kinds: it belongs either to those existents that perform their function without being essentially moved, or to those that move or act while they are being acted upon.

A body of this latter type is composed of both mover and moved, whereas the artificial body has its mover outside. Now, the form that supplies the entelechy of a natural body is called the soul. The soul is, therefore, defined as the first entelechy in a natural, organized body which is either nutritive, sensitive, or imaginative.

The ancient philosophers who preceded Aristotle had confined their study to the human soul alone and regarded the study of the animal soul as a part of natural science. Soul is an equivocal term, because it is not homogeneous in nature. If it were so, its functions would have likewise been homogeneous. It actually functions heterogeneously: nutritively, sensitively, imaginatively, or rationally.

Since every transitory being has to perform a particular function in virtue of which it stands as a part of the universe, the nutritive faculty has two ends, namely, growth and reproduction. This faculty does not only provide substances which are needed for the upkeep of the body, but also a surplus which is employed for the growth and development of the body. But when the growth is completed, the surplus is used for reproduction in those bodies that are reproductive.

The faculty of reproduction is to be distinguished from the nutritive faculty which acts on food and makes it a part of the body. This faculty is the "Actual Intellect" which changes a potential species into the body of an actual species. Those bodies that are not reproductive depend for the preservation of their species upon spontaneous generation. The reproductive faculty is the end of the faculty of growth and perishes only in old age when the nutritive faculty is left alone.

Sense-perception is either actual or potential. What is potential can become actual only when it is changed by something else. It, therefore, requires a mover to change it. This mover is the sensible, the moved being the sense--organ.

The sensibles or the natural accidents are of two kinds: either they are particular to the natural bodies or common to the natural and the artificial bodies; and they are, again, either mover or moved. They are always moved

towards the species, since a mover causes motion in them only in so far as they are particular species, and not because they possess matter.

Every sen-tient body is composite and is the result of a mixture of different elements. This mixture is produced by innate heat and gives rise, for example, to con-densation and rarefaction, as of odours, flavours, and colours. But besides these material states, there arise certain other states such as reproduction and spontaneous generation which are caused by the intellect or some other mover.

As soon as the process of mixture begins, the form begins to be received. Motion and reception of form take place simultaneously; and when the soul attains perfection, the reception of form is completed, matter and form, thus, becoming a single whole. When form is separated from matter, it exists actually as abstracted from matter, but is not the same as it is when it is in matter - -and this is possible only if it now exists as an idea in the mind.

Sensation is, therefore, transitory. But how can a separate form be transitory, since tran-sitoriness is only due to matter? The answer is this. The term "matter" is used for "psychical faculty" and "corporeal faculty" equivocally, and it means only the receptivity of form through which a body that has the faculty of sensitivity becomes sentient. The faculty of sense-perception is, therefore, a capacity in the sense-organ that becomes a form of the thing perceived.

But a further question arises: If perception is a form in matter, how can matter actually exist when it is not so informed? The answer is given as follows: "That `apprehensions' are in a substratum and are identical with it, is clear, or else `an apprehension' would not be a particular. But it does not follow from this that form cannot exist apart from-matter since the matter of `apprehension' is the receptivity of the forms of the apprehensibles only, and is called matter per prius, while the matter of the `apprehensible' is called per posterius."

Psychical perception is of two kinds: sensation and imagination. As said before, sensation is by nature prior to imagination, for which it supplies the matter. In short, sensation is a capacity of the body which is acted upon by -the sensible. Since movements are many, sensations are also many; and because the sensibles are either general or particular, sensations are also general or particular.

The five senses -- sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch are five faculties of a single sense, viz., the common sense. Common sense plays the role of matter through which the forms of things become perceptible. It is through common sense that a man judges and distinguishes different states of the perceptible and realizes that every particle of an apple, for example, possesses taste, smell, colour, warmth, or cold. For this faculty preserves the impres-sions of the sensibles which enable the senses to apprehend the sensibles. The common sense is the entelechy of the whole body and is, therefore, called the soul. This faculty also supplies matter for the faculty of imagination.

Defined as the first entelechy of the organized imaginative body, the imagina-tive faculty is preceded by sensation which supplies material to it.. Sensation and imagination have, therefore, been described as two kinds of

the perception of the soul. But the difference between the two is obvious inasmuch as sensation is particular and imagination general. The imaginative faculty culminates in the reasoning faculty through which one man expresses himself to another, and achieves as well as imparts knowledge.

The appetitive soul consists of three faculties: (1) The imaginative appetence through which progeny are reared, individuals are moved to their dwellings, and have affection, love, and the like. (2) The intermediate appetence through which there is desire for food, housing, arts and crafts. (3) The appetence that makes speech and, through that, teaching possible and, unlike the other two, is peculiar to man.

The appetitive soul is applied to these three faculties per prius et posterius. Every animal possesses the intermediate appetence by which it inclines to nutrition. Some animals do not possess the imaginative yearning. The yearning of intermediate appetence precedes by nature the imaginative appetences. The one thing that is clear is that every man has two faculties - the appetitive and the rational - and these precede others by nature.

The appetitive soul desires a perpetual object or an object in so far as it is perpetual. This desire is called pleasure, and the absence of desire is dullness, pain, and the like. Action is caused by desire, and perpetuity is caused by the faculties. Desire is not distinctive of man. Anyone who does an action induced by desire is regarded to have done an action based on animality. It is obvious that when a man acts in this manner, he does it not because he is possessed of ideas. He attains perpetuity only to the extent to which he is possessed of them.

Though devoid of eternity, the appetitive soul has a strong desire for eternity. It loves only the intermediate imaginary form and the imaginary form. These are the only two forms which are perpetually loved by the appetitive soul. But since forms are many, the appetitive soul hesitates to make an attempt to realize them.

Again, the appetitive soul seeks the service of nature, and suffers from pain and laziness when nature does not co-operate with it. As nature is not simple, it is not always in one and the same state. It is due to nature that an animal needs rest, and it is due to the appetitive soul that it feels dissatisfied with it when prolonged.

But these two forms (i. e., the intermediate imaginary form and the imaginary form) are transitory, not eternal. Hence the appetitive soul does not achieve eternity but that which represents it, and what represents it is not difficult to estimate, for individuals as individuals think that they achieve eternity through perfection and perfection through the attainment of power and freedom.

Hence arises the power and freedom of those despots who hold sway over large areas of the world. Their unlimited power, abundant wealth, and unbridled activities, however, bring them no benefit, for most of them die of hunger and in utter regret for losing what they possessed. They are overtaken by fatigue and distress in dealing with the appetitive soul. In their hearts there survives the memory of their past and they feel regret and remorse.

When this occurs to the class of despots, what will be the fate of those who are lower in rank? This is as it should be, because the anxiety of their appetitive soul is to collect what is not to be collected and achieve what is not to be achieved. The animals which have no reason do not suffer from this kind of remorse, for their appetitive soul has no ambition and they have no memory of their past whims. They suffer only from natural calamities such as old age, which is the lot of every natural organism.

The imaginative faculty in man is the faculty through which he receives impressions of the sensibles and presents them before himself in imagination after their disappearance. This function of the imaginative faculty takes place both in our waking life and in sleep. This faculty also composes forms of the objects of imagination never sensed before. Sometimes it imagines and com-poses something which is not an individual but something applicable to a whole class.

At the final stage of imagination appears the intellect, and the rational faculty starts functioning; and we find in ourselves something which distinguishes us from other animals that obtain nutrition and possess sense-organs. Man finds in himself, for example, some objects of knowledge (concepts) containing the distinction between good and evil, useful and harmful. He also finds in himself things which he considers to be definitely true, things which are merely conjectural, and things which are false. These known objects in the soul are called logos.

Logos is in the first instance related to the potential rational faculty, the function of which is to receive the objects of knowledge. This is so because in the earlier stages man is devoid of them and receives them only at a later stage. The term "logos" is applicable to the objects of knowledge after they become potentially receptive, and also when they actually exist and are expressed through words.

These objects of knowledge (concepts) which exist in potentiality and become actual in rationality, when considered in relation to the objects which they signify, constitute their know-ledge since they are known through and recognized by them. When they are considered in so far as they are perceived by the imaginative faculty and are applied to the contents derived from them, they are called intelligibles;-but when they are considered in so far as they are perceived by the rational faculty which completes them and brings them from potentiality into actuality, they are called mind or the intellect.

There are various grades of knowledge, the first of which is the knowledge of a particularly specified object. This primarily comes into being by achieving the apprehension of the particular in the imaginative faculty in a general way only, i.e., it cannot be imagined specifically. Nor can any quality of the same be described. But it is distinguished in a general way without attending to any one of its qualities. This is the weakest knowledge of an object and resembles the imagination of an animal.

Again, when the state of the particular is possible in the imaginative faculty, man advances to this particular with its detailed characteristics, which help him to recognize it to be the same at different times. He distinguishes Zaid, for example, as tall, fair, delicate, and considers all these

descriptions in his imagination as though they were related numerically to one individual.

Some people, however, think that sometimes words lead to absurdity for they introduce multiplicity where there is only unity: for example, the particular which is described by the words “tall,” “fair,” and so on, is not more than one. However, this is the way in which man achieves the knowledge of individuals in so far as they are definite and particular. Since the qualities through which the particular individuals are known as described above are accidents attached to different individuals, there is no resemblance between any two individuals. Tallness in Zaid, for example, is not exactly the same as tallness in Bakr.

When the objects of imagination are obtained in the imaginative faculty, the rational faculty looks at them through its insight, and realizes the universal meanings. Through these universal meanings the rational faculty imagines and distinguishes the nature of every imagined object. And when the words indicating the universal meanings are mentioned, the rational faculty distinguishes them, presents them before the mind, and apprehends them. All this occurs in more ways than one.

1. The rational faculty presents universal meanings before the mind, and apprehends them as true of the imagined individuals signified by them. Through insight the rational faculty sees the universal meanings in the individuals. In this sense this faculty distinguishes universal meanings from one another in the manner described above.

2. According to another method, the rational faculty distinguishes these universal meanings perfectly, but when it sees them through its insight and presents them to the soul well arranged, it sees them through its insight in the imaginative faculty which also acts upon them, and makes them resemble the universal meaning and imparts to them forms which are common to more than one, but not to all individuals to which the meaning is applicable.

The sculptor represents the form of a horse in stone, or a painter draws the form of a horse on the surface of a board, but this representation is imperfect, for it represents and reproduces the form of a horse that obtains nutrition, and neighs. But all that is represented thus is not common to all horses. The imaginative faculty represents things which are limited in respect of age, size, etc. The image of a horse is not common to the full-grown horse, the young horse, and the colt. Its image is common only to the horses of that particular size or age which the imaginative faculty represents.

As soon as the rational faculty makes distinctions of universal meanings, and presents them to the mind to look more closely into them through its insight, the latter looks into them through the image which the imaginative faculty represents. The rational faculty distinguishes whether the image is perfect or not perfect, common or not common. Without any difficulty it thinks of the intelligible meanings.

In this way the universal meanings are apprehended by artists and most scientists. When the artisan, for example, thinks how to make an article, he presents the image of the particular article to his imaginative faculty, and prepares his plan to make it. Similarly, when a scientist looks into the

objects of knowledge to know their nature and give their description, he presents their images to his imaginative faculty.

These are two methods by which the imaginative faculty serves the rational faculty by presenting to the latter the phantoms of an object, either the phan-toms of the individual object itself or those of its image, which represents the universal meaning, as mentioned above. The rational faculty imparts universal descriptions to the objects of imagination. Whoever exerts the rational faculty to act on the objects obtained in the imaginative faculty sees the confirmation of what has been mentioned and sees through his rational faculty the divine gift flowing over the faculty. This is just like a person who sees by the faculty of seeing the light of the sun through the light of the sun.

The immediate cause of the apprehension of intelligibles and the activity of the rational faculty in actuality is a gift which is like the light of the sun through which one realizes and sees the creation of God so clearly that one becomes a believer in Him, His angels, books, messengers, and the next world, enjoys certain belief, and remembers God while standing, sitting, and lying. Every thought is obtained through this gift which is no other than man's connection with the active intellect.

Thus, it may be concluded that Ibn Bajjah starts describing “Aristotelian Psychology” and in the end arrives at the position of Ibn Sina and also of al-Ghazali, whose name he mentions with respect and reverence.

Intellect And Knowledge

According to Ibn Bajjah, the intellect is the most important part of man. In his opinion correct knowledge is obtained through the intellect which alone enables us to attain prosperity and to build character. Something has already been said about the source of the intellect and its working. The following extracts will, however, throw some further light on the matter:

“It is necessary for man to see through his own insight the contents of the imaginative faculty, just as he sees the individual objects with his eyes and distinguishes them fully. He is sure to find that those individual objects are repeatedly impressed upon the imaginative faculty. Many imaginable objects have one or more than one individual in the imaginative faculty. They also possess the accidents attached to these individuals, viz., measure, colour, knowledge, health, sickness, motion, time, space, and other categories.

Having realized all this, a man sees through his insight that the rational faculty looks into the objects of imagination and apprehends their common characteristic, i. e., the differentia which distinguishes them from the objects of sense, differentia by virtue of which they are considered to be individuals and distinguished as intelligible objects. One should also realize that these differentiae are discerned by the rational faculty through the divine gift which flows over them in the same way as the objects of sight become manifest to the perceiving mind through the light of the sun that falls on them, without which light they would remain completely invisible.

Through the same gift the whole is distinguished from its parts and is judged to be greater than the parts. Again, numbers considered to be numerals are declared by this gift as different and many when investigation

into God's creation - the creatures of heaven and earth, night and day, messengers, revelation, dreams, and what the soothsayer's tongue utters - is repeated so much that man comprehends them through the imaginative faculty, and the rational faculty sees through its insight in a pure, simple, and peculiar way the existence of objects which are neither conceived by thought nor perceived by the senses. Its outlook becomes widened, and it desires to know the causes of those creatures which become intelligible.

The rational faculty does not know the objects of knowledge adequately unless it knows them through four causes - form, matter, agent, and purpose. It is necessary to know all these causes in respect of the objects which inevitably possess them.

Man is by nature inclined to investigate and know all these causes. His inquiry covers in the first instance the four causes of the objects of sense-perception. This is quite evident with respect to the objects of art as well as those of nature. He is all the more interested in knowing the causes of the intelligible objects, for this investigation is considered to be sublime, high, and useful. Finally, it is through investigation of causes that man reaches the belief in God, His angels, books, messengers, and the life hereafter.”

“Look,” says Ibn Bajjah, “into the wonders that lie between the intellect and the faculty of imagination through your penetrative soul. You can see with certainty that the intellect derives from the imaginative faculty the objects of knowledge called the intelligibles, and offers to the imaginative faculty a number of other objects of knowledge.

Take, for example, the moral and artistic ideals, or those objects of knowledge which are either the events that might take place and are available in the imaginative faculty before their occurrence, or the events that have not occurred but have found their way into the imaginative faculty not through the sense-organs but rather through the intellect as in the case of true dreams.

The most astonishing thing concerning the imaginative faculty is that which relates to revelation and soothsaying. It is clear in these cases that what the intellect offers to the human imagination does not proceed from the intellect itself, nor is acted upon by the intellect, but arises in imagination through an agent who has known it beforehand, and is able to create it.

It is God who causes by His will the mover of the active spheres to act upon the passive spheres as He likes. When, for example, He intends to make manifest what will occur in the uni-verse, He first of all sends the knowledge to angels and through them to the human intellect. This knowledge comes to man in accordance with his capacity for receiving it. This is evident in most cases of God's virtuous servants whom He has shown the right path and who are sincere to Him, particularly the apostles to whom He makes manifest through His angels in waking life or dream the wonderful events that are going to happen in the universe.

“God, the Almighty, makes manifest to His existing beings and creatures both knowledge and deed. Every being receives these from Him according to its rank in the perfection of existence: the intellects receive from Him know-ledge according to their positions, and spheres receive from Him figures and physical forms according to their ranks and positions. Every

celestial body possesses intellect and a soul through which it performs particular actions which are perceived by way of imagination such as the imagination of trans-ference from an imaginary place which continues to exist.

Due to this indi-vidually perceptible particular transference there arise particular actions which are perceived by the bodies that come into being and pass away. This is most manifest in the sun and the moon from among the celestial bodies. It is through this intellect that a man knows sciences which are revealed to him from God, things that are intelligible, the particular events which are to take place in the present and the future, as well as the events that happened in the past. This is the knowledge of the unseen of which God informs His chosen servants through His angels.”

Ibn Bajjah further elucidates the nature of human knowledge and the stages thereof when he says:

“Knowledge in man means his seeing the existents to-gether with their perfect existence iu his intellect through the insight of his soul which is a gift of God. This gift of God is of different grades in different men, the greatest insight being that of prophets who perfectly know Him and His creatures, and enjoy that sublime knowledge in their own souls through their excellent insights without learning and without making any effort to learn.

The highest knowledge is that of God Himself and His angels down to the knowledge of what particular events have taken place and will take place in this universe - knowledge gained through the insight of their hearts, without the use of the eyes.

In a lower rank than that of the prophets are the friends of God who possess excellent nature through which they derive from the prophets that which enables them to attain to the knowledge of God and the knowledge of His angels, books, apostles, the Last Day, and the highest blessing, which they continue to attest by the insight they enjoy in accordance with the different degrees of the divine gift they receive. These sincere men also receive a little bit of the knowledge of the unseen in their dreams. The friends of God include the Companions of the Prophet.

After them come a number of men whom God has favoured with insight through which they realize with cer-tainty the reality of everything till stage by stage they attain to sure know-ledge of God, His angels, books, apostles, and the Last Day. They realize through their insight that they have become pure and have achieved perfec-tion or the highest blessing, which is continuity without destruction, honour without disgrace, and richness without fear of poverty. These people who include Aristotle are very few in number.”

Ibn Bajjah believes in the plurality of intellects and refers to the first intellect and the secondary intellects. In his opinion, the human intellect is the intellect remotest from the first intellect. He further explains the grades of the intellect by saying that some intellects have been directly derived from the first intellect, and some others are derived from other intellects, the relation of what has been derived to that from which derivation has been made being the same as the relation of the light of the sun which is inside the house to that of the sun which is in the courtyard of the house.

Knowledge of the nature of existents which the intellect possesses is of two kinds: (1) that which is intelligible but cannot be invented, and (2) that which is intelligible and can be invented. The intellect itself is also of two kinds: (i) theoretical intellect through which man understands things which he cannot bring into being, and (ii) practical intellect through which he conceives artificial beings which he can invent.

Perfection of the practical intellect lies in man's understanding artificial objects and bringing them into being in accordance with his own intention. These are invented only through the organs of the human body, either by the movement of the organs without any implement from outside, or by moving the organs which in their turn move some external instruments. This happens when the artificial objects are accomplished by the human volition.

Human organs are moved per se, but when an artificial object is made, they are moved by the human volition at first in the mind, and then the object is produced outside the mind in accordance with the image formed in the mind before the organs bring it into being. This image is a phantom in the imaginative faculty of the soul and is general. This image disappears from the soul which obtains another image, and the process continues.

Whenever man intends to make a certain object, he forms an image in the imaginative faculty. Then he can see by his insight that another faculty of the soul abstracts this image in the imaginative faculty and transfers it from one state to another until its existence is accomplished in the soul, and then he sets the organs into motion to bring the object into being. This faculty which understands and abstracts in imagination is called the practical intellect. When in the imaginative faculty the practical intellect primarily abstracts the image of the artificial object according to a particular form and size, the moving faculty moves the organs to invent the object.

The intellect is, therefore, the first maker of the object, and not the organs which are moved by the soul, nor indeed the faculty which moves the organs. It is clear that the power of organs is not primarily found in nature but is caused to come into being by the faculty of the intellect which causes it to appear in imagination, and only then the organs cause the objects to be made through volition.

The imaginative faculty seeks the help of sense-perception at the time of inventing the object to present it to the faculty which has moved the organs, and to enable the intellect to compare and see whether the imagined object belongs to sense-perception in the same way as it belongs to the imaginative faculty.

The intellect has two functions to perform; (1) to present to the faculty of imagination the image of the object to be created, and (2) to have the object made outside the soul by moving the organs of the individual's body.

According to Ibn Bajjah, the human intellect by degrees achieves nearness to the first intellect in two ways: (1) by achieving knowledge based on proof, in which case the highest intellect is realized as form; and (2) by achieving knowledge without learning or making an effort to acquire it. This second method is that of the Sufis, notably of al-Ghazali; it enables one to gain the knowledge of God.

From this it is clear that though Ibn Bajjah has emphasized the speculative method, he does not condemn the mystic method, as some Europeans would have us believe.²¹

God, The Fountain-Head Of Knowledge

With regard to the divine gift through which the rational faculty discerns the differentiae, one man excels another, and that in accordance with the capacity that God has given him. But these two gifts are innate, not acquired. The capacities and gifts which are acquired are next to the innate ones and they are acquired by doing, under the guidance of the prophets, what pleases God. Man, therefore, should respond to the Holy Prophet's call and do what he urges him to do.

He can, thus, see through the insight of his heart the nature of every creature, its origin, and its final destination. He can know in the same way that God is a necessary being per se, is alone, has no associates, and is the creator of everything; that everything besides Him is contingent and has emanated from His perfect essence: that His self-knowledge implies His knowledge of all objects; and that His knowledge of objects is the cause of their coming into being.

To reduce the number of stages to achieve nearness to God, Ibn Bajjah advises us to do three things : (1) charge our tongues to rememebr God and glorify Him, (2) charge our organs to act in accordance with the insight of the heart, and (3) avoid what makes us indifferent to the remembrance of God or turns our hearts away from Him. These have to be followed con-tinuously for the whole of one's life.

Political Philosophy

Ibn Bajjah wrote a number of small treatises on the administration of the House-State and the administration of the City-State, but the only available book on the subject is Tadbir al-Mutawahhid (Regime of the Solitary). As is clear from this book, Ibn Bajjah agrees to a great extent with the political theory of al-Farabi. He has, for example, accepted al-Farabi's division of the State into perfect and imperfect. He also agrees with al-Farabi in holding that different individuals of a nation possess different dispositions-some of them like to rule, and some others like to be ruled.²²

But Ibn Bajjah adds to the system of al-Farabi when he exhorts that the solitary man (mutawahhid or the penetrative philosopher) should keep aloof from the people in certain circum-stances. Even though avoidance of people is in itself undesirable, it is necessary in the endeavour to achieve perfection. He also advises him that he should meet the community only on a few inevitable occasions for a short time, and that he should migrate to those countries where he finds knowledge, migration being perfectly permissible under the laws of the science of politics.²³

In his Risalat al-Wada` Ibn Bajjah has given two alternative functions of the State: (1) to estimate the deeds of the subjects in order to guide them to reach their intended goals and not any other ends. This function can be best per-formed in the ideal State by a sovereign ruler. (2) The alternative function is to devise means for the achievement of particular ends just as a rider as a preliminary exercise acquires control over the bridle in order to

become an expert in riding. This is the function of the administrators of those States which are not ideal. In this case the ruler is called the chief (ra'is). The chief enforces in the State a traditional system for the subjects' execution of all actions.

In the system of al-Farabi, as well as in that of Ibn Bajjah, the constitution is to be framed by the Head of the State, who has been equated by al-Farabi with a prophet or Imam. Ibn Bajjah does not mention this identity in so many words but he indirectly agrees with al-Farabi when he declares that "human perfection cannot be attained but through that which the apostles bring from God the Exalted (i, e., the divine Law or Shari`ah). Those who follow God's guidance cannot be led astray."²⁴ It is, therefore, too sweeping a state-ment to say, "He (Ibn Bajjah) ignores the political relevance of the divine Law (Shari`ah) and its educative value for man as a citizen."²⁵

Ethics

Ibn Bajjah divides actions into animal and human. The former are due to natural needs and are human as well as animal. Eating, for example, is animal in so far as it is done to fulfil need and desire, and human in so far as it is done to preserve strength and life in order to achieve spiritual blessings.

Ibn Bajjah draws our attention to the active human faculties, as man is too dignified to be qualified with the passive faculties which are either material or animal. The human faculty of learning is a passive faculty, but it is so in a different sense. The active faculty intends to attain perfection only, and then it stops, as in the art through which a trade is accomplished. But the repetition of the art is exercised only through the appetitive soul and opinion.

What is done due to the appetitive soul is the action which is done by the agent for its own sake. And, what is done by opinion is the action which is done to gain some other end. The appetitive soul desires a perpetual object, the desire being called pleasure, and its absence dullness and pain. Anybody who per-forms an action in this way is regarded as having done an animal action.

Those who act through opinion act only in so far as they are men. Opinion either moves one to that which is essentially perpetual, or to that which is perpetual because it is abundant. If the action is perpetual due to abundance, then the end will take the place of the preliminary action. This end-seeking is either due to propensity only, in which case it is an animal action, or due to opinion which has an intended goal in the achievement of which lies its completion.

The end varies in accordance with the nature of the individuals; some people, for example, are born for shoe-making and others for other vocations. Ends serve one another mutually, and all of them lead to one and the same ultimate goal-the chief end. The chief man is naturally he who prepares himself to aim at the chief end, and those who are not prepared for it are subservient by nature. Some people are, therefore, naturally sub-missive and are ruled by others, and some possess authority by nature and rule others.

Opinion is sometimes right essentially. It is so when it desires the eternal. Sometimes it is right accidentally and not in its essence. The opinions of the shrewd and crafty, for example, are right in respect of the objects they have set up before them; but they are not right-in-themselves. These opinions are relatively right but not universally so.

Colocynth is useful for a man of phlegmatic disposition, but not for all. On the other hand, bread and meat are useful both naturally and universally. The opinion which is right relatively as much as generally is right absolutely. But sometimes what is relatively right is not so in general, and is, therefore, right in one respect and wrong in another.

To declare an action animal or human it is necessary to have speculation in addition to volition. Keeping in view the nature of volition as well as speculation Ibn Bajjah divides the virtues into two types, the formal virtues and the speculative virtues. A formal virtue is innate without any trace of volition and speculation, such as the honesty of a dog, since it is impossible for a dog to be dishonest. This virtue has no value in man. The speculative virtue is based on free volition and speculation.

The action which is done for the sake of righteousness and not for fulfilling any natural desire is called divine and not human, since this is rare in man. Good, according to Ibn Bajjah, is existence, and evil is absence of existence. In other words, evil for him is really no evil.

Mysticism

Renan is right in his view that Ibn Bajjah has a leaning towards mysticism, but is certainly wrong in thinking that he attacks al-Ghazali for his insistence on intuition and Sufism. As a matter of fact, Ibn Bajjah admires al-Ghazali and declares that the latter's method enables one to achieve the knowledge of God, and that it is based on the teachings of the Holy Prophet.

The mystic receives a light in his heart. This light in the heart is a speculation through which the heart sees the intelligibles in the same way as a man sees the sunlit objects through eyesight; and through this apprehension of the intelligibles it sees all that which by implication precedes them or succeeds them.

Ibn Bajjah holds the friends of God (auliya' Allah) in high esteem and places them next only to the prophets. According to him, some people are dominated by corporeality only - they are the lowest in rank - and some are greatly dominated by a fine spirituality - this group is very rare, and to this group belong Uwais al-Qarani and Ibrahim ibn Adham.²⁶

In his attitude towards God and His decree Ibn Bajjah comes close to declaring himself a fatalist. In one of the treatises he declares that if we were to refer to the decree of God and His power we would verily attain peace and comfort. All existing things are in His knowledge and He alone bestows good upon them. Since He knows everything essentially, He issues orders to an intermediary to invent a form like the one which is in His knowledge and to the recipient of forms to receive that form. This is the case concerning all existents, even concerning transitory matter and the human intellect.

In support of his view that God is the Ultimate Creator of all actions Ibn Bajjah refers to al-Ghazali's view, expressed at the end of his Mishkat al-

Anwar, that the First Principle created agents as well as the objects of action to be acted upon; and he gets further support for this view from al-Farabi's observation, in `Uyun al-Masa'il, that all are related to the First Principle in so far as the First is their creator.

Ibn Bajjah also states that Aristotle said in his Physics that the First Agent is the real agent and the near agent does not act but through the First. The First makes the near act and the object to be acted upon. The near is known to the majority of people as agent only in affairs that concern matter. The just king, for example, deserves the ascription of justice, although he is distant in rank from him who is below him in the series of agents.

Whoever ascribes an action to a near agent is like the dog that bites the stone by which it is struck. But such ascription of action to the near agent is not possible in affairs which do not concern physical matters. The active intellect which surrounds the heavenly bodies is the near agent of all transitory particulars. But He who created both the active intellect and the heavenly bodies is the real eternal agent.

God causes the existence of a thing to continue without end after its physical non-existence. When an existent reaches its perfection, it ceases to remain in time (zaman) but exists eternally in the continuous flux of duration (dahr). Ibn Bajjah here reminds one of the Holy Prophet's saying: "Do not abuse dahr as dahr is Allah." So interpreted, the saying implies that the human intellect enjoys eternal continuity. In support of this interpretation of the word dahr Ibn Bajjah mentions his predecessors like al-Farabi and al-Ghazali.

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Chapter 27: Ibn Tufail

By Bakhtyar Husain Siddiqi

Life And Works

Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Malik ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Tufail (Latin, Abubacer), the first great leader of philosophical thought in the Muwahbid Spain, was born in the first decade of sixth/twelfth century, at Guadix, in the province of Granada. He belonged to the prominent Arab tribe of Qais. Al-Marrakushi traces his education to Ibn Bajjah, which in view of Ibn Tufail's denial of acquaintance with him, is incorrect.¹

He started his career as a practising physician in Granada and through his fame in the profession became secretary to the governor of the province. Later, in 549/1154, he became Private Secretary to the Governor of Ceuta and Tangier, a son of 'Abd al-Mu'min, the first Muwahhid ruler of Spain who captured Morocco in 542/1147.

Finally, he rose to the eminent position of the physician and Qadi of the Court and vizier² to the Muwahhid Caliph Abu Ya'qub Yusuf (r. 558/1163-580/1184), whose personal interest in philosophy and liberal patronage turned his Court into a galaxy of leaders of philosophical thought and scientific method and made Spain, what R. Briffault calls, "the cradle of the rebirth of Europe."³

Ibn Tufail enjoyed enormous influence with Caliph Abu Ya'qub Yusuf, and it was he who introduced Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198) to him. On the express desire of the Caliph, he advised Ibn Bajjah to annotate the works of Aristotle, a task that had been taken up zealously by Ibn Bajjah but had remained unfinished to the time of his death.⁴

Ibn Tufail resigned his position as Court physician in 578/1182 due to old age and recommended Ibn Rushd to his patron as his successor. He, however, continued to retain Abu Ya'qub's esteem and after his death (in 580/1184) gained the favour of his son Abu Yusuf al-Mansur (580/1184-595/1199). He died at Morocco in 581/1185-86. Al-Mansur himself attended his obsequies.

Ibn Tufail was an illustrious physician, philosopher, mathematician, and poet of the Muwahhid Spain, but unfortunately very little is known about his works. Ibn Khatib attributes two treatises on medicine to him. Al-Bitruji (his pupil) and Ibn Rushd credit him with "original astronomical ideas." Al-Bitruji offers a refutation of Ptolemy's theory of epicycles and eccentric circles which in the preface to his *Kitab al-Hai'ah* he acknowledges to be a contribution of his teacher Ibn Tufail.⁵

Quoting Ibn Rushd, Ibn Abi Usaibi'ah attributes *Fi al-Buqa' al-Maskunah w-al-Ghair al-Maskunah* to Ibn Tufail, but in Ibn Rushd's own account no such reference is traceable.⁶ Al-Marrakushi, the historian, claims to have seen the original manuscript of one of his treatises on the science of divinity.⁷ Miguel Casiri (1122/1710-1205/1790) names two extant works: *Risalah Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* and *Asrar al-Hikmah al-Mashriqiyyah*, the latter in manuscript form.⁸ The preface to the *Asrar* discloses that the treatise is only a part of the *Risalah Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, the full title of which is *Risalah Hayy Bin Yaqzan fi Asrar al-Hikmat al-Mashriqiyyah*.⁹

Creed Of The Muwahhids

The foundation of the Muwahhid dynasty is associated with the name of Ibn Tumart (d. c. 524/1130), a politico-religious leader who claimed to be the Mahdi. He introduced in the West orthodox scholasticism of al-Ghazali and exhorted people to observe the Zahirite Fiqh. During his travels he met 'Abd al-Mu'min al-Qumi (d. 558/1163), a potter's son, and made him his disciple and successor in his puritanical movement. He raised the banner of revolt against the corrupt Murabit rulers of Spain, but success ultimately fell to the lot of 'Abd al-Mu'min, who took Oran, Tlemcen, Fez, Sale, Ceuta and in 542/1147 became the first Muwahhid ruler of Morocco. He was succeeded by Abu Ya'qub Yusuf (d. 580/1184) and then by Abu Yusuf al-Mansur (d. 595/1199) on whose Courts the two great luminaries Ibn Tufail and Ibn Rushd, shed imperishable luster.¹⁰

The Muwahhids professed to be Ghazalians. They were noted for their puritanical belief in the unity of God. Anthropomorphic notions were an anathema to them. Secondly, inspired by Ibn Tumart, they stood for the strict observance of the exoteric aspect of religion. The Zahirite Fiqh constituted the Muwahhid State religion. Thirdly, as a legacy of Ibn Bajjah, they regarded philosophy as a species of esoteric truth reserved for the enlightened few. The masses, being incapable of pure knowledge, should not be taught more than the literal sense of the colourful eschatology of the Qur'an.¹¹

Needless to say, the mental equipment of Ibn Tufail is largely provided by the official religion of the Muwahhids, and his Hayy Bin Yaqzan is but a defence of the attitude of the Muwahhids both towards people and philosophers.¹²

Hayy Bin Yaqzan

Summary

The treatise dramatically opens with the spontaneous birth of Hayy in an uninhabited island, followed by a popular legend about his being thrown to this desolate place by the sister of a certain king, in order to keep her marriage with Yaqzan a secret. Unalloyed by social conventions, he is nourished there by a roe and taught by natural reason or common sense, which, though really very uncommon, equips him with inductive intellect to probe into the secret of things.

Unlike the lower animals, he becomes con-scious of his being naked and unarmed with physical weapons of defence. He reflects over the situation and covers the lower parts of his body with leaves. arms himself with a stick, and thus comes to realize the superiority of his hands over the feet of animals. The death of the mother-roe leads him to the discovery of the animal soul which uses the body as an instrument, like the stick in his hands, shares light and warmth with fire, and thus bears resemblance to the heavenly bodies.

He then turns to the analysis of the phenomena of nature, compares the objects around him, and discriminates between them, and classifies them into minerals, plants, and animals. Observation shows him that body is a common factor in all the objects, but they belong to different classes

because of the functions peculiar to them. This leads him to assume a specific form or soul for each class of objects.

But the soul being imperceptible, his dialectical ingenuity at last brings him to the idea of an ultimate, eternal, incorporeal, and necessary Being which is the efficient cause of the peculiar behaviour of bodies. This makes him conscious of his own immaterial essence; and acting upon a three-point code of ascetic discipline which will be explained later, he is finally absorbed in the unrestrained contemplation of the Ultimate Being.

At this stage, Asal, a contemplative and meditative soul, from the neighbouring inhabited island appears on the scene in quest of attaining perfection in solitude. He informs Hayy, the child of nature, about the Qur'anic conceptions of God, His angels, prophets, the Day of Judgment, etc., which he by his self-developed intellect immediately recognizes as truths. He, however, in the first instance, fails to see the wisdom implicit in the figurative languages of the Qur'an about God and the hereafter, and in the permission that it gives one to lead a worldly life - a permission which is likely to turn one away from the truth.

Full of ambition and hope, he sets out in the company of Asal to the said inhabited island ruled by Salaman and begins to reform its convention-ridden people. He endeavours hard to enlighten the masses through pure concepts, but, in the end, finds these concepts far above their heads. He then realizes the wisdom of the Prophet in giving them sensuous forms instead of full light, returns to his lonely island, and is absorbed in contemplation.

Sources

Hayy Bin Yaqzan is a unique creation of Ibn Tufail's mystico--philosophical thought. Nevertheless, the idea of this romance is not entirely new. Ibn Sina (d. 428/1037), among his predecessors, had written a mystic allegory of the same title. But the comparison ends here. Ibn Sina's dramatized tale narrates how one day he, with a few companions, went out for a ramble in the vicinity of a town and chanced to meet an old man, Hayy bin Yaqzan, and requested him to be permitted to accompany him in his unending journeys. But the old man replied that that was not possible for Ibn Sina, because of his companions whom he could not leave.

In this allegory Ibn Sina himself represents the rational soul, the companions the various senses, and the old man, Hayy bin Yaqzan, the active intellect.¹³ "With Ibn Sina," thus, "the character of Hai [Hayy] represents the Superhuman Spirit, but the hero of Ibn Tofail's romance seems to be the personification of the natural spirit of Mankind illuminated from above; and that Spirit must be in accordance with the Soul of Muhammed when rightly understood, whose utterances are to be interpreted allegorically."¹⁴

Similarly, the names of Salaman and Asal, the other two characters of Ibn Tufail's romance, are not new in the philosophical literature. These, too, have been borrowed from Ibn Sina's tale of Salaman wa Absal, of which we know only through Tusi's paraphrase in his commentary on Isharat.

The story relates how Absal, the younger brother of Salaman, was obliged to proceed to war in order to avoid the immoral designs of the latter's wife, but was deserted by the army through her machinations and his

wounded body was carried away by a gazelle to a place of safety. On returning home, he raised a strong army and regained the lost kingdom for Salaman, whose wife becoming desperate poisoned him to death.

The sorrow-stricken Salaman lost heart and became a hermit. A mystic trance, at last, revealed to him that his own wife was the cause of the catastrophe, and he killed her and all her accomplices.¹⁵ Salaman, in this tale, represents the rational soul, Absal the theoretical reason, and Salaman's wife, the passion-worshipping body.

Notwithstanding the similarity of names and the episode of the gazelle, the basic theme of both the treatises is intrinsically different. With Ibn Sina the main object is to show how personal afflictions (he himself was a prisoner in the dungeon of a fortress while writing the allegory) invoke divine grace and cause the purification of the soul but the object of Ibn Tufail is nothing less than to dramatize the development of theoretical reason from the gross sense-perception to the beatific vision of God.¹⁶

By far the most marked, deep, and saturating influence, which seems to have coloured the basic structure of Ibn Tufail's romance, is that of Ibn Bajjah, his arch-rationalist predecessor. His lonely, metaphysically minded Hayy is only an extreme form of the "solitary man" of Ibn Bajjah's *Tadbir al-Mutawahhid*. Nevertheless, in spite of his recognition of the necessity of solitude for the improvement of theoretical reason, Ibn Tufail feels rather unhappy over Ibn Bajjah's one-sided emphasis on the role of reason in arriving at the ultimate truth. Somewhat sympathetically he complains of the "incompleteness" of Ibn Bajjah's *Tadbir al-Mutawahhid*.¹⁷

It is to the desire of removing this incompleteness that Ibn Tufail's *Hayy Bin Yaqzan* owes its origin. And it is the influence of Ghazali (d. 505/1111) and perhaps also of Suhrawardi Maqtul, his Persian contemporary that made him supplement reason with ecstasy in its flight to the celestial world.

Of Hayy's birth in an uninhabited island, Ibn Tufail relates two versions. The scientific version of his spontaneous birth, he owes entirely to Ibn Sina.¹⁸ The legendary version is traced by Gracia Gomez ("Comparative Study of Ibn Tufail and Baltazar Gracian," Madrid, 1926) to *Dhu al-Qarnain wa Qissat al-Sanam w-al-Malak wa Bintuhu*, a Greek tale translated into Arabic by Hunain ibn Ishaq.

The tale narrates how, under royal displeasure, the daughter of a king threw away her natural daughter from the son of her father's vizier, in the sea, the surging waves of which landed her in an uninhabited island where she was nourished by a roe. She grew up into a beautiful damsel; later, Alexander the Great chanced to meet her in the island of Oreon.¹⁹ That the life of Hayy resembles that of the damsel in its initial stages, there can be no doubt, but the resemblance ends there. Besides, the aforesaid Greek tale does not seem to be the only source of this legend. Badi' al-Zaman Foruzanfar has lately traced the threads of the fable to the Persian tale of *Musa-o Dara-o Nimrud*.²⁰

The romantic frame of *Hayy Bin Yaqzan* is by no means original. It is of Alexandrian origin; it may have even a Persian strain. Nevertheless, it is Ibn Tufail who changes a simple tale into a romance of a unique philosophical significance. It is the philosophical acumen rather than the poetic

imagination that marks the treatise with novelty and makes it to be “one of the most original books of the Middle Ages.”²¹

Object of the Treatise

As al-Marrakushi, the historian, has said, Hayy Bin Yaqzan is a treatise which aims at giving a scientific explanation of the beginning of human life on earth.²² As a prelude to the story of Hayy Bin Yaqzan, it is related that the moderate climate of the uninhabited island, coupled with a fair proportion of the elements, led to the spontaneous birth of the first man, who found the stick a successful weapon in the struggle for existence, and thereby got the conviction of his own superiority over other animals. But actually this beginning is meant merely to provide a background for showing the development of inductive intellect, independently of any social influence whatsoever.

Contradicting al-Marrakushi's position, but in complete agreement with de Boer, Dr. Muhammad Ghallab²³ rightly contends that the treatise essentially aims at showing that the individual man left to himself is able, with the resources of nature alone and without any help from society, to advance to and reach the ultimate truth, provided he has the necessary aptitude for doing so.

The truth of the Qur'an and the Hadith is open to pure intellectual apprehension, but it has to be guarded against the illiterate masses whose business it is not to think but to believe and obey. In fact, this view is an echo of Ibn Bajjah's position, which later came to be regarded as the proper official attitude under the Muwahhids.

Muhammad Yunus Farangi Mahalli²⁴ points to a still higher aim implicit in the treatise. Religion is as much essential for a progressive society as are philosophy and mysticism - a thesis which is brilliantly exemplified by the co-operation of the three dramatic characters: Hayy, the philosopher; Asal, the mystic; and Salaman, the theologian. The underlying aim is not only to show that philosophy is at one with religion properly understood, but that both the exoteric and the esoteric aspects of religion and philosophy are expressions of the same eternal truth revealed to individuals according to their intellectual capabilities.

Philosophically speaking, the treatise is a brilliant exposition of Ibn Tufail's theory of knowledge, which seeks to harmonize Aristotle with the Neo-Platonists on the one hand, and al-Ghazali with Ibn Bajjah on the other. Al-Ghazali was dogmatically critical of Aristotelian rationalism, but Ibn Bajjah was Aristotelian through and through. Ibn Tufail, following the middle course, bridged the gulf between the two.

As a rationalist he sides with Ibn Bajjah against al-Ghazali and qualifies mysticism with rationalism; as a mystic he sides with al-Ghazali against Ibn Bajjah and qualifies rationalism with mysticism. Ecstasy is the highest form of knowledge, but the path leading to such knowledge is paved with the improvement of reason, followed by the purification of the soul through ascetic practices.

The methods of al-Ghazali and Ibn Tufail are both partially the same, but, unlike the former, the latter's ecstasy is marked by a Neo-Platonic strain. Al-Ghazali, true to his theologico-mystical position, takes ecstasy as

the means to see God, but to Ibn Tufail, the philosopher, the beatific vision reveals the active intellect and the Neo-Platonic chain of causes reaching down to the elements and back to itself.

Doctrines

World

Is the world eternal, or created by God at will out of sheer nothing-ness? This is one of the most challenging problems of Muslim philosophy. Ibn Tufail, quite in keeping with his dialectical ingenuity, faces it squarely in the manner of Kant. Unlike his predecessors, he does not subscribe to any of the rival doctrines, nor does he make any attempt to reconcile them. On the other hand, he subjects both the Aristotelian and the theological positions to scathing criticism.

The eternity of the world involves the concept of infinite existence which is no less impossible than the notion of infinite extension. Such an existence cannot be free from created accidents and as such cannot precede them in point of time; and that which cannot exist before the created accidents must itself be created in time. Similarly, the concept of *creatio ex nihilo* does not survive his scrutiny. Like al-Ghazali, he points out that the notion of existence after non-existence is unintelligible without supposing the priority of time over the world; but time itself is an inseparable accident of the world, and so its being prior to the world is ruled out. Again, the created must needs have a Creator. Why then did the Creator create the world now and not before? Was it due to something that happened to Him? Obviously not, for nothing existed before Him to make anything happen to Him. Should it be attributed to a change in His nature? But what was there to bring about this- change? ²⁵

Consequently, Ibn Tufail accepts neither the eternity nor temporal creation of the world.

This antinomy clearly anticipates the Kantian position that reason has its own limits and that its arguments lead to a maze of contradictions.

God

Both eternity of the world and its *creatio ex nihilo* equally and in-avoidably lead to the existence of an eternal, incorporeal Necessary Being.²⁶ The creation of the world in time presupposes a Creator, for the world cannot exist by itself. Again, the Creator must, of necessity, be immaterial, for matter being an accident of the world is itself subject to creation by a Creator. On the other hand, regarding God as material would lead to an infinite regress which is absurd.

The world, therefore, must necessarily have a Creator that has no bodily substance. And since He is immaterial, it follows that we cannot apprehend Him by any of our senses or even by imagination; for imagination represents nothing except the sensuous forms of things in their physical absence.

The eternity of the world implies the eternity of its motion as well; and motion, as held by Aristotle, requires a mover or an efficient cause. If this efficient cause is a body, its power must be finite and consequently incapable of producing an infinite effect. The efficient cause of eternal

motion must, therefore, be immaterial. It must neither be associated with matter nor separated from it, nor within it nor without it; for union and separation, inclusion and exclusion are the properties of matter, and the efficient cause, by its very nature, is absolutely free from it.

However, a question is posed here. God and the world both being eternal, how could the former be the cause of the latter? Following Ibn Sina, Ibn Tufail makes a distinction between eternity in essence and that in time, and holds that God does precede the world in point of essence, and not in respect of time. Take an example. If you have a body in your fist and move your hand, the body, no doubt, will move with the movement of the hand, yet its motion will be subject to the motion of the hand. The motion of the latter proceeds from its essence, that of the former is borrowed from the latter,²⁷ though in point of time neither precedes the other.

As to the world becoming co-eternal with God, he maintains in a mystic strain that the world is not something other than God. Interpreting the divine essence in terms of light, the essential nature of which is perpetual illumination and manifestation, as held by al-Ghazali, he conceives of the world as the manifestation of God's own essence and the shadow of His own light that has no temporal beginning or end. It is not subject to annihilation as the belief in the Day of Judgment tends to suggest. Its corruption consists in its transformation into another form rather than in its complete annihilation. The world must continue in one form or another, for its annihilation is inconsistent with the supreme mystic truth that the nature of divine essence is perpetual illumination and manifestation.²⁸

Light Cosmology

In full agreement with Ibn Sina and other predecessors, Ibn Tufail accepts the principle that from one nothing can proceed except one. The manifestation of the existing plurality from unity is explained in the monotonous Neo-Platonic fashion, as successive stages of emanation proceeding from the divine light. The process, in principle, resembles the successive reflection of solar light in looking-glasses. The light of the sun falling on a looking-glass and from there passing into another, and so on, gives an appearance of plurality.

All these are the reflections of the light of the sun, and yet they are neither the sun, nor the looking-glasses, nor anything different from both. The plurality of reflected light is lost into the unity of the sun when we look to their source, but reappears when we look to the looking-glasses in which the light is reflected. The same is true of the primal light and its manifestation in the cosmos.²⁹

Epistemology

The soul, in its first state, is not a tabula rasa, or a blank slate. The image of God is implicit in it from the very beginning, but, in order to make it explicit, we need to start with a clean mind, with neither bias, nor prejudice. Freedom from social prejudices and prepossessions as a primary condition of all knowledge is precisely the idea behind Hayy's spontaneous birth in an uninhabited island.

This being achieved, experience, intellection, and ecstasy play their respective roles freely in giving a clear vision of the truth inherent in the soul. Not mere discipline of spirit, but the education of the senses and the intellect, too, is essential for such a vision. The harmony of experience with reason (Kant), on the one hand, and that of reason with intuition (Bergson and Iqbal), on the other, constitutes the very essence of Ibn Tufail's epistemology.

Experience is a process of knowing the environment through the senses. The sense-organs owe their respective functions to the animal soul with its seat in the heart; from there the confused manifold of sense-data reaches the brain which spreads it all over the body through the nerve-paths. It is transmitted through the same paths to the brain, where it is organized into a perceptive whole.

Observation gives us knowledge about bodies which the inductive intellect, with its instruments of comparison and discrimination, classifies into minerals, plants, and animals. Each of these classes of bodies exhibits certain specific functions, which lead us to postulate specific forms or souls (like Aristotle) as the cause of the functions peculiar to the bodies of different classes. Such a hypothesis, however, is untenable on inductive grounds, for the supposed form or soul is not open to direct observation. Actions, no doubt, appear to be issuing from a certain body; in reality, they are caused neither by the body, nor by the soul in a body, but by some cause external to it and that cause is God as indicated before.³⁰

Ibn Tufail also knows the limitations of his newly discovered method. Following al-Ghazali³¹ and anticipating Hume, he sees no power in the cause which may necessarily produce the effect as it does. Hume's empiricism ends in scepticism, but the mystic in Ibn Tufail makes him see that the bond of causality is an act of synthesis which he ascribes to God, but which Kant attributes to the a priori form of understanding.

Ibn Tufail is at once a fore-runner of Bacon, Hume, and Kant. He anticipated the inductive method of modern science; perceived the inability of theoretical reason to solve the puzzle of the eternity and temporal creation of the world, and that of the inductive intellect to establish a necessary connection between cause and effect; and finally cleared the clouds of scepticism by declaring with Ghazali that the bond of causality is a synthetic act of God.

After educating the senses and the intellect and noticing the limitations of both, Ibn Tufail finally turns to the discipline of the spirit, leading to ecstasy, the highest source of knowledge. In this state, truth is no longer obtained through a process of deduction or induction, but is perceived directly and intuitively by the light within. The soul becomes conscious of itself and experiences "what the eye hath never seen, nor ear ever heard, nor the heart (mind) of any man ever conceived."³²

The state of ecstasy is ineffable and indescribable, for the scope of words is restricted to what can be seen, heard, or conceived. Divine essence, being pure light, is perceived only by the light within, which comes into its own through the proper education of the senses, intellect, and spirit. The

knowledge of essence, therefore, is itself essence. Essence and its vision are identical.³³

Ethics

Not earthly felicity, nor even divine vicegerency, but complete union with God is the summum bonum of ethics. Its realization, after the improvement of inductive and deductive intellect, finally depends upon a three-point code of spiritual discipline, which, according to de Boer, has a "Pythagorean appearance."³⁴ Man is a curious mixture of body, animal soul, and immaterial essence, and, thus, at once resembles animals, celestial bodies, and God. His spiritual ascent, therefore, consists in satisfying all the three aspects of his nature, by imitating the actions of animals, heavenly bodies, and God.

As to the first imitation, it is binding upon him to provide his body with bare means of sustenance and protect it against inclement weather and wild animals, with the sole intention of preserving the animal soul. The second imitation demands of him cleanliness in dress and body, kindness to animate and inanimate objects, contemplation of the divine essence and revolving round one's own essence in ecstasy. (Ibn Tufail seems to believe that the celestial bodies possess animal soul and are absorbed in the unrestrained contemplation of God.)

Lastly, he must equip himself with the positive and negative attributes of God, viz., knowledge, power, wisdom, freedom from corporeality, etc. Discharging one's obligation to oneself, others, and God, is, in brief, one of the essentials of spiritual discipline.³⁵ The last obligation is an end-in-itself, the first two lead to its realization in the beatific vision, where vision at once becomes identical with the divine essence.

Philosophy and Religion

Philosophy is purely intellectual apprehension of truth in concepts and images which, by their very nature, are beyond the grasp of conventional modes of expression. Language is a product of the material needs of social environment and as such can lay its hand only on the phenomenal world. The celestial world, being abstract and immaterial, altogether eludes its grasp. Described in material symbols, it loses its essential nature, and occasions men to think of it other than what it really is.³⁶

Why then does the Qur'an describe the divine world in parables and similitudes and thereby waive aside a clearer notion of it, and occasion men to fall into the grave error of attributing a corporeity to the essence of God, from which He is absolutely free? And why does not the Holy Book go further than the precepts and rites of worship, and give men leave to gather riches and allow them liberty in the matter of food, by which means they employ themselves in vain pursuits and turn away from the truth? Is it not the imperative need of the soul to free itself from earthly passions and chains before starting its journey towards heaven? Would not men lay aside worldly pursuits and follow the truth, if they were elevated to pure knowledge in order to understand things aright?³⁷

Hayy's miserable failure to enlighten the masses by means of pure concepts clears the way to the answers to these questions. The Prophet acted

wisely in giving the masses sensuous forms instead of full light, for they had no other way of salvation. Elevated to pure knowledge, they would waver and fall headlong and make a bad end.

Never-theless, though Ibn Tufail voices the Muwahhid State policy of withholding the teaching of philosophy from the multitude, he clearly recognizes a class of gifted people who deserve philosophic instruction and to whom allegory is the best means of imparting knowledge and wisdom.

Religion is for the masses: but philosophy is a privilege of the gifted few. Their provinces should be scrupulously kept apart. Philosophy, no doubt, is at one with religion properly understood; both of them reach the same truth, but through different ways. They differ not only in their method and scope but also in the degree of the blessedness they confer on their devotees.³⁸

Religion describes the divine world in terms of exoteric symbols. It abounds in similitudes, metaphors, and anthropomorphic notions, so that they might better accord with the people's understanding, fill their souls with desire, and attract them to virtue and morality. Philosophy, on the other hand, is a species of esoteric truth. It seeks to interpret the material symbols of religion in terms of pure concepts and images culminating in a state where the divine essence and its knowledge become one.

Sense-perception, reason, and intuition are the bases of philosophical knowledge. Prophets too have intuitions; their main source of knowledge is revelation from God. The knowledge of the prophet is direct and personal, but that of the followers is constituted of testimony.

Philosophy is an exclusive affair of the individual; it presupposes a certain temperament and aptitude for enlightenment. Religion, on the contrary, is a social discipline. Its point of view is institutional, not individual. It aims, more or less, at a uniform betterment of the masses in general, ignoring the individual differences in ability and inner light.

Philosophy brings us face to face with reality. It demands unrestrained contemplation of truth, uninterrupted vision of the primal light, the source of all existence, by renouncing all worldly connections. Religion is not so exacting in its dictates. It decries asceticism in any and every sense of the word; for the generality of mankind, for whom it is primarily meant, are incapable of living up to this ideal. It, therefore, fixes the absolute minimum and then gives men leave to lead a worldly life, without, however, trans-gressing the limits thereto.

Thus, the philosopher, left to his inner light, is capable of attaining to supreme bliss. As to the masses, they should rest content with a second-rate salvation, beyond which, owing to their own limitations, they cannot rise. Later on this theory, under the influence of Ibn Rushd, armed the medieval European scholars in their struggle against the Church, with the doctrine of "two-fold truth," John of Brescia and Siger of Brabant being two of its chief representatives.³⁹

The story does not seem to end here; for the redeeming individualistic attitude of modern philosophy, an attitude that distinguishes it from both the medieval and the ancient outlook, also appears to be a characteristic deposit of the same theory.

Influence

Of Ibn Tufail's works only Hayy Bin Yaqzan is extant today. It is a short philosophical romance, but so great has been its influence on the succeeding generations in the West that it has come to be recognized as "one of the most remarkable books of the Middle Ages."⁴⁰ In spirit, says Leon Gauthier, it resembles Arabian Nights; in method it is both philosophical and mystical.⁴¹

It combines pleasure with truth by calling imagination and intuition to the help of reason, and it is this peculiar appeal that has made it an embodiment of imperishable lustre and eternal freshness, and has caused its numerous editions and translations into Hebrew, Latin, English, Dutch, French, Spanish, German, and Russian.⁴² Even today, the world's interest in it has not ceased. Ahmad Amin's recent critical Arabic edition (1371/1952), followed by its translations into Persian and Urdu within the same decade, go far enough to prove that it has no less a hold over the modern world than it had over the medieval world.⁴³

The treatise caught the attention of the Quakers,⁴⁴ and George Kieth, finding in it a support for "enthusiastic notions"⁴⁵ of the Society of Friends, translated it into English in 1085/1674. So tremendous and alarming was its influence or what Simon Ockley calls "bad use," that he was obliged to devote a thirty-six-page appendix to his English version of the booklet (1120/1708), in order to refute Ibn Tufail's thesis that the individual man, left to his a priori inner light, can arrive at the ultimate truth.⁴⁶

A Spanish writer, Gracian Baltasar's indebtedness to Ibn Tufail occupied the world's attention during the first four decades of the present century. According to L. Gauthier, the early life of Andrenio, the hero of Gracian Baltasar's *El Criticon* (Saragossa, 1062/1651), is a "manifest" and "undeniable imitation" of Hayy's legendary version of birth.⁴⁷ But G. Gomez, the Spanish critic, claims that the *El Criticon* is nearer to the Greek tale of Dhu al-Qarnain wa Qissat al-Sanam w-al-Malak wa Bintuhu, referred to earlier, than to the Hayy Bin Yaqzan.⁴⁸

D. K. Petrof, the Russian Orientalist, too holds that Gracian Baltasar is an exception to Ibn Tufail's influence.⁴⁹ But L. Gauthier, in his latest version of the treatise (Beirut, 1355/1936), contradicts the position of Gomez and Petrof, and concludes that Gracian Baltasar is indebted to the Greek Qissat al-Sanam indirectly through the Hayy Bin Yaqzan of Ibn Tufail.⁵⁰

The influence of the romantic frame of the treatise is also visible in Menedez Pelyo, Pou,⁵¹ Saif Bin dhi Yazan, and Tarzan.⁵² Even the Robinson Crusoe (1132/1719) of Daniel Defoe is no exception to its pervading influence, as proved by A. R. Pastor in his *Idea of Robinson Crusoe*.⁵³

Of Ibn Tufail's pupils Abu Ishaq al-Bitruji and Abu al-Walid ibn Rushd stand far above the rest. He maintained his leadership in the sphere of astronomy through al-Bitruji⁵⁴ whose theory of "spiral motion" (*harkat laulabi*) marks the "culmination of the Muslim anti-Ptolemaic movement."⁵⁵ In philosophy and medicine he dominated the scene in the person of Ibn Rushd,⁵⁶ whose rationalism "ran like wild fire in the schools of Europe" and ruled their minds for no less than three centuries.

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Notes

1. Hayy bin Yaqzan, ed. Ahmad Amin, Egypt, 1952, p. 62. All references are to this edition unless mentioned otherwise.
2. Leon Gauthier doubts that he really held this office, for only one text gives him this position and al-Bitruji, his pupil, calls him simply Qadi. Cf. Encyclopaedia of Islam Vol. II, p. 424.
3. The Making of Humanity, p. 188
4. Na'im al-Rahman, Khilafat-i Muwahhidin (Urdu translation of al-Marra-kushi's al-Mu'jab), p. 240.
5. Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol.II, p.424.
6. A. S. Nadawi, Hukama'-i Islam, Vol. II, p. 42.
7. Khilafat.i Muwahhidin, p. 237.
8. MS. No. 669, Escorial; published Bulaq, 1882. Cf. Leon Gauthier. Ibn Thofail, pp. 32, 34.
9. Gauthier, op. cit., p. 33, footnote.

10. O'Leary, Arabic Thought and Its Place in History, pp. 246-50.
11. D. B. Macdonald, Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory, pp. 251-54.
12. Ibid., p.254.
13. S. M. Afnan, Avicenna, p. 198.
14. De Boer, The History of Philosophy in Islam, p. 185
15. A. S. Nadawi, op. cit., p. 50.
16. Later on 'Abd al-Rahman Jami (d. 898/1492) also adopted the names of Salaman and Absal as characters in one of his best known mystic poems (first edition by F. Falconer, London, 1267/1850; translated into English verse by Fitzgerald, 1267/1850, 1297/1879; literal translation along with Fitzgerald's versions by A. J. Arberry, Cambridge, 1376/1956). Salaman in this poem symbolically represents the rational soul, and Absal, his nurse and lover, the passion-worshipping body. Their close union is frowned on by Salaman's royal father and the two enter fire to put an end to their lives. But only Absal is consumed while Salaman remains unharmed, whose sorrow for Absal, in the end, gives way to celestial love for Venus. The poem, as it is, is nearer in its aim and method to Ibn Sina's tale of Salaman wa Absal, rather than to Ibn Tufail's Hayy Bin Yaqzan.
17. We know of this book only through Moses of Narbonne's version in his Hebrew commentary on Hayy Bin. Yaqzan, 750/1349, the summary of which appears in M_ Lntfi Jum`ah's Tarikh Falsafat al-Islam. Cf. also A. S. Nadawi. op. cit., Vol. 11, p. 30.
18. Ibn Sina has advocated the same view in his Shifa'. Cf. also Jaihl al-Din Dawwani, Akhlaq-i Jalali, Lueknow, 1916, p. 41.
19. Hayy Bin Yaqzan, p.13, footnote.
20. Zindah-i Bedar, p.13.
21. G. Sarton, Introduction to the History of Science, Vol. II, p. 354.
22. Khilafat-i Muwahhidin, p. 237.
23. Article "Ibn Tufail," Majallah Azhar, 1361/1942.
24. Article "Ibn Tufail",. Ma`arif, Azamgarh, January 1922, pp. 18-28
25. Hayy Bin Yaqzan, p.95.
26. Ibid., pp. 96-97.
27. Ibid., p.98.
28. Ibid., p.120.
29. Ibid., p.117.
30. Ibid., p.92.
31. Al-Ghazali "... goes to the extreme of intellectual scepticism, and, seven hundred years before Hume, he cuts the bond of causality with the edge of his dialectic and proclaims that we can know nothing of cause or effect, but simply that one thing follows another (D. B. Macdonald op. cit., p. 229).
32. Hayy Bin Yaqzan, p.114.
33. Ibid., p.115.
34. De Boer, op.cit., p.186.
35. Hayy Bin Yaqzan, pp.107-113.
36. Ibid., p.119.
37. Ibid., p.127.
38. Z.A.Siddiqi, Falsafa-i Hayy Bin Yaqzan, p.103.
39. F. Thilly, A History of Philosophy, p. 239.
40. Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol. II, p. 425.
41. Kamil Gilani, Hayy Bin Yaqzan, p. 106.
42. The little masterpiece has a history of translations into European languages, spread over six centuries: Hebrew translation with a commentary and comparison with the Tadbir al-Mutawahhid of Ibn Bajjah by the Jew Moses Ibn Joshua of Narbonne, 750/1349; Latin, E. Pococke Jr., Oxford, 1082/1671; reprinted, Oxford, 1112/1700; oriental editions, at least four from Cairo and two from Constantinople, 1299/1881; English, G. Kieth, London, 1085/1674; G. Ashwell, London, 1098/1686; S. Ockley, London, 1120/1708, reprinted 1123/1711, 1144/1731, revised by E. A. Dyck, Cairo, 1323/1905; P. Bronnle, London, 1322/1904; revised with an Intro-duction by A. S. Fulton, London, 1325/1907, reprinted, London, 1328/1910, 1348/1929; Dutch, Bouwmeester, Amsterdam, 1083/1672, reprinted 1113/1701; German, .J. G. Pritius, Francfort, 1139/1726; J. G. Eichhorn, Berlin 1197/1782;

Spanish, F. P. Biogues, Saragossa, 1318/1900, reprinted 1353/1934; Russian, J. Kuzmin, Leningrad, 1339/1920; French, L. Gauthier, Alger, 1318/1900, Paris, 1327/1909, and Beirut, 1355/1936, the only authentic and exhaustive critical estimate. (Brockelmann, Vol. I, p. 460, Supp. I, p. 831; George Sarton, op. cit., Vol. II, Part I, p. 355; Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol. II, p. 425).

43. Arabic edition, Egypt, 1327/1909, Damascus, 1359/1940, with a commentary by Dr. J. Saliba and K. 'Awad, Ahmad Amin's critical Arabic edition along with Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi's treatises of the same title, has renewed world's interest in it. Arabic summary, K. Gilani, Egypt; Persian (on Ahmad Amin's lines), B. Z. Frouzanfar, Teheran, 1376/1956; Urdu, Z. A. Siddiqi, Aligarh, 1376/1955, with a separate exhaustive critical estimate, Aligarh, 1376/1956.

44. A religious "Society of Friends," started by George Fox (1034/1624-1103/1691), with no formulated creed, liturgy, priesthood, and outward sacrament. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. IX, p. 849.)

45. S. Ockley, *The Improvement of Human Reason*, p. 194.

46. *Ibid.*, p.168.

47. Gauthier, op. cit., p. 52.

48. Hayy Bin Yaqzan, p. 13.

49. G. Sarton, op.cit., p.355.

50. Hayy Bin Yaqzan, p. 14, footnote.

51. *Ibid.*, pp.12, 14.

52. Kamil Gilani, op.cit., p.105.

53. A. R. Pastor, *Idea of Robinson Crusoe*, Part I, Wartford, 1930.

54. He refuted Ptolemy's theory of epicycles and eccentric circles and in the preface to his *Kitab al-Hai'ah* confesses that he is following the ideas of Ibn Tufail (L. Gauthier, op. cit., p. 26).

55. G. Sarton, op. cit., p. 399.

56. He was advised by Ibn Tufail with regard to his commentaries on Aristotle's works as well as his medical work *Kulliyat*. Cf. G. Sarton, op. cit., p. 355

Chapter 28: Ibn Rushd

¹
By Ahmed Fouad El-Ehwany

Introduction

Abu al-Walid Muhammad ibn Abmad ibn Muhammad ibn Rushd was born in Cordova in 520/1126. His family was renowned for its deep knowledge in Fiqh, and his father and grandfather held the office of the Chief Justice of Andalus. This religious descent gave him the opportunity to reach a high standard in Islamic studies. The Qur'an and its exegesis, the Tradition of the Prophet, the science of Fiqh, Arabic language and literature were all learnt by him by oral transmission from an authorized doctor (alim).

He revised the Malikite book al-Muwatta', which he had studied with his father Abu al-Qasim, and learnt it by heart.² He also pursued such scientific studies as mathematics, physics, astronomy, logic, philosophy, and medicine. His teachers in these sciences were not renowned, but on the whole Cordova was famous for being a centre of philosophical studies, while Seville was renowned for its artistic activities.

In a dialogue between him and Ibn Zuhr the physician, while they were in the Court of al-Mansur ibn `Abd al-Mu'min, Ibn Rushd, proud of the scientific atmosphere in his native city, said: "If a learned man died in Seville his books are sent to Cordova to be sold there; and if a singer died in Cordova his musical instruments are sent to Seville."³ In fact, Cordova at that time rivalled Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, and the other great cities in eastern Islam.

He was the pupil of neither Ibn Bajjah nor Ibn Tufail, the two great Maghribian philosophers. In his story, Hayy Bin Yaqzan, Ibn Tufail observed that most of the learned men in Maghrib were interested in mathematics, and that philosophy when introduced through the books of Aristotle, al-Farabi, and Ibn Sina was found unsatisfactory. The first philosopher who could have produced something valuable on this subject was Ibn Bajjah, but he was occupied in worldly affairs and died before completing his works.

Al-Ghazali criticized the doctrines of the Muslim philosophers in his book Tahafut: and his way to attain to truth was a mystic one. Ibn Sina expounded the doctrine of Aristotle in al-Shifa', but he mixed his own opinions with those of Aristotle- This short account given by Ibn Tufail concerning the state of philosophical studies in eastern Islam explains why he asked Ibn Rushd to comment on Aristotle.

Ibn Rushd lived in the midst of disturbed political conditions. He was born in the reign of the Almoravides who were overthrown in Marrakush in 542/1147 by the Almohades, who conquered Cordova in 543/1148. The Almo-hade movement was started by Ibn Tumart who called himself al-Mahdi. He tried to imitate the Fatimids, who had appeared a century before and founded an empire in Egypt, in their encouragement of philosophy, their secret interpretations, and their excellence in astronomy and astrology.⁴ His three Almo-hade successors 'Abd al-Mu'min, Abu Ya`qub, and Abu Yusuf,

whom Ibn Rushd served, were known for their encouragement of science and philosophy.

When Abu Ya`qub became Amir, he ordered Ibn Rushd to write commentaries on Aristotle. This is the account given by al-Marrakushi. Ibn Rushd said: "When I entered into the presence of the Prince of the Believers Abu Ya`qub, I found him with Abu Bakr Ibn Tufail alone. Abu Ya`qub began praising me, mentioning my family and ancestors. The first thing the Prince of the Believers said to me ... was, 'What is their opinion about the heavens?' referring to the philosophers. 'Are they eternal or created?' Confusion and fear took hold of me.... But the Prince of the Believers understood my fear and confusion, and turned to Ibn Tufail and began talking about the question he had asked me, mentioning what Aristotle, Plato, and all the philosophers had said..."⁵

In another account given by the same biographer, Ibn Rushd relates that Ibn Tufail summoned him one day and told him that the Prince of the Believers complained of the difficulty of the expression of Aristotle and his translators, and mentioned the obscurity of his aims saying: "If someone would tackle these books, summarize them, and expound their aims after understanding them thoroughly, it would be easier for people to grasp them." And Ibn Tufail got himself excused on the plea of old age and his occupation in government service and asked Ibn Rushd to take up this work.

Thus, Ibn Rushd started his commentaries on the books of Aristotle. He deserved for this undertaking the title of the "Commentator"⁶ for which he was renowned in medieval Europe. Dante in his Divine Comedy mentions him together with Euclid, Ptolemy, Hippocrates, Avicenna, and Galen, designating him as the great Commentator.

"Euclide geometra e Tolemeo,
Ipocrate, Avicenna e Galieno,
Averois, che'l gran comento feo."
(Dante, "Inferno," IV, 142-44)

It is related that he wrote three kinds of commentaries: the great, the middle, and the lesser. The great commentaries are called tafsir, following the model of the exegesis of the Qur'an. He quotes a paragraph from Aristotle and then gives its interpretation and commentary. We have now in Arabic his great commentary of the *Metaphysica*, edited by Bouyges (1357-1371/ 1938-1951).

The lesser ones are called the talkhis. In the Arabic language talkhis means summary, resume or precis. One may say that these commentaries although Aristotelian in the main, reveal also the true Rushdian philosophy. A compendium called the *Majmu`ah* or *Jawami`* comprising six books (*Physics*, *De Caelo et Mundo*, *De Generations et Corruption*, *Meteorologica*, *De Anima* and *Metaphysica*) has now been published in Arabic. In these commentaries, Ibn Rushd did not follow the original text of Aristotle and, the order of his thought.

An example of the middle commentaries is to be found in the "Categories," edited by Bouyges in 1357/1932. At the beginning of the paragraph, Ibn Rushd says: "qala" ("dixit") referring to Aristotle, and sometimes (not always) gives an excerpt of the original text.⁷ This method

was current in eastern Islam, and Ibn Sina followed it in his al-Shifa', reproducing in many places the very phrases of the Arabic translation of Aristotle. In fact, Ibn Sina, declared that in his al-Shifa' he was following the "First Master."

It is true that most of the commentaries are found in their Latin or Hebrew translations, or conserved in Hebrew transliteration, but the original Arabic texts are more sure and accurate. On the whole, the value of Ibn Rushd's commentaries is historical, except for the lesser ones which reveal to a certain extent his own thought. His own philosophical opinions are to be found in three important books, the Fasl, the Kashf, and the Tahafut, and in a short treatise called al-Ittisal. His Colliget (Kulliyat) in medicine is as important as the Canon of Ibn Sina, and was also translated into Latin, but it was less famous than that of Ibn Sina's. In jurisprudence (Fiqh) his book Bidayat al-Mujtahid is used as an Arabic reference book.

He was better known and appreciated in medieval Europe than in the East for many reasons. First, his numerous writings were translated into Latin and were circulated and conserved, while his original Arabic texts were either burnt or proscribed due to the antagonistic spirit against philosophy and philosophers. Secondly, Europe during the Renaissance was willing to accept the scientific method as viewed by Ibn Rushd, while science and philosophy began in the East to be sacrificed for the sake of mystical and religious movements. In fact, he himself was affected by this conflict between science (and philosophy) and religion. Religion won the battle in the East, and science triumphed in the West.

His disgrace, persecution, and exile in 593/1198 were the result of that conflict. The dispute for political power between the representatives of religion and philosophers never ceased from the third/ninth century onward. Al-Kindi described this dispute and defended the philosophers in his books.⁸ The men of religious learning (fuqaha' and `ulama') were nearer to the masses who were influenced by them. The Muslim rulers, in need of their support, left the philosophers to the rage of the masses.

Several accounts have been given concerning the exile of Ibn Rushd to Lucena, near Cordova. The charge was that he had written in some of his books of having seen the giraffe in the garden of the king of the Berbers. Ibn Rushd said in his defence that he had written "the king of the two lands." (Berber written in free hand without diacritical marks can be read as Barrain.) A second story holds that he had written down that Venus is divine. A third story is that he denied the historical truth of the People of `Ad mentioned in the Qur'an.

The intrigues of the religious party succeeded to the point that not only was Ibn Rushd exiled but his writings too were publicly burned. A manifesto⁹ against philosophy and philosophers was issued and distributed everywhere in Andalus and Marrakush, prohibiting the so-called dangerous studies and ordering to burn all the books dealing with such sciences. However, his dis-grace did not last long and al-Mansur after his return from Marrakush pardoned and recalled him. Ibn Rushd went to Marrakush where he died in 595/1198.

Philosophy And Religion

The accord between philosophy and religion is rightly regarded as the most important feature of Islamic philosophy. Ibn Rushd's solution to this problem was really an ingenious one. As a philosopher, he found that it was his duty to defend the philosophers against the fierce attacks of the faqihs and theo-logians, especially after their condemnation by al-Ghazali in his "Incoherence of the Philosophers." Ibn Rushd's treatise called *Fasl al-Maqal fi ma bain al-Hikmah w-al-Shari`ah min al-Ittisal* is a defence of philosophy in so far as it is shown to be in harmony with religion.

It may be doubted nowadays whether this question should receive so much attention, but in the sixth/twelfth century it was really vital. Philosophers were accused of heresy (kufr) or irreligion. In fact al-Ghazali condemned the philosophers as irreligious in his *Tahafut*. If this accusation were true, the philosophers according to Islamic Law would be put to death, unless they gave up philosophizing or proclaimed publicly that they did not believe in their philosophical doctrines. Consequently, it was necessary for philosophers to defend themselves and their opinions.

Ibn Rushd begins his treatise by asking whether philosophy is permitted, prohibited, recommended, or ordained by the Shari`ah (Islamic Law). His answer is, from the very outset, that philosophy is ordained or at least recommended by religion (religion is used in this context as synonymous with Shari`ah and specifically Islam). Because the function of philosophy is nothing more than speculating on the beings and considering them in so far as they lead to the knowledge of the Creator.¹⁰

The Qur'an exhorts man to this kind of rational consideration (i'tibar) in many a verse such as: "Consider, you who have vision." Al-i'tibar is a Qur'anic term which means something more than pure speculation or reflection (nazar).

To translate this Qur'anic consideration in logical terms is nothing more than getting the unknown from the known by way of inference. This type of reasoning is called deduction of which demonstration (burhan) is the best form. And since God exhorts man to know Him through demonstration, one must begin to learn how to distinguish between the demonstrative and the dialectical, rhetorical, and sophistical deductions. Demonstration is the instrument by which one can attain to the knowledge of God. It is the logical method of thinking, which leads to certainty.

It follows that the Qur'an exhorts man to study philosophy since he must speculate on the universe and consider the different kinds of beings. We have now passed from the legal plane of Fiqh to the philosophical one, in spite of their distinction. The objective of religion is defined in philosophical terms: it is to obtain the true theory and the true practice (al-'ilm al-haqq w-al-'amal al-haqq).¹¹

This reminds us of the definition of philosophy given by al-Kindi and his followers, which remained current all through Islamic philosophy. True knowledge is the knowledge of God, of all the other beings as such, and of the happiness and unhappiness in the hereafter.¹² The way of acquiring knowledge is of two kinds, apprehension and assent. Assent is either de-monstrative, dialectical, or rhetorical.

These three kinds of assent are all used in the Qur'an. Men are of three classes, the philosophers, the theologians, and the common people (al-jumhur). The philosophers are the people of demonstration. The theologians - the Ash'arites whose doctrine was the official one at the time of Ibn Rushd - are of a lower degree, since they start from dialectical reasoning and not from scientific truth. The masses are the "people of rhetoric" who understand only through examples and poetic thinking.

So far, religion is compatible with philosophy. The act and aim of philosophy are the same as those of religion. Now about the compatibility of their methods and subject-matter. If the traditional (al-manqul) is found to be contrary to the rational (al-ma`qul), it is to be interpreted in such a way as to be in harmony with the rational.¹³ Allegorical interpretation (ta'wil) is based on the fact that there are certain Qur'anic verses which have an apparent (zahir) meaning and an inner (batin) meaning.

Early Muslim scholars in the face of such verses avoided interpreting them, because they were afraid to confuse the minds of the common people. The Ash'arites interpreted some such verses as that of "sitting on the Throne" (al-istiwa'), while the Hanbalites believed in its apparent meaning. The position of Ibn Rushd, as a philosopher, is different from that of the early Muslims, the Ash'arites and the Hanbalites. Ta'wil is to be practised only by the philosophers who are the people of demonstration. Even then, this ta'wil should be kept back as esoteric knowledge, far from being declared to the masses.

Ibn Rushd returns to the plane of Fiqh and compares the logical method of philosophy with the traditional one of Fiqh. This latter, called the principles of Fiqh, depends on four sources: the Qur'an, Tradition, ijma` (consensus) and qiyas (legal syllogism). We have seen that the Qur'an has to be rationally interpreted.

Ijma' comes from the unanimous accord of the opinions of all the qualified scholars at a certain time. But there was no consensus at any time about doctrinal matters, simply because some scholars believed, as mentioned in the Qur'an, that there were certain matters which should be concealed. Only "those who are well grounded in learning"¹⁴ (al-rasikhun fi al-'ilm) had the right to know. And, since there is no consensus in doctrinal matters, al-Ghazali had no right to condemn the philosophers as irreligious on the basis of ijma'. They deserved, in al-Ghazali's opinion, the charge of heresy (takfir) for three things: their doctrine concerning the eternity of the world, their denial of God's knowledge of particulars, and their denial of bodily resurrection.

According to Ibn Rushd, religion is based on three principles in which every Muslim of the above-mentioned three classes should believe. These are the existence of God, the prophecy, and resurrection.¹⁵ These three principles constitute the subject-matter of religion.

As prophecy depends on revelation, philosophy remains distinct from religion, unless it is shown that reason and revelation are in accord with each other. This problem is discussed in other books of his in detail. But he who denies any one of the above principles is irreligious (kafir). He can

believe what he likes through any of the demon-strative, dialectical, or rhetorical ways.

Philosophers should not declare their esoteric interpretations to the masses lest they should be led to heresy. The theologians who did so were responsible for the origin of the various Islamic sects which accused one another of heresy.

All in all, philosophy is the twin sister of religion; they are the two friends who, by their very nature, love each other.

The Way To God

Having established that religion has apparent and inner meanings, symbolic for the common people and hidden for the learned, Ibn Rushd endeavours in his book: al-Kashf `an Manahij al-Adillah to find out the way to God, i.e., the methods given in the Qur'an to attain to the belief in the existence of God and to the knowledge of His attributes, according to the apparent meaning, for the first knowledge that every reasonable man is entitled to obtain is of the way which leads to the belief in the existence of the Creator.

Since this book was written in a theological form, Ibn Rushd began to review the methods of the various Islamic sects, which he classified into five principal kinds: the Ash'arites, the Mu'tazilites, the Batinites, Hashawites, and the Sufis.¹⁶ It was but natural that he should have reserved for his contemporaries, the Ash'arites, the greatest part of his discussion, but strangely enough he never referred to the Batinites mentioned in the above classification. The Mu'tazilites were briefly discussed along with the Ash'arites, but not separately through their original writings which had not, as he later stated, reached the Maghrib.

The Hashawites maintain that the way to God is listening through oral transmission (al-sama')¹⁷ and not through reason. They mean that faith in God is received from the Prophet and that reason has nothing to do with it. But this contradicts what is mentioned in the Sacred Book which calls men in general to believe through rational proofs.

The Ash'arites hold that the way to God is through reason, but their method is different from the religious way which the Qur'an has called man to follow. They lay down certain dialectical premises from which they start, such as: the world is temporal; bodies are composed of atoms; atoms are created; the agent of the world is neither temporal nor eternal. Their arguments, however, are far from being understood by the common people, and are inconsistent and unconvincing.¹⁸

Another Ash'arite way is that of Abu al-Ma`ali.¹⁹ It is based on two premises, that the world is probable (ja'iz), and that what is probable is temporal. But this way abolishes the wisdom of creating the creatures as such. The way of Ibn Sina²⁰ is in some respects similar to that of Abu al-Ma`ali; only he substitutes the probable by the possible.

The Sufis²¹ follow the mystic way. They say that the knowledge of God is thrown into the soul from high above, after we have got rid of our earthly desires. But, this way is not accessible to all mankind, and it abolishes speculation for which people are exhorted all through the Qur'an.

What, then, is the true way to God which is suitable for all mankind? Two ways are mentioned in the Qur'an, called by Ibn Rushd the proof of providence and the proof of creation. The first is teleological and the second cosmological, both starting from man and other beings, not from the universe as a whole.

The proof of providence depends on two principles: the first is that all beings are suitable for the existence of man; and the second is that this suitability is by necessity due to an agent intending to do so by will, since this suitability cannot be achieved by chance. All beings are created for the service of man: stars shine at night for his guidance, his bodily organs are fit for his life and existence. A whole theory of value can be developed from this view.

The proof called creation takes into consideration the animals, plants, and heavens. It is also based on two principles: that all beings are created, and that everything created is in need of a Creator. The examples given refer to animated beings. When we see that bodies devoid of life are endowed with life, we know by necessity that there is a Creator of life, i.e., God. Heavens, also, are commanded to move and take care of the sublunary world. God says in the Holy Book: "Verily, those on whom ye call beside God could never create a fly if they all united to do so."²² He who wants to know God should know the essence and uses of things to attain to the knowledge of true creation.

These two ways are common both to the learned elite and the masses. The difference between their knowledge lies in the degree of details.²³ Common people are content with the sensuous knowledge, which is the first step to science. The elite are convinced only by demonstration.

The significance of God's unicity is expressed in the Qur'anic principle "No God but He."²⁴ Negation of other deities is considered here to be an additional meaning to the affirmation of God's unicity.²⁵ What would happen if there were more than one God? The world would be subject to corruption: one god would be superior to the others, or the rest of the gods would find some device to dethrone the one in power.²⁶

God is qualified by seven main attributes:²⁷ knowledge, life, power, will, audition, sight, and speech. They are human qualifications considered in their absolute perfection. Three positions can be taken as regards the relation between God's essence and His attributes. The first is the negation of the attributes. This is the position of the Mu'tazilites. The second is to affirm them in a state of complete perfection. The third is to conceive them as transcendent and beyond human knowledge. They are in the sphere of the unknowable.

As a matter of fact, the Qur'an asserts the attributes and yet states that "Nothing is similar to Him,"²⁸ which means that He is unknowable. The common people may believe according to the apparent meaning of the text that He sees, hears, speaks, etc. The people of demonstration should not expound their interpretation before the masses.

The doctrines of both the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites are unsound. Ibn Rushd criticizes their solutions in his book al--Manahij and at length in the Tahafut. He holds that in the case of the attributes, without affirming or

negating them, one must follow the apparent meaning mentioned in the Qur'an. As to philosophical interpretation, this must be kept esoteric.

The acts of God are reduced to five principal ones: creation, sending the prophets, predestination, justice, and resurrection.²⁹ They constitute the relationship between God and the world and man.

Creation is an act of God. He created the world providentially, not by chance. The world is well ordered and is in a state of the most perfect regularity, which proves the existence of a wise Creator. Causality is presupposed. All the Rushdian proofs depend on the belief that nothing comes to be without a cause, and that there is a definite series of causes emanating from a Prime Cause.

He says: "He who, in the artificial things, denies or cannot understand the caused resulting from causes would have no knowledge of the art or the artisan; similarly, he who denies the existence in this world of the depend-ence of effects on causes would deny the wise Maker."³⁰

The proof for sending prophets is based on two principles mentioned in the Qur'an. The first is that men of this type are those who prescribe the laws through God's revelation, not through human learning. The act of a prophet is to prescribe laws which if followed by men would bring them ever-lasting happiness. The second principle is that he who is found to be qualified to perform this act of lawgiving is a prophet.

Just as the act of the physician is to cure the body, and he who effects this cure is a physician, so the act of the prophet is to prescribe laws and he who is found to do this act is a prophet. Theologians assume that our belief in the truth of the prophets lies in the belief in their miraculous acts, which are supernatural. But the Qur'an refuses to follow this way which was common to previous religions.

When the Arabs told Muhammad that they would not believe in him unless he made a spring flow from dry earth, he answered through God's revelation: "I am only a human being, a messenger."³¹ The only miracle of Islam is its Holy Book, the Qur'an, which comprises the laws necessary for the well-being of man. Thus, there is nothing supernatural,³² since everything goes on according to natural laws resulting from the close association of causes and effects.

Predestination is a very difficult problem about which the opinions of the Muslim thinkers oscillate from absolute fatalism to absolute free-will. Fatalism abolishes man's freedom, and, consequently, his responsibility. The Mu'tazilites are in favour of free-will which is the ground of man's responsibility for his good and bad doings. If this view is assumed, God has nothing to do with man's acts, man being creator of his own acts. And, consequently, there would be other creators besides the Creator.

The Ash`arites maintain a mid-way position saying that man is predestined and yet he acquires the power to act. This is their famous doctrine concerning the acquisition (al-kasb). But this solution is, in Ibn Rushd's view, self-contradictory. Their doctrine leads to fatalism.

Man is predisposed neither to fatalism nor to free-will. He is determined. Determinism is the production of acts according to their appropriate causes. Causes are external or internal. Our acts are accomplished both through our

will and the compatibility of external happenings. Human will is determined by outer stimuli which are subject to definite regularity and harmonic order according to the universal will of God.

Not only are our acts determined by causes from without, they are also related to causes from within ourselves. The determined regularity in external and internal causes is what we call predestina-tion.³³ God's knowledge of these causes and of what results from them is the reason for their being.

God is just and never does injustice to man, as declared in the Qur'an. The nature of man is not absolutely good, although good is dominant. The majority of mankind are good. God has created good essentially, and bad accidentally for the good. Good and bad are similar to fire which has many uses for the well-being of things, yet in some cases it may be harmful. This Rushdian theory supports the optimism that prevails in the world.

All religions are in accord as to the reality of resurrection. They differ only as to whether it is spiritual or bodily. Spiritual resurrection is the survival of the soul after its separation from the body. Belief in bodily resurrection is more suitable for the minds of the masses who are short of understanding the spiritual immortality of the soul.

The Way To Knowledge

We pass now from Ibn Rushd, the Muslim philosopher garbed in a cloak of Fiqh, to the commentator of Aristotle, who was more faithful to the "First Master" than Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistius. Medieval philosophy in Europe was influenced by Aristotle through the commentaries of Ibn Rushd. As Gilson rightly puts it: "Strangely enough, very few men have been more influential than Averroes in shaping the popular notion of medieval philosophy which is now currently received as historical truth."³⁴ It is true that his main system is Aristotelian, but under the influences of ideas received from different sources, he gave the system a new form.

The way to knowledge is one of the major problems, discussed all through Muslim philosophy because of its relationship to higher existents, namely, the "agent intellect" with which man gets in communion. The soul and intellect are carefully distinguished by Ibn Rushd in his consideration of the process of knowledge.

A full account about the hierarchical order of beings is necessary to understand the place of these two entities. This is why Ibn Rushd began his treatise *Talkhis Kitab al-Nafs* by giving a short review concerning the composition of beings and their source of behaviour and knowledge. From the very start he says: "The aim of this treatise is to set forth in psychology the commentators' opinions which are more related to natural science and more appropriate to Aristotle's purpose. It would be relevant before that to give a brief introduction about the necessary principles presupposed for understanding the substance of the soul."

These are: (i) All perishable beings are composed of matter and form, each of which is not by itself a body, although through their combination the body exists. (ii) Prime matter has no existence in actuality, but is only the potency to receive forms. (iii) The first simple bodies in which prime matter is actualized are the four elements: fire, air, water, and earth.

(iv) The elements enter in the composition of all other bodies through mixture. The remote cause of this mixture is the heavenly bodies. (v) Natural heat is the proximate cause of the real combination. (vi) Organic beings are generated from animate individuals of their kind through natural heat. Soul is the proximate cause of their generation and their remote cause is the intelligence that moves the spheres.

Before further discussion of psychology Ibn Rushd asks the crucial question “Can there be forms separate from matter ?”³⁵ The answer to this question constitutes the true way of knowledge.

Material forms can never be separate from matter, since physical forms³⁶ - which is another expression of material forms - subsist only in matter. Hence they are temporal and subject to change. They are not eternal since they have no subsistence except in matter. It follows that separate forms are some-thing other than the material forms. Consequently, the separateness of the rational soul, namely, the intellect, can only be demonstrated if it is shown that it is pure form.

The soul is not separate because it is “the form of an organic natural body”.³⁷ The soul is divided according to its acts into five kinds: the nutritive, the sensitive, the imaginative, the cognitive, and the appetitive, and this last seems to be subsequent to the imaginative and sensitive.³⁸

The hierarchical order of the faculties is dependent on the order of the material forms, mentioned above. The way of animal knowledge is by sensation and imagination, and that of man, besides these two, by intellect. Thus, the way to knowledge is either through the senses or through the intellect, leading either to the knowledge of the particular or of the universal. True knowledge is that of the universal, otherwise animals can be said to have knowledge.

The term “knowledge” is applied equivocally to animals, man, and God. Animal knowledge is limited by the sensuous and imaginative, whereas human knowledge is universal. Sensation and imagination exist in animals for their conservation. To assure their security, protect themselves, and obtain food, animals have to move towards or away from the sensibles.

In case the sensibles are present, they are perceived by the senses; and in their absence, representations take their place. Sensations are, then, the condition of representation, and “every being which has representations necessarily has sensations.”³⁹ But, since man has a higher faculty, namely, intellect, he gets representations through thought and reasoning, whereas in animals representations exist by nature.⁴⁰

Further, forms perceived by animals are finite, and sometimes, when perceived by man, they become universal images. Those who assume that animals have reason confuse uni-versal images with universal concepts. Forms perceived by man are infinite, in the sense that the particulars they denote are infinite. Representations, in so far as they are the motor cause for movement, effect their action in man through their collaboration with concepts.

Human knowledge must not be confused with divine knowledge, since “man perceives the individual through the senses and universal existents through his intellect. The cause of man's perception changes through the

change in the things perceived, and the plurality of perceptions implies the plurality of objects.”⁴¹

It is impossible that God's knowledge should be analogous to ours, because “our knowledge is the effect of the existents, whereas God's knowledge is their cause.”⁴² The two kinds of knowledge, far from being similar to one another, stand in opposition. God's knowledge is eternal, while man's know-ledge is temporal. “It is God's knowledge which produced the existents, and it is not the existents which produce His knowledge.”⁴³

So far, we have seen that there is individual as well as universal knowledge. The first is the outcome of sensation and imagination, and the second is the result of the intellect. The act of the intellect is to perceive the notion, the universal concept, and the essence.

The intellect has three basic operations abstraction, combination, and judgment. When we perceive a universal notion, we abstract it from matter. This is more evident in a thing denuded of and far from matter, such as the point and line.⁴⁴ Not only does intellect abstract simple apprehensions from matter, it combines them together and judges that some of them when predicated of some others are true or false. The first of these operations is called apprehension (*intelligere* in the Latin terminology) and the second is called assent (*credulitas*).

We have, then, three successive operations. First, we get in the intellect single notions (intentions) totally abstracted from matter, and this operation is what has been called abstraction. Secondly, by way of combining two or more notions together we have the concept, such as the concept of man which is composed of animality and rationality, the genus and differentia. And this constitutes the *esse* of a thing. Hence, a complete essence constitutes also its definition. Thirdly, since concepts are neither true nor false, when affirmed or negated in a proposition, we have a judgment.⁴⁵

The intellect is theoretical and practical. Practical intellect is common to all people. This faculty is the origin of arts of man necessary and useful for his existence. Practical intellectibles are produced through experience which is based on sensation and imagination: Consequently, practical intellect is corruptible since its intellectibles depend for their existence on sensation and imagination. Hence they are generated when perceptions and representations are generated, and corrupted when these are corrupted.

Through practical intellect man loves and hates, lives in society, and has friends. Virtues are the product of practical intellect. The existence of virtues is nothing more than the existence of representations from which we move towards virtuous acts in the most right manner; such as to be brave in the proper place and time and according to the right measure.⁴⁶

Two main questions must be settled concerning the theoretical intellect, the first its eternity and the second, its communion with the agent intellect. The first question can be put in other terms: Are the theoretical intellectibles always in actuality, or do they first exist in potency and then in actuality, thus being in some way material?⁴⁷ This brings Ibn Rushd once more to the consideration of the material forms, grading from the elementary forms (i.e.

forms of the four elements) to the representations produced by the imaginative soul.

They all have four things in common. (1) Their existence is subsequent to change. (2) They are diverse and multiple according to the diversity and plurality of their objects. (It follows from these two qualities that they are temporal.) (3) They are composed of something material and something formal. (4) The perceived is different from the existent, since the form perceived is one in so far as it is intelligible and multiple as regards its individuality.⁴⁸

Intelligible forms in man are different from all the other material forms. (1) Their intellectual existence is one and the same as their objective existence which can be pointed out. (2) Their perception is infinite since the forms when abstracted have no individual plurality. (3) The intellect is the intellectible and perception is the perceived. (4) Intellect grows with old age, whereas all other faculties weaken, because the intellect operates without an organ.⁴⁹

The operation of intellection runs like this: there is the intellect or the person who perceives, and there are the intellectibles which are the object of intellection and perceived by the intellect. Intellectibles must be existent, otherwise the intellect would have nothing to apprehend, because it can only be attached to what exists, not to what does not exist.⁵⁰ And, our know-ledge is the effect of the existents.

Now, these intellectibles, namely, the universals, either exist in the soul as held by Plato, or exist in the reality outside the soul. Ibn Rushd, following Aristotle, rejects the doctrine of idealism. Consequently, universals exist in reality and their existence is attached to the particulars composed of matter and form. Through the operation of abstraction, the intellect denudes the forms of matter.

It follows that intellectibles are partly material and partly immaterial.⁵¹ They are material in so far as they depend on representations which in their turn depend on the particulars. The material intellect must not be understood as corporeal, but as mere possibility, the disposition to receive the intellectibles. What brings but the possible intellect from potency to actuality is the agent intellect. It is higher and nobler than the possible. It is itself existing, always in actuality, whether perceived by us or not. This agent intellect is from all points of view one and the same with the intellectibles.

Man can attain to the agent intellect in his life-time as he grows up. Since it has been shown that the intellect is nothing other than the intellectibles, the act of the intellect in acquiring the intellectibles is called the “union” (al-ittihad) or the “communion” (al-ittisal).

Union is not something analogous to the way of the Sufis, since the agent intellect is not divine and does not illuminate our souls as some Neo-Platonists hold. Union is a rational operation explained on epistemological grounds, and is based on the acquirement of the universal forms by the possible intellect. These universal forms have no existence in actuality apart from the sensible individuals.

When Ibn Rushd was translated into Latin, some of his doctrines were accepted and some refuted. The movement which was influenced by him is called Latin Averroism. It means Aristotelian philosophy as interpreted by Ibn Rushd, his distinction between philosophy and theology, his empirical rationalism, and more especially his theory concerning the intellect. On the whole, Latin Averroism considered Ibn Rushd a faithful exponent of Aristotle and of truth.

Meanwhile, there arose many theologians who opposed his doctrines. An example of this opposition is to be found in the treatise of Albert the Great, "On the Oneness of the Intellect against Averroes." Siger of Brabant followed Ibn Rushd in his psychology in particular; a summary of Siger's treatise: "On the Intellect,"⁵² proves that he borrowed his ideas from a translation of the Kitab al-Nafs. The Averroist movement lasted till the ninth/fifteenth century and had many reactions, which proves the great in-fluence of the philosopher of Cordova.

The Way To Science

Science, religion, and philosophy constitute three different realms. Man is by necessity forced to find some way of harmonizing these different aspects of culture which co-exist in the society in which he lives; otherwise his personality would disintegrate.

Science is necessary for the welfare of all the people living in a civilized community. Their material existence is dependent on and corre-lated with the degree of scientific knowledge. Religion is even more fundamental in human societies. As Bergson puts it, "We find in the past, we could find to-day, human societies with neither science nor art nor philosophy. But there has never been a society without religion."⁵³ Philosophy is the search for truth. It has rightly been said that man is a metaphysical animal.

The great-ness of famous philosophers - Plato, Aristotle, Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, Des-cartes, Kant, etc. - lies in placing each of these three disciplines in its proper place, both in the sphere of knowledge and of action. The first philosophers in Islam gave to science its due consideration, without devaluing religion. Al--Kindi, al-Farabi, and Ibn Sina were all scientists and philosophers. And with that, they were all sincere Muslims, except that they interpreted religion in the light of their scientific and philosophical knowledge.

Al-Ghazali was dissatisfied with the doctrines of the philosophers. He attacked them in his book "The Incoherence of the Philosophers" and accused them of kufr on twenty points. The eloquence of al-Ghazali, his deep know-ledge of the art of controversy and argumentation, and his vast erudition in every study gave him a wide popularity to the point that he was considered an eminent authority on Islam (hujjat al-Islam).

Ibn Rushd answered the accusations point by point. The discussion be-tween the two great figures is really an interesting debate, which mirrors a genuine conflict in Muslim society, between religion, on the one hand, and science and philosophy, on the other, Ibn Rushd, in his capacity as a philo-sopher aiming at truth, integrated the three apparently diverse realms. Through rational interpretation of the Qur'an, he effected the harmony of

religion with philosophy. He unveiled the true way to religion as stated in the Qur'an.

He, now, turns to pave the way to science. In his enthusiastic defence of religion, al-Ghazali unintentionally shut the door to it. The mystic way of the Sufis prescribed by him is incompatible with the rational methods of science. The Muslims, unfortunately, followed al-Ghazali, the "Authority of Islam," and neglected little by little the study of the sciences. Their once great civilization faded.

On the other hand, Ibn Rushd defended science, and medieval Europe followed the way prescribed by him to attain to it. This is the true spirit of Latin Averroism which led to the rise of European science. Science is the body of systematized and formulated knowledge based on observation and classification of facts. But the way to science is more basic than the scientific truths so obtained, since through the scientific method we can attain to the scientific realities and progress more and more in our study.

The two Tahafuts, of al-Ghazali and that of Ibn Rushd, picture the ideas which were in play on the stage of Islamic civilization during the fifth and sixth/eleventh and twelfth centuries. Some of those ideas, though now considered to be of mere historical value, were of major importance at the time.

The length at which the problem of the eternity of the world is discussed and its prime place at the head of the twenty discussions indicate the importance that al-Ghazali gave to it. Ibn Rushd considers that the main questions for which al-Ghazali charged the philosophers of being irreligious amount to three: eternity of the world, denial of God's knowledge of particulars, and bodily resurrection.

In our view, the problem which still remains of vital importance is that of causality. Scientific thought can only be established on the basis of the causal principle. While Hume criticized causality, Kant tried to find out some rational grounds on which causality can stand. Through transcendental a priori forms of pure reason, Kant believed that science is safeguarded.

The induction of Stuart Mill presupposes universal causation. Russell says "Whether from pure prejudice, or from the influence of tradition, or for some other reason, it is easier to believe that there is a law of nature to the effect that causes are always followed by their effects than to the effect that this usually happens."⁵⁴ Only contemporary science has replaced the conception of "cause" by "causal laws," causal lines, statistics, etc.

Ibn Rushd found himself entitled to safeguard science and show the way to attain to scientific realities, since al-Ghazali undermined the necessary relation of cause and effect. As Quadri puts it: "La science perdait ainsi toute raison d'etre. La subsistance n'avait plus de fondement.... La pence scien-tifique devait etre revendiquee et sauvee."⁵⁵

Al-Ghazali begins the dialogue about the natural sciences by enumerating the different sciences "to make it known that the Holy Law does not ask one to contest and refute them." In this enumeration he mentions such sciences as the art of incantation, alchemy, astrology, etc. Ibn Rushd rejects such pseudo-sciences. The talismanic art is vain. Whether

alchemy really exists is very dubious. Astrology does not belong to the physical sciences.⁵⁶

The real reason why al-Ghazali denied the necessary causal relation is that “on its negation depends the possibility of affirming the existence of miracles which interrupt the usual course of nature, like changing of the rod into a serpent”⁵⁷ According to Ibn Rushd, miracles must not be questioned or examined by the philosophers. “He who doubts them merits punishment.”

However, the miracle of Islam lies not in such miracles as changing the rod into a serpent, but in the Qur'an, “the existence of which is not an inter-ruption of the course of nature assumed by tradition ... but its miraculous nature is established by way of perception and consideration for every man.... And this miracle is far superior to all others.”⁵⁸

In fact, Ibn Rushd repeats here what he has stated before in his twin books the *Fasl* and the *Kashf*. . Recent Muslim theologians, Muhammad `Abduh, Ameer Ali, and others, have adopted this Rushdian view which is now current in all Muslim societies. A return to Ibn Rushd is one of the incentives to recent renaissance in the East. Muhmmad 'Abduh says : “It is impossible for the people of Islam to deny the relation existing in this world between causes and effects.”⁵⁹

We pass from this prelude to the heart of the discussion. Al-Ghazali posits the theme like this: “According to us the connection between what is usually believed to be a cause and what is believed to be an effect is not a necessary connection, each of the two things has its own individuality and is not the other... the satisfaction of thirst does not imply drinking, nor burning contact with fire.... For the connection in these things is based on a prior power in God to create them in a successive order, though not because this connection is necessary in itself.”

Ibn Rushd starts his answer from common sense, which in his view is the basis of certitude. “To deny the existence of efficient causes which are observed in sensible things is sophistry, and he who denies them either denies with his tongue what is present in his mind or is carried away by a sophisticated doubt”⁶⁰

But philosophy cannot be based on common sense. Empiricism is useful for practical ends, not for exact sciences. Both practical empiricism based on common sense and scientific knowledge believe in causality, except that the first is less sure and the latter more precise. To be scientific is to be able to predict what will happen in the future when a cause is given. Belief in science and its power results from our ability to predict on the basis of causal necessity.

Modern science still believes in causality, not in its older form of cause-effect relationship, but in causal lines and structures. To sum up, belief in causality is a matter of faith, originating from the animal faith in expectation. Ibn Rushd had complete faith in nature, and maintained that every-thing in the world happens according to a perfect regularity which can be understood in terms of cause and effect.

This brings us to the picture of the physical world as conceived by Ibn Rushd, and the way it can be scientifically known. The world is a continuum

of things and persons interrelated through necessary causality. Two principles are presupposed, though not enunciated: the one is the permanence of things and the other is the law of causation. These two postulates are the result of metaphysical assumptions derived from Aristotelianism, namely, the idea of substance and the idea of the four causes.

Al-Ghazali denies the two principles. As to the permanence of things, he reproduces the counter-argument of some philosophers in a comical manner that “if a man who had left a book at home might find it on his return changed into a youth ... a stone changed into gold, and gold changed into stone; and if he were asked about any of these things he would answer, ‘I do not know what there is at present, in my house.’”⁶¹

Al-Ghazali accepts the challenge saying “There is no objection to admitting that anything may be possible for God.” An example of this possibility is the miracle of Ibrahim when he was thrown into fire and was not burnt. Fire by the will of God lost its quality of burning. Fire in itself is not an efficient cause. The true cause is God who through His will and power gives the things their qualities. There is no reason, then, why they might not be con-trary to what they are.

To meet this argument, ibn Rushd looks at the problem from the philosophi-cal point of view already mentioned. The permanence of things permits us to attain to the essence of a thing, its definition, and giving it a name. “For it is self-evident that things have essences and attributes which determine the special functions of each one of them and through which the definitions and names are differentiated. If a thing had not its specific nature, it would not have a special name nor a definition, and all things would be one.”⁶²

As to the second postulate concerning causality, “all events have four causes, agent, form, matter, and end.” Human mind perceives the things and conceives their causes. And, “intelligence is nothing but the perception of things with their causes, and in this it distinguishes itself from all the other faculties of apprehension; and he who denies causes denies the intellect. Logic implies the existence of causes and effects, and knowledge of the effects can only be rendered perfect through knowledge of their causes. Denial of causes implies the denial of kntwledge.”⁶³

If they call the relation of cause--effect a habit, habit is an ambiguous term. Do they mean by habit (1) the habit of the agent, or (2) the habit of the existing things, or (3) our habit to form a habit about such things? Ibn Rushd rejects the first two meanings and accepts the last which is in harmony with his conceptualism. Because it is impossible that God should have a habit. The habit of existing things is really their nature, since habit can only exist in the animated.

On the whole, the way to science starts with faith which is the basis of certitude. Sceptics and agnostics have no place in science. Armed with this faith in the existence of the world as such, the intellect discovers the causes of things. Scientific knowledge is the knowledge of things with their causes which produce them.

The Way To Being

Two distinct types of metaphysics came down to the Arabs, a metaphysics of Being and a metaphysics of the One. The first is that of Aristotle, and the second that of Plotinus. Since the *Enneads* of Plotinus was mistakenly ascribed to Aristotle, al-Kindi was confused between the two systems and could not bring them into accord.

Al-Farabi was more inclined to the philosophy of the One. He fused the two systems in the Necessary Being, God, the One of the Qur'an and the One of Plotinus. The way to the One is rather a mystic way, and that to Being is purely logical. The philosophy of al-Farabi was mixed with the wine of mysticism. Ibn Sina, following the way opened by al-Farabi, looked at the problem from a new standpoint, i. e., from the distinction between the necessary and the contingent, yet in his old age he dwelt upon the fusion of the One and the Being with a kind of divergence towards a gnostic mysticism.

Ibn Rushd returned to the original doctrine of Aristotle and freed himself from the burden of Neo-Platonism. Being, and the way to attain to it, is the object of his short *Talkhis on Metaphysics*. At the beginning of this treatise he says: "Our aim is to pick up from the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle his theoretical doctrines."⁶⁴

As a faithful follower of Aristotle he defines metaphysics as the knowledge of Being as such. Metaphysics is part of the theoretical sciences. It studies Being absolutely (*bi-itlaq*); the immaterial principles of physical sensibles such as unity, plurality, potency, actuality, etc., the causes of the existents on the side of God and divine entities. Physical science is concerned with the causes of individual beings. It remains for metaphysics to study the highest causes of the particulars.

The subject-matter of metaphysics is three-fold: the study of (1) sensible things and their genera, namely, the ten categories; (2) the principles of substance, the separate entities and how they are related to the First Principle, which is the Supreme Perfection and the Prime Cause; and (3) the particular sciences in view of correcting their sophistries. It is evident that the second part of this division is the most fundamental, and the two others are related to it. Hence, Ibn Rushd gives a more elaborate definition of metaphysics. "It is the science which studies the relationship of the different existents as regards their hierarchical order of causes up to the Supreme Cause."⁶⁵

Hence, knowledge of Being consists in an exploration into Its causes and principles. True knowledge is conformity with the existent. Ibn Rushd con-fronts the mental with the external existence to the point that if what exists in our minds is in conformity with what is outside, it is true of Being. Two distinct meanings are thus applied to Being, the one epistemological and the other ontological. Which of the two is the origin of the other, essence or existence?

There is no ambiguity in the system of Ibn Rushd about this question. The external existents are the basis of our knowledge. If an entity exists in our minds without having any real existence outside, it would not be a being, but simply an entity such as chimera, for example.⁶⁶ Being and existence are, then, one and the same. To exist is to be real.

The criterion of Being is its real existence, whether in potency or in act. Prime matter has being, al-though it never exists without form. When the intellect is attached to external existents, the being which was outside becomes inside the mind in the form of a concept or an essence. Existence, then, is presupposed in Being.

External existents are called substances. Substance is the first of the ten categories; the rest are the secondary substances. Prime substance has more substantiality than the secondary. When we say, "Socrates is a man," this denotes that Socrates is more substantial than human, humanity, or manness. Meanwhile, manness is as real as Socrates. Both the universal and the particular are substances. The particular has a sensuous existence, and the universal an intellectual one. But the individual substances are the starting point in the entire metaphysics of Ibn Rushd.

Physical bodies are commonly said to be composed of two principles, matter and form. This is not quite true, because a body is not only matter or only form; it is a whole composed of the two. It is a composite. This whole is additional to the two principles of Being.⁶⁷ Hence the principles of the sensible substances amount to three. The body is one unity which has many parts. By substance, we mean the whole composed of matter and form.

Some philosophers, for example Ibn Sina, assumed that every physical body has two forms, a specific form and a corporeal form. The latter, *forma corporeitatis*, consists in the three dimensions which give the body extension in space. According to Ibn Sina, the form of corporeity is substance and is the cause of plurality in physical beings. Ibn Rushd rejects this view and says that Ibn Sina was totally wrong.⁶⁸ Individual substances are composed of matter and only one form. They have two kinds of existence, the one sensuous and the other intellectual, Matter is the cause of their corporeity and form the cause of their intelligibility.

A thing is known by its definition which gives its essence; and definition is composed of parts, the genus and the differentia. Genera, species, and differentiae are universals. Now, are the essences or the universals the same as the individual things, or are they different? Universals are identical with individuals, since they define their essences.

Those who assume that the universals have a separate existence and subsist by themselves fall in contradictions very difficult to resolve. In their view human knowledge can be possible only if the universals have separate real existence. But, "it is evident that for the intellection of essences we have no need to assume the separateness of the universals."⁶⁹ They exist only in our minds as concepts denuded of matter. Hence, this doctrine is conceptualism, as opposed to realism and nominalism. Human mind occupies a dignified place in nature and plays an active role in acquiring knowledge.

Moreover, universals are not eternal and immutable as Platonic idealism assumes. It is true that, as regards essence, universals are eternal since essence as such is not corruptible. But as regards the individual which is essentially corruptible, the universal is corruptible and changeable in so far as it is a part of the composite of form and matter. The first substance is the "this" which is pointed at.

How can the universals be eternal and at the same time corruptible? Or, as Ibn Rushd puts it: “How can eternal entities be the principles of corruptible things?”⁷⁰ This difficulty is solved by reference to potency and actuality. The scale of beings is graded from pure potency to pure actuality. Prime matter is pure potency; it can only exist in a being combined with form. The lowest existents are the four elements of which sensible bodies are composed.

Potency (dynamic in Greek) can be understood as possibility or disposition. Potency is so called as opposed to actuality. Now, the first substance can exist in actuality or in potency. Matter inherent in the substance is its potentiality. This potentiality is of different degrees according to proximity and remoteness. Man, for example, exists potentially in the sperm and in the four elements; the first potency is the near one, the latter is the remote one.

Four conditions are necessary for a thing to exist: (1) the proximate subject, (2) its disposition, (3) the motor causes, (4) the absence of preventing causes. Take, as an example, a sick man. Not all sick men have the possibility to be cured, and he who has the possibility should also have the disposition. In addition to these two conditions, he must have the efficient cause which brings him from sickness to health, provided there are no external preventions.⁷¹ The case of the natural objects is similar to that of the artificial ones.

Consequently, there is always a motor cause which brings a thing to exist in actuality. Sometimes, there are more than one motor causes. For example, bread has the potency to change into flesh and blood, and has as motor causes the mouth, the stomach, the liver. etc. The remote cause is the potency in the elements to change into flesh. Along with these causes, bread is in need of a very remote cause, namely, the heavenly bodies.

Since physical things are composed of matter and form, potency is always subsequent to matter, and actuality subsequent to form. Form, which is the act, is prior to matter at every point, because form is also the efficient and final cause. The final cause is the cause of all other causes, since these are there for the sake of it. Furthermore, potency is not prior in time to act, because potency can never be denuded of act.

Matter and form exist simul-taneously in a being. The motor cause of a physical thing is apparently prior to the existence of the thing. A distinction must be made between a motor cause and an efficient cause. Motor cause applies only to change in place, namely, the movement of translation. All other changes, especially generation and corruption, are caused by efficient causes.

Celestial bodies are moved by a motor, not an efficient, cause, because their movement is translation in space and they do not change. They are intermediate existents between the pure act and the existents which exist sometimes in potency and sometimes in act. Their similarity to existents in act lies in their eternity and incorruptibility. Their similarity to the things which exist in potency and come to actuality is in their change of place, their circular movement in space.

Ibn Rushd terminates the discussion of this point by saying: “Consider how divine providence has managed to combine the two kinds of existence. In between pure act and pure potency, it has posited this kind of potency, namely, the potency in space through which the eternal and corruptible existences are connected.”⁷²

Furthermore, act is prior to potency in point of dignity and perfection, because evil is privation or one of the two opposites, such as sickness which, although existent, is bad as regards privation of health; and since potency is the possibility to become either of the two opposites, it is not an absolute good. Pure act is an absolute good.⁷³ Hence, the nearer the things are to the First Principle which is pure act, the better they are.

Celestial bodies have obtained their principles from the First Principle, God. And, likewise, everything on this earth which is good is the product of His will and design. As to evil, it exists because of matter. This world, as it is, is the best possible one. Either the world would not have existed at all, or it would have existed having some evil for the sake of a greater good.

We have seen that sensible substances are composed of matter and form. Now, are these two principles sufficient for the existence of sensible substances? Or, is there a separate substance which is the cause of their perpetual existence?⁷⁴ It is evident that the sensible is in need of a motor cause, and this cause needs another, up to the First Mover whose movement is eternal. This brings us to the consideration of time.

Time is an eternal continuum subordinate to an eternal movement, which is continuous and one, because the true one is continuous. It is clear that Ibn Rushd asserts the eternity of the world, on the assumption that both movement and time are eternal. Eternity of the world is the first and longest discussion in the Tahafut of al-Ghazali. The whole discussion is, as mentioned above, only of historical value, and, therefore, we need not dwell on it.

The First Mover moves the primum mobile by desire, not by representation. The world is animated, i, e., it has a soul. It also has intelligence. Celestial bodies are moved not through sensations and representations, as is the case with animals, but through the conception of intelligence. (Intelligence is so called with regard to celestial bodies; with regard to man it is called intellect.)

Heavenly bodies have no senses, because these are found in animals for their conservation. Representations exist in animals for the same end. Celestial bodies are in no need of conservation since they are eternal. Their movements are the product of desire (shauq) through intellection. The first mover of the firmament is moved by a most dignified desire - desire for the Supreme Good. The movers of the celestial bodies are, then, intelligences which are themselves immobile. There are thirty-eight movers and nine spheres.

The tenth intelligence, or the Intelligentsia Agens, is the last of these movers. It moves the sphere of the moon. It is the cause of the movement of the sublunary beings. It is this intelligence which gives forms to the elements and other existents.

Man is the nearest being to the celestial bodies, and this is because of his intellect. He is intermediate between the eternal and the corruptible.⁷⁵ Through the agent intelligence, he acquires the forms which are its products. Thus, communion with the agent intelligence can be realized. And in this communion lies man's felicity and happiness.

Notes

1. On the life and work of Ibn Rushd see: Renan, *Averroes et l'averroisme*, Paris, first ed., 1852, ninth ed., 1932; Munk, *Melanges de Philosophie Juive et Arabe*, Paris, 1859, reprint 1927; Horten, *Die Philosophie des Ibn Roschd*, Bonn, 1910; *Die Metaphysik des Averroes*, Halle, 1912; *Die Hauptlehren van Averroes nach seiner Schrift, Die Widerlegung des Gazali*, Bonn, 1913; Carra de Vaux, *Les Penseurs de l'Islam*, Vol. IV, Paris, 1923; Gauthier, *Ibn Rochd*, Paris, 1948; *La theorie d'Ibn Rochd sur les rapports de la religion et de la philosophie*, Paris, 1909; Quadri, *La philosophie Arabe dans l'Europe Medievale des Origines a Averroes*, Paris, 1947 (translated from the Italian); Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, New York, 1954; El-Ehwany, *Islamic Philosophy*, Cairo, 1957; Hourani, *The Life and Thought of Ibn Rushd* (a series of four lectures), American University, Cairo, 1947; 'Abbas Mahmud al-'Aqqad, *Ibn Rushd* (in Arabic), Cairo, 1953.

For the editions of his writings, and his manuscripts see: Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, Vol. I, Weimar, 1898; Bouyges, *Notes sur les philosophes arabes comme des Latins au Moyen-Age; Inventaire des textes arabes d'Averroes*, *Malanges de l'Universite Saint Joseph*, Beyrouth, 1922.

Latin Translations: *Opera Omnia*, apud Juntas, 10 Vols, Venice, 1574. New editions of the Averroes Latinus have been recently published: (i) *Parva Naturalia*, Cambridge, Mass., 1949; (ii) *Commentarium magnunt in Aristotelis De Anima*, Cambridge, Mass., 1953.

Arabic Editions and Translations: Editions by Bouyges: *Tahafut al-Tahafut*, Beyrouth, 1930; *Talkhis Kitab al Maqulat*, Beyrouth, 1932; *Tafsir ma ba'd al--Tabi'ah*, 5 Vols., 1938-1951; *Tahafut al-Tahafut*, Cairo, 1319/1901 (this editor comprises the *Tahafut* of al-Ghazali, the *Tahafut* of Ibn Rushd and the *Tahafut* of Khwajah Zadah), complete English translation by Simon van den Bergh, London, 1954, in 2 Vols., the first for the text and the second for the notes. (i) *Fasl al-Maqal*; (ii) *Al-Kashf 'an Manahij al-Adillah*; (iii) "Discussion of the Opinions of Ibn Rushd by Ibn Taimiyyah." The first two treatises are edited in Arabic by Muller, Munich, 1859, and translated by him into German, 1875; reprinted in Arabic, Cairo, 1894-1895.

French translation by Gauthier, *Accord de la religion et de la Philosophie*, Algier, 1905.

English translation by Jamilur Rahman, *The Philosophy and Theology of Averroes*, Baroda, 1921; a new English trans. is in preparation by George Hourani.

Rasa'il Ibn Rushd, Hyderabad, 1947. A compendium of six treatises *Talkhis*; (i) *Physics*; (ii) *De Caelo et Mundo*; (iii) *De Generatione et Corruptione*; (iv) *Meteorologica*; (v) *De Anima*; (vi) *Metaphysica. De Anima*, *Talkhis Kitab al-Nafs*, Arabic edition by A. F. El-Ehwany, Cairo, 1950.

Metaphysics, *Talkhis ma ba'd al-Tabi'ah*; (i) Arabic edition by Mustafa Kabbani, Cairo, n.d.; (ii) *Compendio de metafisica*, Arabic text with Spanish trans., introduction and glossary by Carlos Quiros Rodriguez, Madrid, 1919; (iii) *Die Epitome der Metaphysik des Averroes*, German translation by Simon van den Bergh, Leiden, 1924; (iv) new Arabic edition by Amin Osman, Cairo, 1958 (paraphrasis in *Libros Platonic de Republica*); new English translation by Rosenthal, Cambridge, 1956.

2. The biography of Ibn Rushd by al-Dhahabi, reproduced in Arabic by Renan, p. 456. (See also *Tabaqat al-Atibba'* by Ibn Abi Usaibi'ah; *Kitab al-Mughrib* by Ibn Said, etc.)

3. *Al-Maqqari*, *Nafh al-Tib*, Vol.II.

4. Ibn Khallikan, biography number,660. On the connection between Almohades and the Ismailites, see al-'Aqqad, *Ibn Rushd*, Cairo 1953, pp. 9-15.

5. 'Abd al-Wahid al-Marrakushi, ed. Pozy, pp. 174-75.

6. This is also the opinion of Bouyges. In his preface to *Talkhis Kitab al-Maqlat* (Beyrouth, 1932, p. v.), he says: "C'est an qualite de 'Commentateur' d'Aristote que le philosophe arabe andalous Averroes (1126-1198) est devenu celebre."

7. The only Arabic middle commentary we have is the “Categories.” The text of Ibn Rushd compared with the ancient Arabic translation shows that there is nothing additional. It is neither a summary nor a commentary. It is simply a new edition of the translation put in a new phraseology. Are all the so-called middle commentaries of this type? We leave the question open.

8. E1-Ehwany, *Islamic Philosophy*, Cairo, 1957, pp. 40-42, in which excerpts from al-Kindi's treatise on “First Philosophy” are translated. Compare what al-Kindi says in favour of philosophy with what ibn Rushd sets forth.

9. Mentioned by al-Ansari in Renan's *Averroes et l'averroisme*, pp. 439-43.

10. *Fasl*, Cairo ed., p.2.

11. *Ibid.*, p.18.

12. *Ibid.*, p.19.

13. *Ibid.*, p.8.

14. *Ibid.*, p.10.

15. *Ibid.*, p.15.

16. *Al-Kashf 'an Manahij al-Adillah*, Cairo ed., p. 31. Ibn Rushd mentions in the beginning only four sects; the Sufis have been excluded, although he discusses their method later.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 31. Al-sam' is also called the traditional.

18. *Ibid.*, p.32, and ad passim.

19. *Ibid.*, p.40.

20. *Ibid.*, p.41.

21. *Ibid.*, p.44.

22. *Ibid.*, p.46.

23. *Ibid.*, p.48.

24. *Ibid.*, p.49, (La ilaha illa hu).

25. *Wahdaniyyah*; sometimes translated as “unity” which gives a different meaning, unity being *wahdah*.

26. Ibn Rushd refers to three verses; (i) xxi, 22: “If there were therein Gods besides Allah, then verily both (the heavens and the earth) had been disordered.” (ii) xxiii, 91: “Nor is there any God along with Him; else would each God have assuredly championed that which he created, and some of them would assuredly have overcome others...” (iii) xvii, 42: “If there were other gods along with Him, as they say, then had they sought a way against the Lord of the Throne” (Pickthall's trans.).

27. *Al-Kashshaf*, p.53.

28. *Ibid.*, p.60; Surah xlii, 11: “Naught is as His likeness; and He is the Hearer, the Seer” (Pickthall's trans.).

29. *Ibid.*, p.80.

30. *Ibid.*, p.86.

31. *Ibid.*, p.97. Surah xvii, 93: “Am I aught save a mortal messenger?”

32. Supernatural in the sense of interrupting the course of nature (*khariq*).

33. *Al-Kashshaf*, p.107.

34. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, New York, 1954, p.219.

35. Ibn Rushd, *Kitab al-Nafs*, p. 8.

36. “Material forms” is called in Arabic *hayulaniyyah* or *tabi'iah*. The first term comes from the Greek term *hyle*, the second means physical or natural.

37. *Kitab al-Nafs*, p.12.

38. *Ibid.*, p.13.

39. Ibn Rushd, *Tafahut*, tr. van den Bergh, p. 301.

40. *Kitab al-Nafs*, p.69.

41. *Tahafut*, p.279.

42. *Ibid.*, p.285.

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Kitab al-Nafs*, p.67.

45. *Ibid.*, p.68.

46. *Ibid.*, p.71.

47. *Ibid.*, p.72.

48. Ibid., p.74.
49. Ibid., p.76.
50. Tahafut, p.281.
51. Kitab al-Nafs, p.88.
52. For this summary, see Gilson, op.cit. p.396.
53. Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, New York, 1954, p.102.
54. Bertrand Russell, *Human Knowledge*, London, 1948, p. 472.
55. Quadri, *La Philosophie Arabe*, Paris, 1947, p. 204.
56. Tahafut al-Tahafut, tr. van den Bergh, Vol. I, p. 312.
57. Ibid., p.313.
58. Ibid., p.315.
59. Ibn Rushd wa Falsafatuhu, by Antun Farah, Alexandria, 1903, p. 91. The author began an Arabian Averroism analogous to the Latin Averroism, and wrote articles on Ibn Rushd in his journal al-Jami`ah. When he published this book, he added the discussions of Muhammad 'Abduh and Qasim Amin, the two leaders of recent renaissance in Egypt.
60. Tahafut al-Tahafut, p.318.
61. Ibid., p.324.
62. Ibid., p.318.
63. Ibid., p.319.
64. Talkhis ma ba'd al-tabi'ah, Cairo edition by Osman Amin, 1958.
65. Ibid., p.34.
66. Ibid., p.17.
67. Ibid., pp. 37, 65. On p. 65 Ibn Rushd says: "It is evident that the sensible substances are three: matter, form, and the whole composed of them." Now one would ask, "If sensible substances are composed of matter and form, what do their names denote, the matter, the form, or the composite?" It is clear that the name most probably denotes the whole.
68. Ibid., pp 40-41 He says: "Some assumed that corporeity means divisibility in dimensions, they thought that dimensions are more liable to have the name of substance...". For the doctrine of Ibn Sina, see Ahmed Fouad El-Ehwany's book, *Ibn Sina*, Cairo, 1958, pp. 49-50.
69. Ibid., p.45.
70. Ibid., p.94.
71. Ibid., p.86.
72. Ibid., p.94.
73. Ibid., p.95.
74. Ibid., p.124.
75. Ibid., p.159.

Chapter 29: Nasir Al-Din Tusi

By Bakhtyar Husain Siddiqi

Life

Khawajah Nasir al-Din Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Hasan, an accomplished scholar, mathematician, astronomer, and Shiite politician of the period of the Mongol invasion on the Assassins and the Caliphate, was born at Tus in 597/1201. After receiving early education from his father and Muhammad b. Hasan, he studied Fiqh, Usul, Hikmah and Kalam especially the Isharat of Ibn Sina, from Mahdar Farid al-Din Damad, and mathematics from Muhammad Hasib, at Nishapur. He then went to Baghdad, where he studied medicine and philosophy from Qutb al-Din, mathematics from Kamal al-Din b. Yunus, and Fiqh and Usul from Salim b. Badran.¹

Tusi began his career as an astrologer to Nasir al-Din 'Abd al-Rahim, the Governor of the Isma'elite mountain fortress of Quhistan during the reign of 'Ala al-Din Muhammad (618-652/1221-1255), the seventh Grand Master (Khudawand) of Alamut. His "correspondence"² with the wazir of the last 'Abbasid Caliph, al-Musta'sim (640-656/1242-1258) of Baghdad, was, however, intercepted by his employers, and he was removed to Alamut under close supervision, although he enjoyed there every facility to continue his studies. In 654/1256, he "played"³ the last Assassin ruler Rukn al-Din Khurshah into the hands of Hulagu and then accompanied the latter as his trusted adviser to the conquest of Baghdad in 657/1258.⁴

The Maraghah Observatory

Tusi's chief claim to fame rests on his persuading Hulagu to found the celebrated observatory (rasad khanah) at Maraghah, Adharbaijan, in 657/1259, which was equipped with the best instruments, "some of them constructed for the first time."⁵ Here he compiled the astronomical tables, called Zij al-Ilkhani, which "became popular throughout Asia, even in China."⁶

Besides being dedicated to the advancement of astronomy and mathematics in the late seventh/thirteenth century, this observatory was important in three other ways. It was the first observatory the recurring and non-recurring expenditure of which was met out of endowments, thus opening the door for the financing of future observatories.⁷

Secondly, just as Ibn Tufail (d. 581/1185) turned the Court of Caliph 'Abd al-Mu'min into an enviable intellectual galaxy that promoted the cause of knowledge and wisdom in the West, Tusi made the Maraghah observatory a "splendid assembly"⁸ of the men of knowledge and learning by making "special arrangements"⁹ for the teaching of philo-sophical sciences, besides mathematics and astronomy, and by dedicating the income of endowments to stipends. Thirdly, annexed to the observatory, there was a huge library in which were stored the incorruptible treasures of knowledge looted by the Mongols and Tartars during their invasions on Iraq, Baghdad, Syria, and other territories. According to Ibn Shakir, the library contained more than four hundred thousand volumes.¹⁰

Tusi retained his influential position under Abaqa, Hulagu's successor, uninterrupted until his death in 672/1274.

Works

In an age of widespread political devastation followed by intellectual decline, Hulagu's patronage to Tusi is of singular importance in the history of Muslim thought. The revival and promotion of philosophical sciences in the late seventh/thirteenth century centred round Tusi's personality. To the Persians, he was known as “the teacher of man”¹¹ (ustad al-bashar). Bar-Hebraeus regarded him as “a man of vast learning in all the branches of philosophy.”¹² To Ivanow, he appears an “encyclopedist,”¹³ and Afnan thinks him to be “the most competent ... commentator of Avicenna in Persia.”¹⁴

One also cannot help being impressed by the “remarkable industry” displayed by him in “editing and improving”¹⁵ the translations made by Thabit bin Qurrah, Qusta bin Luqa, and Ishaq bin Hunain of Greek mathematicians and astronomers. Brockelmann has enumerated fifty-nine of his extant works,¹⁶ but Ivanow attributes “something like one hundred and fifty works”¹⁷ to him. The list given by Mudarris Ridwi runs to one hundred and thirteen titles, excluding twenty-one the attribution of which to Tusi is doubtful.¹⁸

Himself an accomplished scholar rather than a creative mind, Tusi's position is mainly that of a revivalist and his works are largely eclectic in character. But even as a revivalist and eclectic, he is not lacking in originality, at least in the presentation of his material. His versatility is indeed astonishing. His manifold and varied interests extend to philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, physics, medicine, mineralogy, music, history, literature, and dogmatics. His important philosophical works are listed below.

1. Asas al-Iqtibas (logic), 1947.
2. Mantiq al-Tajrid, (logic).
3. Ta'dil al-Mi'yar (logic).
4. Tajrid al-'Aqa'id (dogmatics), Teheran, 1926.
5. Qawa'id al-'Aqa'id (dogmatics), Teheran, 1926.
6. Risaleh-i I'tiqadat (dogmatics).
7. Akhlaq-i Nasiri (ethics).
8. Ausaf al-Ashraf (Sufi ethics)
9. Risaleh dar Ithbat-i Wajib (metaphysics).
10. Ithbat-i Jauhar al-Mufariq (metaphysics).
11. Risaleh dar Wujud-i Jauhar-i Mujarrad (metaphysics).
12. Risaleh dar Ithbat-i 'Aql-i Fa'al (metaphysics).
13. Risaleh Darurat-i Marg (metaphysics).
14. Risaleh Sudur Kathrat az Wahdat (metaphysics).
15. Risaleh 'Ilal wa Ma'lulat (metaphysics).
16. Fusul (metaphysics), Teheran, 1956.
17. Tasawwurat (metaphysics), Bombay, 1950.
18. Talkhis al-Muhassal, Cairo, 1323/1905.
19. Hall-i Mushkilat al-Isharat, Lucknow, 1293/1876.

Akhlaq-I Nasiri

Nothing can be farther from truth than the assertion that Akhlaq-i Nasiri of Tusi is a mere “translation”¹⁹ of Tahdhib al-Akhlaq of Ibn Miskawaih. The author was undoubtedly commissioned by Nasir al-Din 'Abd al-Rahim, the Isma'ilite Governor of Quhistan, to translate the Kitab al-Taharat (Tahdhib al-Akhlaq) from Arabic into Persian, but he did not accept the suggestion for fear of “distorting and disfiguring the original.”²⁰

Besides, Ibn Miskawaih's effort is confined to the description of moral discipline; the domestic and political disciplines are altogether missing in his work. These, according to Tusi, are equally important aspects of “practical philosophy” and, therefore, are not to be ignored. With this in mind, Tusi compiled Akhlaq-i Nasiri on the following pattern.

With regard to content, the part on moral philosophy is a “summary”²¹ and not a translation of Kitab al-Taharat, but the form, the arrangement of topics, and the classification of subjects is Tusi's own, which apparently give an air of originality to it.

For the parts on domestic and political philosophy, Tusi is greatly indebted to Ibn Sina²² and Farabi,²³ and yet the mere addition of these two parts which completed practical philosophy (hikmat-i `amali) in all its details, if not any-thing else, justifies Tusi's claim that Akhlaq-i Nasiri was written “not on the style of imitation nor in the spirit of translation, but as an original venture.”²⁴

Ethics

Following Ibn Miskawaih, Tusi regards ultimate happiness (sa`adat-i quswa) as the chief moral end, which is determined by the place and position of man in the cosmic evolution, and realized through his amenability to discipline and obedience. The concept of ultimate happiness is intrinsically different from the Aristotelian idea of happiness which is devoid of the “celestial element”²⁵ and also has no reference to the cosmic position of man.

The Platonic virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice (derived from the trinity of the soul - reason, ire, and desire) and their differentiation into seven, eleven, twelve, and nineteen species respectively, given by Ibn Miskawaih, figure prominently in Tusi's ethics, the only difference being that he reduced the last nineteen to twelve.

But following Aristotle's distinction in the soul of theoretical reason, practical reason, ire, and desire, and, unlike Ibn Miskawaih, he deduces justice from the culture of practical reason²⁶ without disclaiming the Platonic view of the proper and harmonious functioning of the triple powers of the soul. Unlike Aristotle and like Ibn Miskawaih, he ranks benevolence²⁷ (tafaddul) higher than justice, and love (mahabbah) as a natural source of unity, higher than benevolence.

Aristotle conceived of vice as an extreme of virtue either on the side of excess or defect. To Galen, vice was a malady of the soul. The Qur'an, after enunciating the general ethical principles of moderation,²⁸ defines vice as a disease of the heart.²⁹

Ibn Miskawaih, after enumerating the eight generic vices of astuteness and stupidity (safah and balahat), rashness and cowardice (tahawwur and

jubun), indulgence and abstention (sharrahāt and khumud), tyranny and sufferance (jaur and mahanāt), on the Aristotelian pattern, describes at length the causes and cures of fear and sorrow. Ibn Miskawaih does not make it clear whether fear and sorrow constitute the excess or deficiency of ire and desire.

This problem is taken up by Tusi, and he finds out a solution for it, befitting his ingenuity. Disease is the deviation of the soul from equipoise (i'tidal). Aristotle and following him Ibn Miskawaih had thought of this deviation in terms of quantity (kammiyyat) and, therefore, the excess (ifrat) and defect (tafrit) of a state were for them the only two causes of moral diseases.

Tusi for the first time propounded the view that the deviation is not only quantitative but also qualitative, and to this new type of deviation he gave the name of perversion³⁰ (rada'at). Consequently, a moral disease may have one of the three causes: (1) excess, (2) defect, or (3) perversion of reason, ire, or desire. This explains adequately that fear constitutes the perversion of ire, and sorrow, the perversion of desire.

Equipped with the theory of triple causation of the maladies of the soul, Tusi classifies the fatal diseases of the theoretical reason into perplexity (hairat), simple ignorance (jahl-i basit), and compound ignorance (jahl-i murakkab), constituting its excess,-deficiency, and perversion - a classification which cannot be traced to Ibn Miskawaih.

Perplexity is caused by the inability of the soul to distinguish truth from falsehood due to the conflicting evidence and confusing arguments for and against a controversial issue. As a cure of perplexity, Tusi suggests that a perplexed man should, in the first instance, be made to realize that composition and division, affirmation and denial, i. e., the contraries, being mutually exclusive, cannot exist in one and the same thing at the same time, so that he may be convinced that if a proposition is true, it cannot be false, and if it is false, it cannot be true. After his assimilating this self-evident principle, he may be taught the rules of syllogism to facilitate the detection of fallacies in the arguments.

Simple ignorance consists in a man's lack of knowledge on a subject without his presuming that he knows it. Such ignorance is a precedent condition for acquiring knowledge, but it is fatal to be contented with it. The disease may be cured by bringing home to the patient the fact that intellection and not physical appearance entitles a man to the designation of man, and that an ignorant man is no better than a brute; rather he is worse than that, for the latter can be excused for its absence of reason, he cannot.

Compound ignorance is a man's lack of knowledge on a subject coupled with his presumption that he knows it. In spite of ignorance he does not know that he is ignorant. According to Tusi, it is almost an incurable disease, but devotion to mathematics may perhaps reduce it to simple ignorance.

Tusi regards anger (ghadab), cowardice (jubun), and fear (khauf) as the three prominent diseases of ire (quwwat-i difa') on the side of excess, deficiency, and perversion, respectively. In his analysis of fear, especially

the fear of death, and in his elaboration of the seven concomitants and ten causes of anger, he follows Ibn Miskawaih.

Similarly, excess of appetite (ifrat-i shahwat) is caused by the excess of desire while levity (batalat) results from its deficiency, and sorrow (huzn) and jealousy (hasad) constitute the perversion of this power. He defines jealousy as one wishing a reverse in the fortune of another, without longing to possess a similar fortune for oneself. Following Ghazali, he also distinguishes between envy³¹ (ghibtat) and jealousy, by defining the former as a longing to have the fortune similar to the one possessed by another without wishing any reverse to him. Jealousy consumes virtue as fire consumes fuel, but envy is commendable, if directed to the acquisition of virtues, and condemnable if directed to lust for worldly pleasures.

Tusi regards society as the normal background of moral life, for man is by nature a social being, and his perfection consists in evincing this characteristic of sociability towards his fellow-beings. Love and friendship, therefore, constitute the vital principles of his moral theory - a theory in which apparently there is no place for the retired and secluded life of an ascetic.

In a later work, Ausaf al-Ashraf, however, he approvingly writes of asceticism as a stage in mystical life. He claims no mystic experience and makes it clear in the preface that his effort is a purely intellectual appreciation and rational formulation of the mystic tradition.³² Though not a mystic, he is an advocate of a rational treatment of mysticism. He classifies it into six progressive stages, each stage, excepting the last, having six moral states of its own.

The first stage is that of the preparation for the mystic journey (suluk), the necessary requirements of which are faith in God (iman), constancy in the faith (thabat), firmness of intention (niyyat), truthfulness (sidq), contemplation of God (anabat), and sincerity (khulus).

The second stage consists of the renunciation of the worldly connections which obstruct the mystic path. There are six essentials of this stage and these are repentance over sins (taubah), asceticism of the will (zuhd), indifference to wealth (faqr), rigorous practices to subdue irrational desires (riyadat), calculation of virtues and vices (muharabat), harmony between actions and intentions (muraqabat), and piety (taqwa).

The third stage of the mystic journey is marked by aloofness (khalwat), contemplation (tafakkur), fear and sorrow (khauf and huzn), hope (rija'), endurance (sabr), and gratitude to God (shukr).

The fourth stage covers the experiences of the traveller (salik) before reaching the final goal. They are devotion to God (iradat), eagerness in devotion (shauq), love of God (mahabbah), knowledge of God (ma'ri fat), unshakeable faith in God (yaqin), and tranquillity of the soul (sukun).

The fifth stage consists of resignation to God (tawakkul), obedience (rida'), submission to the divine will (taslim), certitude about the oneness of God (tauhid), effort for union with God (wahdat), and absorption in God (ittihad).

In the sixth stage the process of the absorption in God reaches its culmination and the traveller is ultimately lost (fana') into the oneness of God.

Domestic Science

Acknowledging his debt to Ibn Sina,³³ Tusi defines home (manzil) as a particular relationship existing between husband and wife, parents and children, master and servant, and wealth and its possessor. The aim of do-mestic science (tadbir-i manzil) is to evolve an efficient system of discipline, conducive to the physical, social, and mental welfare of this primary group, with father as its controlling head. The father's function is to maintain and restore the equipoise of the family, having in view the particular dispositions of the constituents and the dictates of expediency in general.

Wealth is necessary for achieving the basic ends of self-preservation and race-preservation. For its acquisition, Tusi recommends the adoption of noble professions and the achievement of perfection in them, without ever giving way to inequity, infamy, and meanness. Hair-dressing and filth-clearing are, no doubt, mean and repulsive professions, but they are warranted on the ground of social expediency.

Tusi regards the saving of wealth as an act of prudence, provided it is not prompted by greed or miserliness, and does not cause hardship to the constituents of the home or involve the risk of one's integrity and prestige in society. In matters of expenditure, he stands for moderation in general. Nothing should be spent which may smack of extravagance, display, miscalculation or stinginess.

Not gratification of lust, but procreation and protection of property are the basic aims of marriage. Intelligence, integrity, chastity, modesty, shrewdness, tenderness of the heart, and, above all, obedience to husband are the qualities which ought to be sought in a wife. It is good if she is further graced with the qualities of noble birth, wealth, and beauty, but these are absolutely undesirable if not accompanied with intelligence, modesty and chastity.

Ad-ministrative expediency requires that the husband should be awe-inspiring. He may be benevolent and magnanimous to his wife, but in the wider interests of the home, he should avoid excessive affection, keep her in seclusion, and should not confide secrets or discuss important matters with her. Polygamy is undesirable because it invariably upsets the whole domestic organization. Women are feeble-minded by nature and psychologically jealous of another partner in the husband's love and fortune.

The concession of polygamy is reluctantly given by Tusi to kings because they are in a position to command unconditional obedience, but even for them it is desirable to avoid it as an act of prudence. Man is to the home as heart is to the body, and as one heart cannot give sustenance to two bodies, so one man cannot manage two homes. So great is the sanctity of home in Tusi's eyes that he even advises people to remain unmarried if they are unfit to enforce family equilibrium.

On the discipline of children, Tusi, following Ibn Miskawaih,³⁴ begins with the inculcation of good morals through praise, reward, and benevolent

censure. He is not in favour of frequent reproof and open censure; the former increases the temptation, and the latter leads to audacity. After bringing home to them the rules regarding dining, dressing, conversation, behaviour, and the manner of moving in society, the children should be trained for a particular profession of their own liking. The daughters should be specifically trained to become good wives and mothers in the domestic set-up.

Tusi closes the discussion with the greatest emphasis on the observance of parental rights, as enjoined by Islam. Psychologically speaking, children realize the rights of the father only after attaining the age of discrimination, but those of the mother are evident from the very start of life. From this Tusi concludes that paternal rights are largely mental, while maternal ones are largely physical in character. Thus, to the father one owes unselfish devo-tion, veneration, obedience, praise, etc., and to the mother, the provision of food, clothes, and other physical comforts.

Lastly, servants are to home as hands and legs are to man. Tusi recommends that they should be treated benevolently, so that they may be inspired to identify their interests with those of their master. The underlying idea is that they should serve out of love, regard, and hope, and not out of necessity compulsion, and fear, which affect adversely the interests of the home.

To sum up: Home for Tusi is the centre of domestic life. Income, saving, expenditure, and the discipline of wife, children, and servants, all revolve round the general welfare of the family group as a whole.

Politics

Farabi's *Siyasat al-Madinah* and *Ara' Ahl al-Madinat al-Fadilah* form the first attempt towards the philosophical formulation of a political theory in the Muslim world. He used *`ilm al-madani* both in the sense of the civic science and the science of government. Following him, Tusi has also used *siyasat-i mudun* in both of these senses. In fact, his treatment of the need for civic society (*tamad-dun*) and the types of social groups and cities is largely derived from Farabi's views on the subject.³⁵

Man is by nature a social being. To substantiate his position, Tusi refers to *insan*, the Arabic word for man, which literally means to be gregarious or associating. Since this natural sociability³⁶ (*uns-i taba'i*) is characteristically human, it follows that the perfection of man consists in evincing this character-istic fully towards his fellow-beings. Civilization is another name for this perfection. It is for this reason that Islam has emphasized the superiority of congregational prayers over those offered in isolation.

The word *tamaddun* is derived from *madinah* (city) which means living together of men belonging to different professions for the purpose of helping one another in their needs. Since no man is self-sufficient, everyone is in need of help and co-operation from others. Wants differ from man to man and the same is true of the motives which induce one to co-operation. Some seek co-operation for the sake of pleasure; others are prompted by the consideration of profit; and still others aim at goodness or virtue. This diversity in the causes of co-operation leads to conflict of interests resulting in aggression and in-justice. Thus arises the need for government to keep

everyone content with his rightful lot without infringing the legitimate rights of others.

Administra-tion of justice, therefore, is the chief function of a government, which should be headed by a just king, who is the second arbitrator, the first being the divine Law. He can exercise royal discretion in minor details according to the exigencies of time and occasion, but this too should conform to the general principles of the divine Law. Such a king, Tusi concludes, is the vicegerent of God upon earth, and the physician of the world temper.

As to the qualities of this monarch, he should be graced with the nobility of birth, loftiness of purpose, sobriety of judgment, firmness of determination, endurance of hardship, large-heartedness, and righteous friends. His first and foremost duty is to consolidate the State by creating affection among its friends and disaffection among its enemies, and by promoting unity among the savants, warriors, agriculturists, and business men - the four constituents of the State.

Tusi then proceeds to lay down the principles of war ethics for the guidance of rulers. The enemy should never be taken lightly, however lowly he might be, but at the same time war should be avoided at all costs, even through diplo-matic tricks, without resorting to perfidy.³⁷ But if the conflict becomes inevitable, offensive should be taken only in the name of God and that too with the unanimous approval of the army. The army should be led by a man of dashing spirit, sound judgment, and experience in warfare.

Tusi particularly emphasizes the maintenance of an efficient secret service to have vigilance over the movements of the enemy. Again, diplomacy demands that the enemy should, as far as possible, be taken prisoner rather than killed, and there should be no killing after the final victory, for clemency is more befitting a king than vengeance. In the case of a defensive stand, the enemy should be overtaken by ambush or surprise attack, provided the position is strong enough; otherwise no time should be lost in digging trenches building fortresses, and even in negotiating for peace by offering wealth and using diplomatic devices.

Tusi, being the wazir of Hulagu, was well aware of the degeneration of monarchy into absolute despotism, and, therefore, advised the attendants upon kings to avoid seeking close contact with them, for being in their company is in no way better than associating with fire. No office is more perilous than that of a minister to a king, and the minister has no greater safeguard against the jealousies of the Court and the vagaries of the royal mood than his trust-worthiness.

The minister should guard jealously the secrets confided to him, and should not be inquisitive about what is withheld from him. Tusi was held in great esteem by the Mongol chief, yet he agrees with Ibn Muqna`, that the closer one may be to the king, the greater should he show his respect to him, so much so that if the king calls him "brother," he should address him as "lord."

Source Of Practical Philosophy

According to Tusi, the Qur'anic injunctions relate to man as an individual, as a member of a family, and as an inhabitant of a city or State.³⁸

This three-fold division is evidently suggestive of the classification of practical philosophy into ethics, domestics, and politics by Muslim thinkers. The same is true of the content of these sciences; but it is no less true that later on these disciplines were considerably broadened under the influence of Plato and Aristotle. Shushtery's remark that "ethics was the only subject in which the East did not imitate the West," and that "the only influence which the West could bring to bear upon the East in connection with this subject, was the method of scientific treatment,"³⁹ is more true of domestics and politics, where Greek influence is least traceable, than of ethics proper.

Psychology

Instead of proving the existence of the soul, Tusi starts with the assumption that it is a self-evident reality and as such it needs no proof. Nor is it capable of being proved. In a case like this, reasoning out of one's own existence is a logical impossibility and absurdity, for an argument presupposes an argu-mentator and a subject for argument, but in this case both are the same, viz., the soul.

Nature of the Soul

The soul is a simple, immaterial substance which perceives by itself. It controls the body through the muscles and sense-organs, but is itself beyond the perception of the bodily instruments. After reproducing Ibn Miskawaih's arguments for the incorporeality of the soul from its indivisi-bility, its power of assuming fresh forms without losing the previous ones, its conceiving opposite forms at one and the same time, and its correcting sense-illusions,⁴⁰ Tusi adds two of his own arguments.

Judgments of logic, physics, mathematics, theology, etc., all exist in one soul without intermingling, and can be recalled with characteristic clarity, which is not possible in a material substance; therefore, soul is an immaterial substance. Again, physical accom-modation is limited and finite, so that a hundred persons cannot be accom-modated at a place meant for fifty people, but this is not true of the soul. It has, so to say, sufficient capacity to accommodate all the ideas and concepts of the objects it knows, with plenty of room for fresh acquisition.⁴¹ This too proves that the soul is a simple, immaterial substance.

In the common expression "My head, my ear, my eye," the word "my"⁴² indicates the individuality (huwiyyah) of the soul, which possesses these organs, and not its incorporeality. The soul does require a body as a means to its perfection, but it is not what it is because of its having a body.

Faeulties of the Soul

To the vegetative, animal, and human soul of his predecessors, Tusi adds an imaginative soul which occupies an intermediate position between the animal and the human soul. The human soul is charac-terized with intellect (nutq) which receives knowledge from the first intellect. The intellect is of two kinds, theoretical and practical, as conceived by Aristotle.

Following Kindi, Tusi considers the theoretical intellect to be a potentiality, the realization of which involves four stages, viz., the material intellect ('aql-i hayulani), the angelic intellect ('aql-i malaki), the active intellect ('aql-i bi al-fi'l), and the acquired intellect ('aql-i mustafad). It is at

the stage of the acquired intellect that every conceptual form potentially contained in the soul becomes apparent to it, like the face of a man reflected in a mirror held before him. The practical intellect, on the other hand, is concerned with voluntary and purposive action. Its potentialities are, therefore, realized through moral, domestic, and political action.

The imaginative soul is concerned with sensuous perceptions, on the one hand, and with rational abstractions, on the other, so that if it is united with the animal soul, it becomes dependent upon it, and decays with it. But if it is associated with the human soul, it becomes independent of the bodily organs, and shares the happiness or misery of the soul with its immortality. After the separation of the soul from the body, a trace of imagination remains in its form, and the punishment and reward of the human soul depend upon this trace (hai'at) of what the imaginative soul knew or did in this world.⁴³

The sensitive and calculative imagination of Aristotle apparently constitutes the structure of Tusi's imaginative soul, but his bringing the imaginative soul into relation with an elaborate theory of punishment and reward in the hereafter is his own.

As a matter of tradition handed down from Ibn Sina and Ghazali,⁴⁴ Tusi believes in the localization of functions in the brain. He has located common sense (hiss-i mushtarak) in the first ventricle of the brain, perception (musaw-wirah) in the beginning of the first part of the second ventricle, imagination, in the fore part of the third ventricle, and memory in the rear part of the brain.

Metaphysics

According to Tusi, metaphysics proper consists of two parts, the science of divinity ('ilm-i Ilahi) and the first philosophy (falsefah-i ula). The knowledge of God, intellects, and souls constitutes the science of divinity, and the know-ledge of the universe and the universals constitutes the first philosophy. The knowledge of the categories of unity and plurality, necessity and contingency, essence and existence, eternity and transitoriness also forms part of the latter.

Among the accessories (furu`) of metaphysics fall the knowledge of pro-phethood (nubuwwat), spiritual leadership (imamat), and the Day of Judgment (qiyamat). The range of the subject itself suggests that metaphysics is "of the essence of Islamic philosophy and the realm of its chief contribution to the history of ideas."⁴⁵

God

After denying the logical possibility of atheism and of an ultimate duality, Tusi, unlike Farabi, Ibn Miskawaih, and Ibn Sina, argues that logic and metaphysics miserably fall short of proving the existence of God on rational grounds. God being the ultimate cause of all proofs, and, therefore, the foundation of all logic and metaphysics, is Himself independent of logical proof. Like the fundamental laws of formal logic, He neither requires nor lends Himself to proof. He is an a priori, fundamental, necessary, and self-evident principle of cosmic logic, and His existence is to be assumed and postulated rather than proved. From the study of moral life as well, he

arrives at a similar conclusion and, like Kant in modern times, regards the existence of God as a fundamental postulate of ethics.

Tusi further argues that proof implies perfect comprehension of the thing to be proved, and since it is impossible for the finite man to comprehend God in His entirety, it is impossible for him to prove His existence.⁴⁶

Creatio ex nihilo

Whether the world is eternal (qadim) or was created by God ex nihilo (hadith), is one of the most vexing problems of Muslim philosophy. Aristotle advocated the eternity of the world, attributing its motion to the creation of God, the Prime Mover. Ibn Miskawaih agreed with Aristotle in regarding God as the creator of motion but, unlike him, reasoned out that the world, both in its form and matter, was created by God ex nihilo.

Tusi in his Tasawwurat (written during the period of Isma'elite patronage) effects a half-hearted reconciliation between Aristotle and Ibn Miskawaih. He begins by criticizing the doctrine of creatio ex nihilo. The view that there was a time when the world did not exist and then God created it out of nothing, obviously implies that God was not a creator before the creation of the world or His creative power was still a potentiality which was actualized later, and this is a downright denial of His eternal creativity. Logically, therefore, God was always a creator which implied the existence of creation or world with Him. The world, in other words, is co-eternal with God. Here Tusi closes the discussion abruptly with the remark that the world is eternal by the power of God who perfects it, but in its own right and power, it is created (muhdath).

In a later work, Fusul (his famous and much commented metaphysical treatise), Tusi abandons the above position altogether and supports the orthodox doctrine of creatio ex nihilo, without any reservation. Classifying Being into the necessary and the possible, he argues that the possible depends for its existence on the necessary; and since it exists by other than itself, it cannot be assumed in a state of existence, for the creation of the existent is impossible and absurd. And that which is not in existence is non-existent, and so the Necessary Being creates the possible out of nothing. Such a process is called creation and the existent, the created (muhdath).

Similarly, in Tasawwurat, Tusi agrees with Ibn Sina that from one nothing can proceed except one, and following this principle explains the emanation (sudur) of the world from the Necessary Being after the Neo-Platonic fashion. In Risaleh-i 'Aql, Risaleh-i 'Ilal wa Ma'lulat, and Sharh-i Isharat too, he supports, both logically and mathematically, pluralization in the creative process taken as a whole. But in later works, Qawa'id at-'Aqa'id, Tajrid al-'Aqa'id, and Fusul, he evidently attacks and blows up the very foundation of this principle, once held so dearly by him.

The reflection of the first intellect is said to have created the intellect, soul, and body of the first sphere. This position, he now points out, obviously implies plurality in what is created by the first intellect, which goes against the principle that from one nothing can proceed except one. As to the source of plurality, he further argues that it exists either by the authority of God or without His authority. If it exists by the authority of God, then there is no doubt that it has come from God. If, on the other hand,

it exists without the authority of God, that would mean the setting up of another god besides God.⁴⁷

Again, in Tasawwurat, Tusi holds the view that God's reflection is equivalent to creation and is the outcome of His self-conscious necessity. But in Fusul, he abandons this position as well. He now regards God as a free creator and blows up the theory of creation out of necessity. If God creates out of necessity, he argues, His actions should spring out of His essence. Thus, if a part of the world becomes non-existent, the essence of God should also pass into nothingness; for the cause of its non-existence is conditioned by the non-existence of a part of its cause, the non-existence of which is further deter-mined by the non-existence of the other parts of its cause and so on. And since all existents depend for their existence on the necessity of God, their non-existence ultimately leads to the non-existence of God Himself.⁴⁸

Prophethood

After establishing freedom of the will and resurrection of the body, Tusi proceeds to establish the necessity of prophethood and spiritual leadership. Conflict of interests coupled with individual liberty results in the disintegration of social life, and this necessitates a divine Code from God for the regulation of human affairs. But God Himself is beyond all sensory apprehension; there-fore, He sends prophets for the guidance of peoples. This, in turn, makes necessary the institution of spiritual leadership after the prophets to enforce the divine Code.

Good And Evil

Good and evil are found mixed up in this world. The obtrusiveness of evil is inconsistent with the benevolence of God. To avoid this difficulty, Zoroastrians attributed light and good to Yazdan and darkness and evil to Ahriman. But the existence of two equal and independent principles itself involves a metaphysical inconsistency. Rejecting the view on this ground, Tusi explains away the reality and objectivity of evil with the enthusiasm of Ibn Sina, his spiritual progenitor.

According to Tusi, the good proceeds from God and the evil springs up as an accident ('ard) in its way. The good, for instance, is a grain of wheat thrown into the soil and watered, so that it grows into a plant and yields a rich crop. The evil is like the foam which appears on the surface of the water. The foam evidently comes from the water-courses and not from the water itself. Thus, there is no evil principle in the world, but as an accident it is a necessary concomitant or by-product of matter.

In the human world, evil is occasioned by an error of judgment or through a misuse of the divine gift of free-will. God by Himself aims at universal good, but the veils of the senses, imagination, fancy and thought hang before our sight and cloud the mental vision. Thus, prudence fails to foresee the conse-quences of actions, resulting in wrong choice, which in turn begets evil.

Again, our judgment of evil is always relative and metaphorical, that is, it is always with reference to something. When, for instance, fire burns a poor man's cottage or flood sweeps away a village, a verdict of evil is invariably

passed on fire and water. But in reality there is nothing evil in fire or water; rather their absence would constitute an absolute evil in comparison to the partial evil occasionally caused by their presence.

Lastly, evil is the outcome of ignorance, or the result of some physical disability, or the lack of something which provides for the good. The absence of day is night, the lack of wealth is poverty, and the absence of good is evil. In essence, therefore, evil is the absence of something - a negative, not a positive something.⁴⁹

To the question why a finite sin is dealt with infinite punishment by God, Tusi replies that it is a mistake to attribute either reward or punishment to God. Just as the virtuous, by nature and necessity, deserve eternal bliss and happiness, so the vicious by nature and necessity deserve eternal punishment and despair.

Logic

On logic, his works include *Asas al-Iqtibas*, *Sharh-i Mantiq al-Isharat*, *Ta'dil al-Mi`yar*, and *Tajrid fi al-Mantiq*. The first of these gives a comprehensive and lucid account of the subject in Persian on the lines of Ibn Sina's logic in *al-Shifa'*.

Tusi regards logic both as a science and as an instrument of science. As a science, it aims at the cognition of meanings and that of the quality of the meanings cognized; as an instrument, it is the key to the understanding of different sciences. When knowledge of meanings as well as of the quality of meanings becomes so ingrained in the mind that it no longer requires the exercise of thought and reflection, the science of logic becomes a useful art (*san`at*), freeing the mind from misunderstanding, on the one hand, and perplexity, on the other.⁵⁰

Having defined logic, Tusi, like Ibn Sina, begins with a brief discussion of the theory of knowledge. All knowledge is either a concept (*tasawwur*) or a judgment (*tasdiq*); the former is acquired through definition and the latter through syllogism. Thus, definition and syllogism are the two instruments with which knowledge is acquired.

Unlike Aristotle, Ibn Sina had divided all syllogisms into the copulative (*iqtirani*) and the exceptive (*istithna'i*). Tusi has followed this division and elaborated it in his own way. His logical works are Aristotelian in general outline, but he mentions four⁵¹ instead of three syllogistic figures; and the source of this fourth figure is found neither in the *Organon* of Aristotle nor in any of the logical works of Ibn Sina.⁵²

Review

Tusi, as we have already seen, owes his ethics to Ibn Miskawaih and politics to Farabi; but neither of them reaches the depth and the extent of Ibn Sina's influence over him. Tusi's logic, metaphysics, psychology, domestics, and dogmatics - all are substantially borrowed from him. Besides, his long though casual connection with the Nizari Isma`ilites also influenced his ethical, psychological, and metaphysical speculations.

Historically speaking, his position is mainly that of a revivalist. But from the standpoint of the history of culture, even the revival of the philosophical and scientific tradition, especially in an era of political and intellectual

decline, though marked by tiresome erudition and repetition, is no less important than origination, inasmuch as it prepares the ground for the intellectual rebirth of a nation.

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Notes

1. Zand's article on Tusi in Hilal, November 1956, Karachi.
2. Ivanow, Tasawwurat, p. xxv.
3. Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol. IV, p. 980.
4. After passing into the service of Hulagu, Tusi, in the preface to Zij al-Ilkhani, referred to his connection with the Isma'illites as "casual" (Ivanow, op cit., p xxv) and also "rescinded" the dedication of Akhlaq-i Nasiri to Nasir al-Din 'Abd al--Rahim, his Isma'ili patron at Quhistan (Browne, Literary History of Persia, Vol. II, p. 456)
5. Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol. IV, 981.
6. P. K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 378.
7. Aidin Sayili's article in Yadnameh-i Tusi, Teheran University, Teheran, 1957, p. 61.
8. Hukuma'-i Islam, Vol.II, p.256.
9. Yadnameh-i Tusi, p.66.
10. Browne, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 485.
11. Asas al-Iqtibas, p.YB.
12. Browne, op. cit, Vol. III, p. 18.
13. Ivanow, op.cit., p. lxxv.
14. Afnan, Avicenna, p.244.
15. Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol. IV, p. 981.
16. Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur, Suppl., Vol. 1, pp. 670-76.
17. Ivanow, op. cit., p. xxvi.
18. Asas, pp. YJ-YH
19. Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol. I, p. 933.
20. Akhlaq-i Nasiri, p. 5.
21. Ibid., p.6.
22. Ibid., p.145.
23. Ibid., p.175.
24. Ibid., p.6.
25. Ibid., p.44.
26. Ibid., p.61.
27. Aristotle regards "prodigality" as the extreme of liberality on the side of excess, and hence a positive vice, although it is for him "no sign of meanness, but only of folly" (Nichomachean Ethics, p. 105).
28. Qur'an, ii, 190; v,2.
29. Ibid., ii, 10.
30. Akhlaq-i Nasiri, p.114.
31. Ghazali, Ihya', Vol.III, Chap.III
32. Ausaf al-Ashraf, p.1
33. Akhlaq-i Nasiri, p.145. The treatise referred to by Tusi is Kitab al-Siyasat, ed. Ma'luf, Beirut, 1911.
34. Tahdhib al-Akhlaq, pp.46-54.
35. Ara' Ahl al-Madinat al-Fadilah, pp. 53-85; Siyasat at-Madaniyyah, pp. 1-76.
36. Compare this theory of natural sociability with Hobbes' view of man as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" (Roger, Students' History of Philosophy, p. 245).
37. Compare it with Machiavellian ethics of "force and fraud." "A ruler will perish if he is always good. He must be as cunning as a fox and as fierce as a lion" (Bertrand Russell, A History of Western Philosophy, p. 528).
38. Akhlaq-i Nasiri, p.10.
39. Outlines of Islamic Culture, Vol. II, p. 441
40. Tahdhib al-Akhlaq, pp.3-7.
41. Tasawwurat, p.25.
42. Every body belongs to a soul, according to this argument. In modern times, William James too has used the same argument to prove that every thought belongs to a mind. "It seems as if the elementary psychic facts were not thought, this thought or that thought, but my thought, every thought being owned." W. James, Psychology (Briefer Course), p. 153
43. Tasawwurat, p.23.
44. Ghazali has located retention (hafizah) in the first ventricle (tajwif) of the fore part of the brain, imagination (wahmiyyah) in the middle ventricle of the brain, thought

(tafakkur) in the middle of the brain, and recollection (tadhakkur) in the rear verticle of the brain. (Mizan al-`Amal, p. 25.).

45. Afnan, op.cit., p.106.

46. Tasawwurat, p.8.

47. Fusul, p.18.

48. Ibid., pp. 16-18.

49. Tasawwurat, p.44.

50. Asas al-Iqtibas, p.5.

51. Ibid., p.379.

52. Afnan, op.cit., p.101.

Part 4: The Middle-Roaders

Chapter 30: Al-Ghazali Part 1 - Metaphysics

Chapter 31: Al-Ghazali Part 2

Chapter 32: Fakhr Al-Razi

Chapter 30: Al-Ghazali Part 1 - Metaphysics

A. Introduction

Al-Ghazālī occupies a position unique in the history of Muslim religious and philosophical thought by whatever standard we may judge him: breadth of learning, originality, or influence. He has been acclaimed as the Proof of Islam (hujjat al-Islam), the Ornament of Faith (zain al-din) and the Renewer of Religion (mujaddid).¹ Al-Subki (d. 771/1370) went so far in his estimation of him as to claim that if there had been a prophet after Mohammad, al-Ghazālī would have been the man.²

To be sure he gathered in his own person all the significant intellectual and religious movements of his time and lived over again in the inwardness of his soul the various spiritual phases developed by Islam. He was, in turn, a canon-lawyer and a scholastic, a philosopher and sceptic, a mystic and a theologian, a traditionist and a moralist. His position as a theologian of Islam is undoubtedly the most eminent.

Through a living synthesis of his creative and energetic personality, he revitalized Muslim theology and reoriented its values and attitudes. His combination of spiritualization and fundamentalism in Islam had such a marked stamp of his powerful personality that it has continued to be accepted by the community since his time. His outlook on philosophy is characterized by a remarkable originality which, however, is more critical than constructive. In his works on philosophy one is struck by a keen philosophical acumen and penetration with which he gives a clear and readable exposition of the views of the philosophers, the subtlety and analyticity with which he criticizes them, and the candour and open-mindedness with which he accepts them whenever he finds them to be true.

Nothing frightened him nor fascinated him, and through the philosophies of Aristotle and Plotinus and to their Muslim representatives before him, al-Farabi and ibn Sina. The main trends of the religious and philosophical thought of al-Ghazālī, however, came close to the temper of the modern mind. The champions of the modern movement of religious empiricism, on the one hand, and that of logical positivism, on the other, paradoxical though it may seem, would equally find comfort in his works. The teachings of this remarkable figure of Islam pertaining either to religion or philosophy, either constructive or critical, cannot, however, be fully understood without knowing the story of his life with some measure of detail, for, in his case, life and thought were one, rooted in his own personality. Whatever he thought and wrote came with the living reality of his own experience.

B. Life

B. Life³

Abu Hamid Mohammad ibn Mohammad ibn Mohammad ibn Ta'us Ahmad al-Tusi al-Shafi'i, generally known simply by his nisbah al-Ghazālī,⁴ was born in 450/1058 at Tabaran, one of the two townships of Tus, now in ruins in the neighbourhood of modern Meshed in Khurasan.

Al-Ghazālī was not the first scholar of distinction in his family. There had been another Abu Hamid Ghazālī (d. 435/1043), his grand-uncle, who

was a theologian and juris-consult of great repute,⁵ possibly a model which he might have set before him in his ambitious youth. But he was early exposed to Sufistic influences. His own father was a pious dervish, who, according to al-Subki would not eat anything but what he could earn with his own hands and spend as much time as he could in the company of the divines.

Early left as an orphan, al-Ghazālī was brought up and educated by a pious Sufi friend of his father along with his brother who later made a mark as a great mystic. While still a boy al-Ghazālī began the study of theology and canon-law, with the express desire for wealth and reputation as he himself has acknowledged⁶ first in his native town under Shaikh Ahmad ibn Mohammad al-Radhkhani al-Tusi and then at Jurjan under the Imam Abu Nasr al-Isma‘ili. After his return from Jurjan he stayed for a while in Tus and possibly during this period studied Sufism under Yusuf al-Nassaj and perhaps even undertook some of the Sufistic exercises. At the age of about 20 he proceeded to the Nizamiyyah Academy of Nishapur to study under Abu al-Ma‘ali al-Juwanini known as Imam al-Haramian, the most distinguished Ash‘arite theologian of the day, only fourth from Al-Ash‘ari himself in an apostolic succession of the Ash‘arite teachers.

The curriculum of the Academy included a wide range of subjects such as theology, canon-law, philosophy, logic, dialectics, natural sciences, Sufism, etc. Imam al-Haramian allowed full freedom of thought and expression to his students; they were encouraged to engage in debates and discussions of all kinds. Al-Ghazālī gave early proof of great learning and also of a tendency towards philosophizing. Imam al-Haramian described him as “a plenteous ocean to be drowned” and comparing him with two other students of his observed, “al-Khawafi’s strong point is verification, al-Ghazālī’s is speculation and al-Kiya’s is explanation.”⁷

In his debates with other students he showed great suppleness of mind and a gift for polemics. Not long afterwards he began to lecture to his fellow students and to write books. But al-Ghazālī was one of those rare minds whose originality is not crushed by their learning. He was a born critic and possessed great independence of thought. It was verily during his studentship at the Nizamiyyah Academy of Nishapur that he became impatient of dogmatic teaching and freed himself from the bondage of authority (taqlid) and even showed the signs of scepticism.

During his stay at Nishapur, he also became a disciple to the Sufi Abu ‘Ali al-Fadl ibn Mohammad ibn ‘Ali al-Farmadhi al-Tusi, a student of al-Ghazālī’s own uncle and of the reputed al-Qushairi (d. 465/1074). From al-Farmadhi al-Ghazālī learned more about the theory and practice of Sufism. He even practised rigorous ascetic and Sufistic exercises under his guidance but not to the desired effect. As he himself narrates, he could not attain to that stage where the mystics begin to receive pure inspiration from “high above.”⁸ So he did not feel quite settled down in his mind.

On the one hand, he felt philosophically dissatisfied with the speculative systems of the scholastic theologians and could not accept anything on authority, on the other, the Sufistic practices {583} also failed to make any definite impression on him for he had not received any sure results. There is

no doubt, however, that the increasing attraction of the Sufistic teaching, with its insistence upon a direct personal experience of God, added to al-Ghazālī's critical dissatisfaction with dogmatic theology.

Al-Farmadhi died in 477/1084 and Imam al-Haramain in 478/1085. Al-Ghazālī was then in his 28th year, ambitious and energetic; the fame of his learning had already spread in the Islamic world. He betook himself to the Court of Nizam al-Mulk, the great vizier of the Saljuq sovereign Malik-shah (r. 465/1072 - 485/1092) and joined his retinue of canonists and theologians. Nizam al-Mulk, by his munificent patronage of scholarship, science, and arts had gathered round him a brilliant galaxy of savants and learned men. He used to hold frequent assemblies for debate and discussion and al-Ghazālī soon made his mark at these and was conspicuous for his skill in debate.

Al-Ghazālī's profound knowledge of Muslim law, theology, and philosophy impressed Nizam al-Mulk so much that he appointed him to the Chair of Theology in the Nizamiyyah Academy (established 458 - 60/1065 - 67) at Baghdad in 484/1091. He was then only 34. This was most coveted of all honours in the then Muslim world and one which had not previously been conferred on anyone at so early an age.

As a professor in the Academy, Al-Ghazālī was a complete success; the excellence of his lectures, the extent of his learning, and the lucidity of his explanations attracted larger and larger classes including the chief savants of the time. Soon all Islam acclaimed his eloquence, erudition, and dialectical skill and he came to be looked upon as the greatest theologian in the Ash'arite tradition. His advice began to be sought in matters of religious and political, and he came to wield influence comparable to that of the highest officials of the State. Apparently, he attained all the glory that a scholar could by way of worldly success, but inwardly he began to undergo an intellectual and spiritual crisis.⁹

His old doubts and scepticism began to assail him once again and he became highly critical of the very subjects that he taught. He keenly felt the hollowness of the meticulous spinning of casuistry of the canon-lawyers.¹⁰ The systems of the scholastic theologians (Muta'allimin) had no intellectual certainty, for they depended entirely on the acceptance of their initial dogmatic assumptions on authority. He denounced their over-emphasis on the doctrinal, for it led to a faulty representation of religion by reducing it to a mere mould of orthodoxy and catechism of dogmas.

The disputes of the scholastics amongst themselves he considered as mere dialectical logomachies which had no relation with religious life.¹¹ Al-Ghazālī turned once again to the study of philosophy, this time as diligently and as comprehensively as he could,¹² but found, like Kant, that it was impossible to build theology on reason alone. Reason was good so far as it went, but it could not go very far. The ultimate, the Supreme Truth, could not be reached through it. Becoming keenly aware of the theological limitations of reason, he fell into a state of scepticism and lost his peace of mind. The hypocrisy of his orthodox teaching became unbearable and he found himself to be in a false position.

But all was not lost. He had some assurances that he could be delivered from this state of despair through the Sufi way. It was not that he now discovered that in Sufism lay the possibility for a direct encounter with reality; this fact he had been realizing over a period of exercises, only he had not advanced far enough into them. If he could consecrate himself to the Sufistic way of life through spiritual renunciation, sustained asceticism, and prolonged and deep meditation, he might have received the light he sought. But this meant, in his case, giving up his brilliant academic career and worldly position. He was, by nature, ambitious and had great desire for fame and self-glorification.

On the other hand, he was the most earnest seeker after truth. Besides, he had the anxiety to reach a secure faith which was accentuated by his thought of life after death. He remained in the throes of severe moral conflict and in a spiritual travail for about six months beginning with Rajab 488/July 1095. He collapsed physically and mentally, appetite and digestion failed and he lost his power of speech. This made it easy for him to renounce his post as a professor. He left Baghdad in Dhu'l al-Qa'dah 488/November 1095, ostensibly on a pilgrimage to Mecca. Actually, he went into seclusion to practice the ascetic and religious discipline of the Sufis in order to secure certainty for his mind and peace for his soul. He gave away all his fortune except some "trust funds" to maintain his family and proceeded to Syria.

For two years, from 488/1095 to 490/1097, he remained in strict retirement in one of the minarets of the mosque of the Umayyads in Damascus, undergoing a most rigorous ascetic discipline and performing religious exercises. He moved to Jerusalem for another period of meditation in the mosque of 'Umar and the Dome of the Rock. After paying a visit to the tomb of Abraham at Hebron, he went on pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, and then followed a long period of retreat at different places in holy shrines and mosques and wandering in deserts.¹³ After 11 years, the life of a wandering dervish and scholar came to an end and he finally returned to his native town, Tus, in 499/1105.¹⁴

Of his inner spiritual experiences in their experimental actuality, after he left Baghdad, al-Ghazālī tells us almost nothing except that there were revealed to him in periods of solitude things innumerable and unfathomable. Apparently, these experiences culminated in his acknowledgement of the authority of the Prophet and the complete submission of the truth revealed in the Qur'an. The first public sign of his recovery to orthodoxy is perhaps al-Risalah al-Qudsiyya, written during his retreat in Jerusalem, where in all probability he was before 492/1099, for in Sha'ban of that year Jerusalem was captured by the Crusaders. This has been inserted as Qawa'id al-'Aqa'id in the third chapter of the second book of his massive magnum opus *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* (The Revivification of the Sciences of Religion) in which he began to set down what he had learned through his long periods of self-discipline and meditation.¹⁵ During his wanderings he not only kept on writing other books besides *Ihya'* but also resumed teaching from time to time. He keenly felt it incumbent upon him to crush heresy and disbelief around him and to call people back to the truth and moral power of Islam, both through writing and teaching; he virtually assumed the role of a moral

and religious reformer. He began to devote himself more and more to the study of the traditions of the Prophet and make an extensive use of them for the purposes of edification and spiritual guidance.

On his return to Tus he once again gave himself to the life of retirement and contemplation, but soon Fakhr al-Mulk, the son of his old patron, Nizam al-Mulk, who was the vizier of Sultan Sanjar, urged him to accept the care of theology at the Maimunah Nizamiyyah College at Nishapur which he did after some hesitation in Dhu'l Qa'dah 499/August 1106. But he did not stay there long and retired once more to his home in Tus and established a madrasah at which he began to teach both theology and Tasawwuf. At the instance of the learned and the common people of Baghdad he was once again summoned by the Grand Vizier al-Said to take up teaching in the old Nizamiyyah Academy of Baghdad but al-Ghazālī chose to remain in Tus. There he lived in peace with some personal disciples in charge of his madrasah. Every moment was filled with study and devotion until his death on the 14th of Jamada the second 505/December 19, 1111. It was a beautifully complete and round life in which the end had become a beginning.

C. Method

The most important thing about al-Ghazālī's system of thought is its method which may be described as that of the courage to doubt. The best expression of it is given in his famous auto-biographical work, *al-Munqidh min al-Dalal* (The Deliverer from Error), which he wrote some five years before his death.¹⁶ In *al-Munqidh* al-Ghazālī makes a critical examination of the methods of the various schools of thought current in his time in a manner closely similar to that of Descartes' (d. 1060/1650) in his *Discours de la methods* (1047/1637).

All kinds of knowledge, al-Ghazālī held, should be investigated and nothing should be considered dangerous or hostile. For him, he said that he had embarked on the open sea of knowledge right from his adolescence setting aside all craven caution, "I poked into every dark recess and made an assault on every problem, I plunged into every abyss. I scrutinized the creed of every sect and I fathomed the mysteries of each doctrine. All this I did that I might distinguish between the true and the false. There was no philosopher whose system I did not acquaint myself with, or a theologian whose doctrines I did not examine. If ever I met a Sufi, I coveted to probe into his secretes, if an ascetic, I investigated into the basis of his austerities, if one of the atheistic zindiqs, I groped into the causes of his bold atheism."¹⁷ Such was the courage of al-Ghazālī to know.

He was free from the parochialism of the dogmatic theologians of his day who would rather consign the books of the atheists and philosophers to flames than read them. But prepared though he was to listen to every creed and doctrine, he would accept none and doubt all. For one thing, he came to the conclusion and the greatest hindrance in the search for truth was the acceptance in beliefs on the authority of others and blind adherence to the heritage of the past. He remembered the traditional saying of the Prophet, "Every child is born with a sound disposition (*fitrah*); it is the parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian,"¹⁸ and he was anxious to know

what that sound disposition was before it suffered the impress of the unreasoned convictions imposed by others. Indeed, he wanted to reconstruct the knowledge from its very foundation and was led to make the following reflections, “The search after truth being the aim which I propose to myself I ought to recognize the certitude is the clear and complete knowledge of things, such knowledge as leaves no room for doubt, nor any possibility of error.”¹⁹

As one might foresee, this proposed test for certitude only led him to a series of doubts. No part of the knowledge he had acquired hitherto could stand this rigorous test. He further observed, “We cannot hope to find truth except in matters which carry their evidence in themselves, i.e. in sense-perception and necessary principles of thought, we must, therefore, first of all establish these two on a firm basis.” But he doubted the evidence of sense-perception; he could see as plainly as Descartes did later that they so often deceive us. No eye can perceive the movement of a shadow, still the shadow moves. A small coin would cover any star yet the geometrical computations show that a star is a world vastly larger than the earth.²⁰

Al-Ghazālī’s confidence in sense-perception having been shaken, he turned to the scrutiny of what he called the necessary principles, but he doubted even these. Are ten more than three? Can a thing be and not be at the same time or be both necessary and impossible? How could he tell? His doubt with regard to the sense-perception made him very hesitant to accept the infallibility of reason. He believed in the testimony of sense until it was contradicted by the verdict of reason. Well, perhaps there is above reason another judge who, if he appeared, would convict reason of falsity and if such a third arbiter is not yet apparent it does not follow that he does not exist.

Al-Ghazālī then considers the possibility that life in this world is a dream by comparison with the world to come, and when a man dies, things may come to appear differently to him from he now beholds.²¹ There may be an order of reality different from this spatio-temporal order which may be revealed to a level of consciousness other than the so-called normal consciousness such as that of the mystics or the prophets. Such was the movement of al-Ghazālī’s thought, which though formulated a little artificially in the *Munqidh* was dramatic enough to make out a case for the possibility of a form of apprehension higher than rational apprehension, that is, apprehension as the mystic’s inspiration or the prophet’s revelation.²²

Al-Ghazālī’s method of doubt or sceptical attitude did certainly have its historical antecedents. The Ash‘rites’ system of atomism, by reducing all categories except substance (*jauhar*) and quality (*‘ard*) to mere subjectivities virtually amounted to a form of scepticism.²³ Even earlier than the Mu‘tazilites, like al-Nazzam (d. 231/845) and Abu al-Hudhail (d. 266/840), had formulated the principle of doubt as the beginning of all knowledge.²⁴ But with al-Ghazālī, this was as much a matter of an inherent trait of his intellectual disposition as a principle. One may be tempted to say that his keenly alert and sensitive mind, though, exposed from early youth to all the various intellectual and spiritual movements of the time such as

scholasticism, rationalism, mysticism, etc., was not fully captured by any one single movement.

Ambitious and self-confident, he had been, in a way, playing with the various influences rather than affected exclusively by anyone of them. His restless soul had always been trying to reach for what it had not attained. In his sincere and open search for absolute truth, he possibly remained oscillating for a long time between the moments of belief and disbelief, moments when he might have found comfort in his religious convictions with complete submission to the teachings of the Qur'an and the moments when his doubts and scepticism might have over-whelmed him, clamouring for indubitable certainty.

It is certainly very difficult to map the exact usual method of working out the history of the mental development of an author on the basis of the chronological order of his works is not possible in the case of al-Ghazālī for our knowledge of his works is incomplete, both with regard to their extent and relative order, not to speak of exact dating.²⁵ None of his works, not even al-Munqidh which has often been compared with the Confessions of Augustine allows us a peep into the inward workings of his soul.²⁶ It is merely a schematized description of spiritual development and not an existential study of the "phenomenology" of his soul. He has simply arranged in a logical order what must necessarily have come to him in a broken and sporadic form.

Nevertheless, al-Munqidh is our most valuable source to determine al-Ghazālī's relative position with regard to the various schools of thought around him. He had been moving through them all these years, studying them very closely in his quest for certainty, and of them he now gives us a critical evaluation in a summary fashion. He divides the various "seekers" after truth into four distinct groups: Theologians, Mystics, and Authoritarians (Ta'limites), and Philosophers.

His criticism of the theologians is very mild. He himself had been brought up in their tradition and was thoroughly saturated into their system. It is doubtful if he ever parted company with them completely. He did not cease to be a theologian even when he became a mystic and his criticism of the philosophers were essentially from the standpoint of a theologian. Only he was dissatisfied with the scholastic method of the theologians, for it could not bring any intellectual certainty, their doctrines, he deemed, however, to be correct. His belief in God, Prophecy and Last Judgment were too deeply rooted in him to be shaken altogether, his scepticism with regard to them, if at all, was a temporary phase, he very much wanted a confirmation of these fundamental beliefs either on some philosophical grounds or through some sort of first-hand experience.

So far as the mystics were concerned, al-Ghazālī found himself hardly in a position to level any criticism against them except for the extravagantly pantheistic utterances or antinomian tendencies of some of the intoxicated Sufis.²⁷ They were essentially men of feeling (arbab al-ahwal) rather than men of words (ashab al-aqwal) and he had himself early realized the importance of experiences and states rather than that of definitions and

dogmas. The claims of the mystics he knew could not be challenged by one who lacked their experiences.

Al-Ghazālī held a very poor opinion of the pre-tensions of those whom he called the part of ta‘lim or authoritative instruction also known as Isma‘iliyyah and Batiniyyah.²⁸ Theirs was a kind of Muslim popery or Montanist movement. They renounced reason and held that truth can be attained only by a submissive acceptance of the pronouncements of an infallible Imam. This doctrine indeed was a part of the propaganda of the Fatimid Caliphate (297/909 - 555/1160) with its centre in Cairo and, thus, had its moorings in the political chaos of the day. Al-Ghazālī’s examination of the Ta‘limes was certainly due to his love for thoroughness in search for truth, but perhaps he also wanted to make clear his position with regard to an ideology having political strings behind it.

It was the fourth class of seekers of truth, namely the philosophers, who engaged his attention most of all and troubled his mind more than anyone else.

D. Attack On The Philosophers

1. Introduction

Al-Ghazālī’s critical examination of the method and doctrines of the philosophers is the most exciting and important phase of his intellectual inquiry. He was not all against philosophical investigation as such. His early interest in philosophy is evidenced by the treatise that he wrote on logic such Mi‘yar al-‘Ilm fi Fan al-Mantiq, “The touch-stone of Science in Logic” (quite an elaborate treatise) and Mihakk al-Nazar fi al-Mantiq, “The Touchstone of speculation in Logic” (a smaller work).

In the history of Muslim thought, his is the first instance of a theologian who was thoroughly schooled in the ways of the philosophers, the doctors of Islam before him either had a dread of philosophy, considering it a dangerous study, or dabbled in it just to qualify themselves for polemics against the philosophers. But al-Ghazālī strongly realized that to refute a system before literally inhabiting it and being thoroughly immersed into its very depths was to act blindly. “A man,” he tells us, “cannot grasp what is defective in any of the sciences unless he has so complete a grasp of the science in question that he equals its most learned exponents in the appreciation of its fundamental principles and even goes beyond and surpasses them...”²⁹ In all intellectual honesty he refrained from saying a word against the philosophers until he had completely mastered their systems.

He applied himself so assiduously to the study of the entire sweep of Greek philosophy current in his time and attained such a firm grasp of its problems and methods³⁰ that he produced one of the best compendia of it in Arabic entitled as Maqasid al-Falasifah (The Intentions of Philosophers). This compendium was such a faithful exposition of Aristotelianism that when it came to be known to the Christian scholastics through a Latin translation made as early as 540/1145 by the Spanish philosopher and translator Dominicus Gundisalvus,³¹ it was taken to be the work of a genuine Peripatetic. Albert the Great (D. 679/1280), Thomas Aquinas (d.

673/1274), and Roger Bacon (d. 694/1294) all repeatedly mentioned the name of the author of the “Intentions of the Philosophers” along with ibn Sina and ibn Rushd as the true representatives of Arab Aristotelianism.³² But never did Arab Aristotelianism find a more vigorous foe than al-Ghazālī. His compendium in philosophy was merely propaedeutic to his Tahafut al-Falasifah (The Incoherence of the Philosophers)³³ in which he levelled a devastating attack on the doctrine of the Muslim Peripatetics with a dialectic as subtle as any in the history of philosophy.

Al-Ghazālī, for the purposes of his scrutiny, divided the philosophers into three main groups: the materialists (dahriyyun),³⁴ the naturalists or the deists (tabi‘iyyun), and the theists (ilahiyyun). The materialists completely dispensed with the idea of God and believed that the universe has existed eternally without a creator: a self-subsisting system that operates and develops by itself, has its own laws, and can be understood by itself. The naturalists or the deists struck by the wonders of creation and informed of a running purpose and wisdom in the scheme of things while engaged in their manifold researches into the sciences of phenomena, admitted the existence of a wise Creator or Deity, but rejected the spirituality and immortality of the human soul. They explained the soul away in naturalistic terms as epiphenomena of the body and believed that the death of the latter led to the complete non-existence of the former. Belief in heaven, hell, resurrection, and judgment they considered as old wives’ tales or pious fictions.

Al-Ghazālī discussed the theists at length for them, according to him, held a comparatively more final position and exposed the defects of the materialists and the naturalists quite effectively, thus saving him from doing so for himself. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle he listed as theists but concentrated on Aristotle who criticized all his predecessors and even had refuted his own teacher, excusing himself of this by saying, “Plato is dear to us, and truth is dear, too. Nay, truth is dearer than Plato.”³⁵

As far as the transmission of Aristotle’s philosophy in Arabic was concerned, al-Ghazālī found that none of the Muslim philosophers had accomplished anything comparable to the achievements of al-Farabi and ibn Sina. These two were Aristotle’s most faithful and capable translators and commentators; the works of others were marked with disorder and confusion. Thus, al-Ghazālī finally came to concentrate on that philosophical thought of his day which had emerged from the writings of these two theistic philosophers (particularly ibn Sina) and applied himself to its examination in a systematic manner.

He divided the philosophical sciences into mathematics, logic, physics, politics, ethics, and metaphysics, and went into their details in order to see if there really was anything false or untenable. He was most scientific in his approach, ready to accept whatever he found to be based on the evidence of factual data or susceptible of proof by argument in conformity with the principles of reason. He had least hesitation in accepting as true much of what the philosophers taught with regard to their sciences of mathematics, logic and physics. He even had no serious quarrel with them in the spheres of politics and ethics. The most grievous errors of the theistic philosophers, he found, consisted in their metaphysical views which, unlike mathematical

and natural sciences, were not grounded in compelling reason or positive inquiry but on conjectures and fanciful speculations. Had their metaphysics been so very well grounded in sound reasoning as their mathematical sciences were, they would have agreed amongst themselves on metaphysical issues as they did on the mathematical ones.

But, above all, what al-Ghazālī saw to his dismay was that the philosophies of al-Farabi and ibn Sina, at points did violence without any philosophic warrant or justification to the principles of religion as enunciated in the Qur'an. His empirical and theological spirit revolted very strongly against this. The positive facts of religion could not be sacrificed for sheer metaphysical speculations, nor could they be interpreted externally from the point of view of a pre-conceived system of philosophy. These had to be interpreted intrinsically and reckoned on their grounds.

The Muslim philosophers had failed to take this empirical standpoint. They had also been slow in realizing that notwithstanding a great breadth of outlook that the study of Greek philosophy had brought to the Muslims, there was in the ultimate analysis, quite a gulf between the inspiration of the Qur'anic teachings and the spirit of Hellenism.³⁶ Carried away by their enthusiasm to bring reconciliation between philosophy and religion, al-Farabi and ibn Sina, according to al-Ghazālī, had so compressed the dogmas of Islamic religion within the moulds of Aristotelian and Plutonian systems as to fall either into a morass of inconsistencies to get implicated into heretical positions.

Al this al-Ghazālī brought out with the most accomplished understanding and admirable skill and with a "transcendental" dialectic as subtle as that of Kant's in his *Tahafut al-Falasifah* which indeed is the most important of all his works from the point of view of our present study. Within less than a hundred years it called forth the most stimulating rejoinder (entitled, *Tahafut al-Tahafut*) from the celebrated ibn Rushd and then a rejoinder of a rejoinder from Muslih al-Din Mustafa ibn Yusuf al-Bursawi, generally known as Khuwaja Zadah, a Turkish theologian who died in 893/1488.³⁷ These works, particularly the first two taken together epitomize the essential problems arising from the impact of classical philosophy on the teachings of religion.³⁸

2. Method and Problems of *Tahafut*

It is generally believed that al-Ghazālī wrote his *Tahafut al-Falasifah* during the period of his doubts, but in fact, the work is essentially of a polemical nature and shows in him an odd combination of scepticism and ecstatic assurances. The general effect of the teaching of the philosophers, al-Ghazālī felt, was so ruinous to the religious and moral life of the masses that his will-nigh apostolic humanism revolted against it and he dedicated himself to an open warfare against the philosophers. There is no doubt about the theological inspiration and the polemical spirit of the *Tahafut* but then we add most emphatically that neither of them seriously affects the great philosophical value of his work.³⁹

The modern reader cannot fail to be struck with clear anticipations of Hume (d. 1190/1776), Schleiermacher (d. 1250/1834), Ritschl (d. 1307/1889), and others, and even of the logical positivists of our day in

some of the arguments and the general motif of the Tahafut. His general position may be briefly described to be that the truth of the positive facts of religion can neither be proven nor disproven, and to do otherwise lead the philosophers to take, more often than not, quite non-sensical positions.

Al-Ghazālī assails the philosophers on 20 points⁴⁰ (beginning with creation and ending with the last things) and endeavours to show that their dogmas of the eternity and the everlastingness of the world are false, their assertion that God is the creator of the world, that they fail to prove the existence, the unity, the simplicity and in corporeality of God or God's knowledge either of the universals or of the particulars, that their views with regard to the souls of the celestial spheres, and the spheres' knowledge of the particulars and the purpose of their movement are unfounded, that their theory of causation which attributes effects to the very nature of the cause is false, and that they cannot establish the spirituality of the soul, nor prove its immortality, and, finally, that their denial of resurrection of the bodies in the life hereafter is philosophically unwarranted,. Al-Ghazālī charges the philosophers with infidelity on three counts:

1) eternity of the world,

2) denial of God's knowledge of the particulars, and

3) denial of bodily resurrection.

For the rest, their views are heretical or born of religious indifference. But in all, they are involved in contradictions and suffer from confusion of thought.

The problem which al-Ghazālī considers the most important is that of the eternity (qidam) of the world to which he allots the greatest space, almost a quarter of the book. This has been one of the most challenging and uncompromising problems in the conflict between religion and philosophy. The advocates of orthodoxy considered the eternality of the universe to be the most pernicious thesis of the philosophers and vehemently combated against it. Al-Ash'ari (d. 324/935) wrote a refutation of it in his *Kitab al-Fusul* which probably is the earliest scholastic treatise dealing with this question,⁴¹ and ibn Hazm (d. 457/1064) made the doctrine a dividing line between the orthodox and the heterodox sects.

The orthodox could not possibly concede the philosophers' claim of the eternality of the world, for with them there is nothing eternal but God, all else is created (hadith). To make anything co-eternal with God is to violate the strict principle of monotheism, for that infringes the absoluteness and infinity of God and reduces Him to the position of an artificer - a Demiurge. Virtually, the doctrine drives one to the materialists' position that the world is an independent universe, a self-subsistent system, which develops by itself, and can be understood by itself. All this was hard to swallow for a theologian like al-Ghazālī.

The philosophers like al-Farabi and ibn Sina, as Muslims, did not deny that God is an eternal creator of the universe, but as true Aristotelians believed that God's activity consists merely in bringing forth in the state of actuality the virtual possibilities inherent in the prime matter which was alleged to be co-eternal with Him. This was in conformity with the Aristotelian notion of change not as a passage from non-being into being,

which would make it unintelligible, but as a process by which what is merely “potential being” passes over, through “form,” into “actual being.”⁴² So God, as an eternal creator, constantly combines matter with new forms, He did not create the universe out of sheer nothingness of a definite time in the past. As a corollary they believed in the infinity of time.

Al-Ghazālī, on the other hand, in accordance with the obvious teachings of the Qur’an, firmly holds the position that the world was created by God out of absolute nothingness⁴³ at a certain moment in the past which is at a finite interval from the present. He created not only forms but also matter and time along with them which had a definite beginning and hence, is finite.

The two positions as outlined above readily remind one of Kant’s thesis and anti-thesis in the first antinomy⁴⁴ which present an impossible problem in the sense that conditions requisite for their verification or falsification are de facto impossible. One is tempted to say that al-Ghazālī does not recognize the impossibility of the problem for he clearly proclaims that he does not intend to defend his own position but only to refute that of the philosophers. This is true in general of all other disputations in Tahafut al-Falasifah. The arguments of the philosophers are presented with very considerable plausibility, but the dialectical skill and philosophical acumen the al-Ghazālī employs to refute them are also over-whelming. Though the whole discussion is surcharged with a polemical spirit, yet one cannot fail to see that al-Ghazālī’s standpoint throughout remains highly scientific and logical, he does not succumb merely to verbal quibbles. He clearly says that he does not have any quarrel with the philosophers on the usages of terms.⁴⁵

Al-Ghazālī’s quarrel with the philosophers is because many of their particular arguments are logically false and the various positions that they take in their system as a whole are inconsistent with one another, but above all, because some of their basic assumptions are unfounded. These assumptions, al-Ghazālī does not prove most powerfully, can be demonstrated logically, nor are they self-evident through “intuition.” Such, for example, is the assumption that every event has a cause or that causes produce their effects necessarily.

The Muslim philosophers have accepted these assumptions merely in the dogmatic tradition of Aristotelian philosophy. The faulty reasonings of the philosophers or the inconsistencies in their positions are remediable but not so the uncritical acceptance of their assumptions. Al-Ghazālī for himself is not prepared to accept any part of the Aristotelian system except the first principles of logic and rules of syllogism - nothing else until and unless it has logical coerciveness about it. On the other hand, he is not prepared to reject any of the doctrines of religion until and unless it is disproved with a similar logical rigour and cogency.

Nothing is “possible” in philosophy until it is logically necessary, and nothing is “impossible” in religion until it is logically self-contradictory. Apparently, this is a double-faced criterion to judge variously the truths of philosophic assumptions and those of religious assumptions, but from the point of view of philosophy of religion, it is perfectly justified. Philosopher qua philosopher has to accept the facts of religion as given by religion, the

sin qua non of any empirical philosophy of religion. Thus, in spite of the fact that al-Ghazālī's whole polemic against the philosophers derives its inspiration from the Ash'rite theology, his method remains in its essentials purely philosophical, fulfilling in its own some of the most important requirements of the modern and even contemporary approaches to the problems of the philosophy or religion.⁴⁶

These few observations with regard to al-Ghazālī's method in the Tahafut were necessary before we could enter into some of the detailed arguments which he gives in the refutation of the philosophers' various positions.

3. Eternity of the World

The proof of the philosophers for the eternity of the world starts with certain assumptions with regard to the notions of cause and will. These they take to be true axiomatically:

1. Every effect has a cause.
2. Cause must be the action of some external force other than the effect.
3. Cause or an act of will when executed must immediately lead to the effect.⁴⁷

For the world's coming from non-existence to existence there certainly should have been some cause, this could not be a physical cause for ex hypothesi none yet existed. If this cause arose from an act of the will of God at some specific time, then the divine will itself should have been determined by some other cause. This cause, which led God to change His mind, should certainly be outside His mind, but again this is not possible, for nothing outside Him yet existed. Thus, one is forced to conclude that either nothing ever arose from the being of God, which is not true, for the world does exist or that the world must have been in existence from all eternity, as an immediate effect of His eternal will.

Al-Ghazālī declines to subscribe to any one of the assumptions as stated above and shows that belief in the origination of the world from the eternal will of God at a specific moment of time as chosen by Him involved no violation of the fundamental principles of logic. The assumptions of philosophers, that every effect has a cause and that a cause is a force external to its effect, do not have a logical coerciveness about them. It is quite legitimate to believe that God's will does not have any cause or at least that this cause does not lie outside His will but in itself. Similarly, it is not logically necessary that the effect should follow a cause immediately, for it is not logically contradictory to hold the notion of "a delayed effect."

It is possible to think that God's will is eternal and yet an object of that eternity of God's will and the eternity of the object of His will. God, for example, can eternally will that Socrates and Plato should be born at such and such a time and that the one should be born before the other. Hence, it is not logically illegitimate to affirm the orthodox belief that God eternally willed that the world should come into being at such and such a definite moment in time.

The philosophers point out a real difficulty here. According to them, it is impossible to find out a differentiating principle for God's eternal choice of a particular moment for the creation of the world. All moments of time are

completely similar; how is it possible to choose between two completely similar things? Why, in short, was the world not created earlier or later than when it was created? One of the answers to this is that there arises no question of the world's being created earlier or later, for time yet was not, time, too, was created along with the creation of the world, i.e. both world and time are finite in duration. Al-Ghazālī adds further that should one assume with the philosophers that time is infinite, then at any present moment that infinite time has brought to an end and time that has an end is not infinite but finite. It is noteworthy that this is exactly the argument given by Kant in the thesis of his first antinomy.

Al-Ghazālī's real standpoint, however, is that God just arbitrarily chose one particular moment rather than another for the world's coming into being. We need ask no more about this choice, for God's will is completely undetermined. His will does not depend upon distinctions in the outside world, for it is the true significance of God's will. God chooses a particular moment for the creation of the universe as He chooses a particular direction for the movement for the creation of the universe as He chooses a particular direction for the movement of the spheres of the (Ptolemaic) heaven, in some cases from east to west, in others from west to east (as described in the Aristotelian astronomy) even when the reversal of directions would have made no difference. There is no way to explain God's choice either in one case or the other.

The difficulty posed by the philosophers arises because of their misguided attempt to understand the nature of divine will altogether in the terms of man's will. Certainly, God's will is not like men, as God's knowledge is not like man's knowledge. So far as God's knowledge is concerned, the philosophers avowedly admit that it differs from man's knowledge in so many respects that in their final position it becomes indeed an inexplicable mystery. God, according to them, possesses the knowledge of all the universals without this knowledge necessitating plurality, with its being additional to His essence, and without its multiplying in proportion to the multiplicity of the objects known.

Some of them assert after Aristotle that God is the knower, the knowledge, and the known, and that the three are one. Should we judge all this by what applies to man's knowledge, it will be found to be an utter impossibility. While the philosophers admit that God's knowledge cannot be compared with man's knowledge, they insist upon drawing a comparison between God's will and man's will. This is exactly what al-Ghazālī calls the incoherence of the philosophers and, according to him, their thought-system taken as a whole reveals quite a number of such incoherencies. Indeed the philosophers' very notion of eternal creation is self-contradictory and meaningless. Is it sense to speak of a creation of that which exists eternally? If God and the prime matter are both eternal existents, does it make sense to say that one is the cause of the other? Can the relation between two existents *qua* existents be regarded as a casual one?

Further, the philosophers put different constructions upon their notions of space and time. They assume time to be infinite and space to be finite, and yet consider time to be co-implicant of movement in space. Al-Ghazālī

insists rightly that one who believes in the finitude of space must in consistency assume the existence of finite time, particularly when to one another.⁴⁸ And if they insist that it is impossible to think of empty space they should equally realize that it is impossible to conceive of an empty time.

These are just a few of the inconsistencies of philosophers pointed out by al-Ghazālī in the course of his disputation with regard to the eternity of the world and they could be mentioned here only briefly, considering the space at our disposal. One further point of criticism may, however, be added for its importance in the history of modern philosophy. Prior to its origination, the philosophers hold, the world must have either been possible (mumkin), or impossible (mumtani‘), or necessary (wajib). It is impossible that it should have been impossible, for that which is impossible in itself is never brought into existence. Again, it is impossible for it to have been necessary in itself, for that which is necessary in itself is never deprived of existence.

It follows then that the existence of the world must have always been possible in itself; otherwise it would never have come to be. This possibility cannot inhere in possibility itself, or in the agent, or in non-substratum, for the possible is that which is in the process of becoming actual. Hence, the subject of possibility in some sub-stratum which is susceptible of possibility and this is matter. Now, this matter cannot be considered to have been originated, the possibility of its existence would have preceded its existence. In that case, possibility would have existed in itself, but possibility existing in itself is unintelligible. Hence, matter is eternal and it is only the passing over of the forms to matter which is originated.

In rebutting this highly sophisticated argument of the philosophers al-Ghazālī points out in Kantian fashion that possibility, like impossibility, is a purely subjective notion to which nothing need correspond in reality. If possibility requires an existent to correspond to it, but avowedly there is no existing thing in concrete ability to which impossibility may be referred. Hence, possibility, like impossibility, is merely a concept, the assumption of an existing sub-stratum to which his concept may be related is to have a metaphysical jump from mere thought to actual existence and to commit as we understand now an ontological fallacy.

4. Theory of Emanation

The entire argument of philosophers with regard to the eternity of the world is, thus, full of contradictions and unproved assumptions, but the most manifest of their inconsistencies and the sheer baselessness of their assumptions become signally conspicuous when they come to explain the origination of the world from the being of God in the terms of Plutonian Theory of Emanation. Plotinus considers the world to be a necessary outflow from the being of God like light from the sun⁴⁹ or better as Spinoza described it later like the properties of a triangle from a triangle.⁵⁰ Muslim philosophers' subscription to this view according to al-Ghazālī is the clearest evidence that their verbal avowal of creation is a mere dissimulation and duplicity. The problem of emanation with the philosophers, however, arises because of their over-emphasis on the abstract unity and absolute perfection of God.

Creation through an act of volition implies both will and knowledge, and these cannot be predicated of God as attributes apart from His essence without doing violence to His absolute unity. Further both will and knowledge are limitations - will in particular implies a deficiency in a being who wills, for it means that he desires or wants to have that which he lacks. Hence, philosophers elaborated an ingenious theory of emanation which contrives to erect a cosmological staircase between the stable stillness of God's unity and the changing and varied multiplicity of the world. This staircase is constituted of a finely graded series of intelligence superior to that of man had the overwhelming authority of Aristotle⁵¹ and further it was possible and even fascinating to conceive of them in terms of angels as described by philosophers.

The emanation of Muslim philosophers in the final analysis worked under two governing principles: First, it is unthinkable that, from God, who is a pure unity anything could precede except that which is itself a unity. This gave rise to the formula - from one only one can follow. Secondly, being has two aspects, it is either necessary (wajib) or possible (mumkin), and it is either essence (mahiyah) or existence (anniyah). In the case of God alone are essence and existence given to them by God.

The first emanation from the existence of the First Principle (al-mabda' al-awwal), the Necessary Being (al-wajib al-wujud), i.e. God is the first intelligence (al-'aql al-awwal) which is numerically one. Its existence is possible in itself and necessary through the First Principle; further, it knows its own essence as well as the essence of the First Principle. From its twofold existence and twofold knowledge springs a multiplicity of knowledge and existence. The first intelligence, in fact, has three kinds of knowledge. Of the First Principle, of its own essence in so far as it is necessary, and of its possible being. One might ask, "What is the source of this three-foldness in the first intelligence when the principle from which it emanates is one?" The answer is, "From the First Principle only one precedes, i.e. the essence of the first intelligence by which it knows itself."

Now, its knowledge of its principle is evidently necessary, although this necessity is not derived from that principle. Again, being possible in itself the first intelligence cannot owe its possibility to the First Principle but possesses it in its own self. Though only one should proceed from one, yet it is possible that the first effect may come to possess not from the First Principle but by itself certain necessary qualities which express some relation or negation of relation and give rise to plurality. Thus, from the three kinds of knowledge possessed by the first intelligence emanate three beings, but only one from each kind. As it knows its principle there proceeds from it a second intelligence; as it knows its essence three proceeds from it the first soul of the highest sphere (which is the ninth heaven), and as it knows itself as possible in itself there proceeds from it the body of that sphere.

In a similar fashion from the second intelligence emanates the third intelligence, the soul of the stellar sphere and the body of that sphere. From the third intelligence emanates the fourth intelligence, the soul of the sphere of Saturn and the body of that sphere. From the fourth intelligence emanates

the fifth intelligence, the soul of the sphere of Jupiter and the body of that sphere. Now there are, according to the then current Ptolemaic system, only nine celestial spheres in all, including the sphere of the fixed stars, all in concentric circles with earth at the centre.⁵² So, starting from the First Principle the emanations proceed on until the last or the tenth intelligence appears and with it the last sphere of the moon and its soul.

The tenth intelligence, also called the active intellect (al-'aql al-fa'al),⁵³ acts in our world. It produces the first matter (hayula) which is passive and formless but which is the basis for the four elements which all creatures arise. The composition and decomposition of the elements is the cause of general and corruption of all bodies. But all these transformations take place under the influence of the movement of the spheres. As the active intellect is the producer of matter, so it is the dispenser of forms, dator formarum (wahib al-suwar). It gives to each matter its proper form and it also gives each body a soul (which, in fact, is its form) when the body is ready to receive.

Thus, active intellect is also the source of the existence of human souls. But the human soul does not feel at home in its physical abode and yearns for nothing less than the First Principle Himself. Hence, it starts its spiritual journey back to the original source, traversing through the various stages of the intelligence of the spheres. This is a rounded though brief description of the emanationistic world-view so enthusiastically elaborated by the Muslim philosophers, by ibn Sina, for example, in both his major works on philosophy, viz., Kitab al-Shifa' and Kitab al-Najat and by al-Farabi in his al-Madinat al-Fadilah.⁵⁴

Determinism implicit in the emanationistic world-view is so opposed the theistic voluntarism of the Ash'arite world-view that al-Ghazālī launches the most vehement attack against it. His strictures against this grand cosmological construction made out of so many various foreign imported ideas are the strongest and the bitterest of all others that may be found in the entire Tahafut. All this, he inveighs, is arbitrary reasoning, idle speculation, a wild guess, darkness piled upon darkness. If someone says he saw things of this kind in a dream, it would be inferred that he was suffering from some disease. Even an insane person could not rest satisfied with such postulates.⁵⁵ In our times, to say nothing of the scientists, F. R. Tennant, who may be described as the eminent "religious positivist" holds the theory of emanation more or less on the same estimation.⁵⁶

Al-Ghazālī's criticism of the emanationistic argument consists in showing, on the one hand, that it fails to account for the multiplicity and composition in the universe and, on the other that it does not at all succeed in safeguarding the absolute unity of God. If the formula ever so glibly repeated that from one only one proceeds should be observed strictly logically, then all the beings in the world would be units, each of which would be an effect of some other unit above it, as it would be the cause of some other unity below it in a linear fashion. But, in fact, this is not the case. Every object, according to the philosophers themselves, is composed at least of form and matter.

How does a composite thing such as body then come into existence? Does it have only one cause? If the answer is affirmative, then assertion that only one proceeds from one becomes null and void. If, on the other hand a composite thing has a composite cause, then the same question will be repeated in the case of this cause so on and so forth until one arrives at a point where the compound necessarily meets the simple.

This contact between the compound effect and the unitary cause wherever it occurs would falsify the principle that only one proceeds from one. Now, strictly speaking, all the existents in the universe are characterized by composition and only the First Principle, i.e. God alone can be said to possess true simplicity or unity, for in Him alone there is the complete identity of essence and existence. This would lead us necessarily to the conclusion that both the principle of “only one form” fails to account for the composition and multiplicity which is apparent in the universe or that even God does not possess a genuine unity. But the philosophers cloak the issue with their artificial subtleties and the grandiose constructions they put upon their emanationistic foundations.

What earthly and even unearthly relation are there, al-Ghazālī questions rightly, between the first intelligence’s having a possible existence and the body of the sphere of the second intelligence which is supposed to proceed from it? Neither logic nor experience can substantiate this wild supposition and as such it is no more than pure non-sense. Further, how is it possible that from two kinds of knowledge of the first intelligence, that is, knowledge of the First Principle and that of itself, should arise two kinds of existence, first, that of the second intelligence and, second, that of the soul of the highest sphere? How can the knowledge of a thing lead to the existence of a thing (as we would now put it after Kant) without committing an obvious ontological fallacy? How can the knower emanate from the knowing, al-Ghazālī rightly wonders, as does F. R. Tennant, and like him deplors that of all the people, philosophers should believe in such mythical non-sense.⁵⁷

Even if the triplication with which the philosophers characterize the first intelligence should be taken for granted (which indeed cannot be done) it fails to account for all that they want to deduce from it. The body of the highest sphere, which according to them proceeds only from one aspect of the essence of the first intelligence, is surely not unitary in nature but composite and that in three ways. First, as stated above, it is composed of form and matter, as indeed all bodies are according to the philosophers’ own admission. True, form and matter always exist conjointly in all bodies, yet they are so different from each other that one cannot be the cause of the other. Hence, form and matter of the body of the highest sphere require two principles for their existence and not one. A unitary aspect of the three-fold character of the first intelligence fails to account for it.

Secondly, the body of this sphere has a definite size. Its having a definite size is something additional to the bare fact of its existence. Certainly, it could have come into existence with a different size, bigger or smaller than what it is. Hence, over and above that which necessitated the existence of

the body of the sphere, there should be an additional cause to account for the adoption of this particular size.

Thirdly, in the highest heaven, there are marked out two points as its poles, which are fixed. This fact was admitted by the philosophers in accordance with the Aristotelian astronomy. Now, either all the parts of the highest sphere are similar, in which case it is impossible to explain why two points should be chosen in preference to all the others as its poles, or they are different, some of them possessing properties which are not possessed by the others. Hence, we require yet another aspect in the first intelligence to be the case for differences in the various parts of the highest sphere which differences alone could justify the choice of two points therein to be the poles.

In view of what has been stated above, it is sheer “ignorance” on the part of philosophers to hold that the body of the highest sphere has emanated only from one aspect of the essence of first intelligence. Either the principle that only one proceeds from one is true, in which case the first intelligence which is not a mere triplication but a whole multiplicity remains unexplained, or this principle is an empty formula signifying nothing, and, thus, making it possible that “many may proceed from one.” In the latter case the infinite variety and plurality of the world can be directly derived from the unity of God and there is no need to erect an emanationistic staircase between Him and the world.

The above principle certainly collapses when we come to the second intelligence, for it is supposed to be, in one of its aspects, the cause of the sphere of the fixed stars. These are 1200 or so (according to the then Greek or Arab astronomers’ reckoning)⁵⁸ and are different in magnitude, shape, position, colour, and in respect of their special function in nature etc. Each one of these factors in every single star needs a separate cause as its determinant (murajjih). All this necessitates a bewildering multiplicity in the second intelligence and also indirectly pre-supposes the same in the first intelligence in so far as the latter is the emanative cause of the former.

Should the above arguments fail to convince the philosophers, there is another way to show that the first intelligence is more than a mere triplication. Is the self-knowledge of the first intelligence identical with its essence or other than it? It is not possible that it should be identical, for knowledge is not the same thing as that which is known. Hence, the first intelligence is not a triplication but a quadruplicity, to wit, its essence, its knowledge of itself, its knowledge of the First Principle, and its being a possible existent by itself. To all these four aspects there can be added yet another, namely, its being a necessary being whose necessity is derived from an external cause. All this proves that the first intelligence has five aspects and not three, as arbitrarily assumed by philosophers. Whether the first intelligence has five aspects or three, it certainly is not of purely unitary character according to the philosophers’ own admission. This shows that there is something in the effect which is not present in the cause, i.e. the First Principle, and this is scandalous.

Not only does the formula that only one proceeds from one become shame-facedly invalid right at the outset, but further, according to al-

Ghazālī, the entire emanationistic line of argument does great violence to the concept of God's unity and, thus, nullifies the very purpose for which it is adopted. There is no reason, according to him, that the very arguments which the philosophers advance to establish the triple character of the first intelligence should not be applied to God Himself.

One of the aspects of plurality in the first intelligence according to philosophers is its being a possible existent by itself. It may be asked, "Is its being possibly identical with its existence or other than it?" If it is identical, no plurality would arise from it. If it is other than its existence, then why should it not be possible to say that there is as much plurality in the First Principle, i.e. God Himself, for He only has existence but is necessary in His existence? The necessity of existence as such is other than existence itself. In truth, existence may be considered to be a generic concept divided into necessary and possible. If one specific difference is an addition to existence per se in one case, it should be considered so in the other, also. If the philosophers insist that the possibility of existence is other than existence in the case of the first intelligence, through the same argument they should admit that necessity of existence is different from existence in the case of the First Principle.

Similarly, al-Ghazālī asks, "Is the first intelligence's knowledge of its principle identical with its existence and with its knowledge of itself or other than two?" If it is identical, then there will be no plurality in its nature. But if it is other than the two, then such a plurality exists also in the First Principle, for He too knows Himself as well as what is other than Himself. Thus, al-Ghazālī contends that either there can be no plurality in the first intelligence or if it is there, then it is for the same reasons in the First Principle too, and, therefore, the beings characterized by diversity and plurality would directly proceed from Him. Al-Ghazālī forces this conclusion upon the philosophers through their own logic.

For himself al-Ghazālī believes that, "The First Principle is an omnipotent and willing agent, He does what he wills, ordains as He likes, and He creates the similar and dissimilar things alike, whenever and in whatever manner He wills? The impossibility of such a belief is neither a self-evident truth, nor a matter of inferential knowledge."⁵⁹ Al-Ghazālī frankly and rightly confesses that the problem of God's relation with the universe in the final analysis remains every beyond the comprehension of human understanding. The inquiry into the manner in which the world proceeded from God's will, he urges, is "an idle and aimless venture." The modus operandi of God's creative activity is wholly inexplicable and this inexplicability is inevitable; indeed, if it were explicable, it would not be "creative." Explanation in all its forms establishes some connection or similarity with what is experienced, whereas God's creativity is an activity through which the experients and what is experienced by them come to be. How can human comprehension envisage the mode of God's creation when it is itself the creature of the act?

Philosophers try to avoid the charge of plurality with regard to the First Principle so far as His knowledge is concerned by affirming that the First Principle does not know anything other than Himself and His self-

knowledge is the same thing as His essence, so the knowledge, the knower, and the object of knowledge are all one in Him. This indeed was originally the position of Aristotle according to whom God is describable as thought thinking itself. In Aristotle's own words "...it must be itself that thought thinks, and its thinking is thinking on thinking."⁶⁰ This view of God as reflective thought, reflective in the literal sense of turning back upon itself, has been subjected to severe criticism by al-Ghazālī.

According to him, self-knowledge of a literal and direct sort is impossibility. He argues with Plotinus that self-knowledge even in the case of God implies an epistemological subject-object dualism and, therefore, would impede the philosophers' thesis of the absolute unity of the First Principle. Not only the Aristotelian conception of God as thought thinking thought does not absolve the philosophers from introducing plurality in the First Principle, but further lends them into many more difficulties with regard to their emanationistic world-view. Consider, for example, the relative positions of the First Principle and the first intelligence in terms of their knowledge. The First principle which is the emanative cause of the first intelligence does not know anything other than Himself, whereas the latter knows not only its cause but further knows itself and three effects which proceed from it, viz., the second intelligence, the soul of the highest sphere, and the body of that sphere.

It is a strange theory, al-Ghazālī observes, which makes the effect have the knowledge of its cause but not the cause of its effect. The necessity of a cause possessing the knowledge of its effect is more compelling than the necessity of an effect possessing the knowledge of its cause. In fact, the philosophers make the first intelligence superior to and "nobler" than the First Principle in so far as from the First Principle, only one thing proceeds, while from the first intelligence three things proceed. Further, the First Principle does not know what proceeds from Him; in fact, He does not know anything other than Himself, while the first intelligence knows itself, its cause, and its three effects. Al-Ghazālī feels as bitter at the Aristotelian conception of God as thought thinking itself that he goes to the length of saying that the philosophers by limiting God's knowledge to the sphere of self-knowledge virtually reduce Him to the status of the dead.⁶¹

5. God's Knowledge of the Particulars

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Al-Ghazālī is very emphatic and uncompromising with regard to the all-circumscribing knowledge of God, "God knows the creeping of the black ant upon the rugged rock in the dark night, and He perceives the movement of the mote in the midst of the air."⁶³ Ibn Sina also subscribes to the view that God knows everything, "Nothing, not even as much as a particle of dust in the heavens or on the earth, remains hidden from His Knowledge."⁶⁴ Yet, interestingly enough, al-Ghazālī does not hesitate to level a charge of infidelity against him on this score for, according to ibn Sina, though God knows all the particulars, He knows them only in a universal way. This means that God cannot have the perceptual knowledge of particular things but knows them by way of a universal knowledge.

Ibn Sina realizes the difficulty of his position and so adds that the understanding of it needs great intellectual subtlety. The reasons that he advances to deny perceptual knowledge to God are fully recognized by al-Ghazālī. Perceptual knowledge is characterized both temporally and spatially, whereas God is above both time and space and so it is not possible to ascribe perceptual knowledge to Him. A particular event occurs at a particular moment of time and suffers change with the passage of time. Change in the object of perception implies a change in the content of perception itself which obviously leads to change of perception implies a change in the content of perception itself, which obviously leads to change in the subject of perception, i.e. in the percipient himself.

But change in God is unthinkable, therefore, perception of a particular event is not possible for Him. Similarly, to distinguish between one particular object and another in space is possible only through the senses and implies a special relation of a sensible thing to the percipient as being near to or far from him or in a definite position, and this is impossible where God is concerned. Hence, it is not possible for God to have perceptual knowledge of the particulars. His knowledge can only be that which rises above the particular “now’s” and the particular “here’s,” that is to say, is of conceptual or universal nature.

Ibn Sina’s position as briefly outlined above seems to be very well grounded in sound reasoning and is quite understandable, yet, according to al-Ghazālī, it is so pernicious to religion that it altogether demolishes the entire edifice of religious Law (hence his charge of infidelity). The theory implies that God cannot know any new state that emerges in John; He cannot know that John has become an infidel or a true believer, for He can know only the disbelief or the belief of man in general in a universal manner and not in specific relation to individuals.

Yes, God cannot know Mohammad’s proclaiming himself a prophet at the time when he did. The same will be true of every other prophet, for God only knows that among men there are some who claim prophecy, and that such and such are their attributes; but He cannot know a particular prophet as an individual, for that is to be known only by the senses. There is certainly a point in what al-Ghazālī says here for it is really difficult to show any relation between the temporal and the timeless, yet the above criticism of his is a little wide of the mark for it is based on a misinterpretation of ibn Sina’s position. By the statement that God does not have perceptual knowledge of the particulars, ibn Sina does not mean to say that God does not have the knowledge of the particulars or that His knowledge is restricted only to that of the universals or general concepts. Ibn Sina insists that God does have knowledge of the particulars; only this knowledge comes to Him not through sensuous perception but through intellectual perception, not from moment to moment but eternally.

Ibn Sina starts with the Aristotelian conception that God has only self-knowledge but adds emphatically that His self-knowledge necessarily implies knowledge of all the existent things in the universe in so far as He is the principal or the ultimate source of them all. There is not a single existent particular which does not proceed from Him directly or indirectly and the

existence of which does not become in some way necessary through interaction of the various causes but ultimately all these have to be traced back to the First Cause. God, the First Cause, has the full pre-science of the working of the various causes which originate from Him and knows the effects produced by them and the time involved in their occurrence and recurrence.

Thus, God knows the particular events even when they occur to a single individual under specific conditions and at particular times in so far as they are fully explicable in terms of general laws and all-pervasive causal nexus. This may be illustrated with reference to an analogous human situation. An astronomer who has full understanding of the general laws governing the movements of the heavenly bodies can, through his proper calculations, describe the various phenomena such as the particular eclipses and the conjunctions of the stars. The analogy, however, though helpful, cannot be stretched to an identity, for, strictly speaking, there is nothing in our experience to compare with divine knowledge. Our knowledge is liable to error and it is fragmentary, whereas God's knowledge is infallible and all-embracing, so much so that the whole universe is known to Him in one single congruous manifestation which is not affected by time.

God is immediately aware of the entire sweep of history regarded as an ordered string of specific events in an eternal now. Further, God not only knows but is also the very ground of the objects that He knows. The universe proceeds from the essence of God verily because of His knowledge of the universe; the ideal representation of the universal system is the very cause of its emanation. Had God not known the universe with all its concrete particularities, the universe would never have come into being. This indeed is a very original and quite ingenious theory with regard to God's knowledge of the particulars.

Yet, it is undoubtedly of highly speculative nature and so al-Ghazālī is all out to bring quite an arsenal of criticism against it with a dialectical analyticity and rigour not incomparable to those of the logical positivists of our own day. He is not at all prepared to accept any of the assumptions of the philosophers until and unless they should either be adaptable in the form of analytical propositions or be verifiable through some kind of intuitive experience. The attribution of knowledge to God as it is, but particularly that of "the other," cannot go without jeopardizing to some extent at least His absolute unity and simplicity which otherwise are so emphasized, rather over-emphasized by philosophers. Above all, the theory, like any of its kind, fails to relate in any satisfactory manner the eternity of God's knowledge with the transiency of human experience, which relation indeed is the very crux of religious experience.

So far as it suffers from the pre-suppositions of the intellectualistic-deterministic world-view of philosophers, al-Ghazālī simply has no patience with it. For one, it suggests a block universe such as makes little allowance if any at all, even for the exercise of God's will. These are just a few general remarks to indicate the mode and the various lines of al-Ghazālī arguments against the philosophers; they may now be substantiated and amplified by listing some of the actual points of his criticism.

The statement that God's self-knowledge necessarily implies the knowledge of all the existent particulars in the universe cannot be logically validated, nor can it be verified on the basis of any analogous human experience. God's self-knowledge and His knowledge of others do not have the relation of logical entailment, for it is possible to imagine the existence of the one without imagining the existence of the other at the same time. Looking to our own experience it would be wrong to claim that man's knowledge of what is other than himself is identical with his self-knowledge and with his essence.

It may be said that God does not know other things in the first intention (al-wajh al-awwal) but that He knows His essence as the principle of the universe from this His knowledge of the universe follows in the second intention (al-wajh al-thani), i.e. by way of a logical inference. Now, the statement of the philosophers that God knows Himself directly only as the principle of the universe, according to al-Ghazālī, is as much an arbitrary assumption as the earlier statement and is exposed to exactly the same kind of criticism. According to the philosophers' own admission, it would suffice that God should know only His essence; the knowledge of His being the principle of the universe is additional to it and is not logically implicated in it. Just as it is possible for a man to know himself without knowing that he is "an effect of God" (for his being an effect is a relation to this cause), even so it is possible for God to know Himself without knowing that He is the principle or cause.

The principle or cause is merely the relation that He bears to His effect, the universe. His knowledge of His relation to the universe is not by any means entailed by His knowledge of His own essence. Do not the philosophers themselves in their doctrine with regard to the attributes of God affirm the possibility only of negative or relational statements about God on the plea that negations or relations add nothing to His essence?⁶⁵

The knowledge of the relation, therefore, cannot be identical with the knowledge of the essence. Hence, the philosophers' assumption that God knows His essence and thereby also knows Himself as the principle of the universe, remains unproved logically and unverified experientially. Al-Ghazālī raises many more points of criticism of a similar nature which fully bring out the "positivistic" and "analytic" thrusts in his thought. This type of criticism should have been sufficient with al-Ghazālī, for it served his purpose of refuting the philosophers quite effectively, but his religious calling and persuasion impel him to launch many more attacks on philosophers. They do not aim so much at the complete smashing of the philosophers' arguments as to bring out either inconsistencies in their various positions or more so the difficulties of a religious nature in accepting them.

Al-Ghazālī fully appreciates the motive of the philosophers in elaborating their theory with regard to the nature of God's knowledge of the particulars, which is no other than that of safe-guarding the immutability and the unity of God. Granted that God's knowledge remains unaffected by change, for it rises above the distinction of "is," "was" and "will," yet how can God's knowledge remain unaffected by the multiplicity and diversity of

the objects that He knows? How can it be claimed that knowledge remains unitary even when the things known are unlimited in number and are different, for knowledge has to conform to the nature of the things known? If the change in the objects of cognition necessarily pre-supposes change in the subject, multiplicity and difference in the former pre-suppose the same in the latter.

“Would that I could understand,” says al-Ghazālī, “how an intelligent person can allow himself to disbelieve the oneness of the knowledge of a thing whose states are divisible into the Past, the Present and the Future, while he would not disbelieve the oneness of knowledge which relates to all the different genera and species. Verily, the difference and the disparity among the diverse genera and species are more marked than the difference with the division of time. If that difference does not necessitate multiplicity and difference, how can this do so either?”⁶⁶

Though the philosophers ascribe omniscience and fore-knowledge to God, they make His knowledge a sort of mirror which passively reflects in an eternal now the details of already finished sequence of events just as we in a particular present moment have the memory of a fixed and inalterable sequence of past events. Thus, God’s knowledge of time is restricted only to the relational aspect of time, i.e. that of the sequence of before and after or of earlier and later. There is, however, another aspect of time which typically characterizes the human experience and forms its very essence, namely, that of the ever-fleeting, ever-changing now. This is the time which is born afresh at every moment, the time in which the future is perpetually flowing through the present into the past.

Now, according to the philosophers’ thesis of God’s knowledge as explained above, in God’s eternal being there can be no counterpart of the experience of this living time in which we humans move and act. God may know, for example, that my acts of religious devotion are subsequent to my religious conversion, but He cannot know now that I am acting or have acted in such and such a way. So God in His supra-temporal transcendence would remain impervious to my religious solicitations, for I am eternally doomed to the tyranny of this ever-fleeting, ever-trembling now.⁶⁷ Should this be true and should I come to realize it, I may cry in despair, “Of what use is God to me!” Such is the catastrophe to which the philosophers’ over-emphasis upon the eternity and changelessness of God’s knowledge leads through its very incumbent logic.

The problem of the relation of the eternity of God to the temporality of human experience is almost an impossible problem and the philosophers of all times have stumbled over it. It may suggested, however, that God is transcendental of both time and change and yet in some mysterious way immanent in it. Viewed superficially, this seems to be an apparent logical contradiction, but, adds al-Ghazālī, the philosophers dare not point this out for they themselves have affirmed with regard to their doctrine of the eternity of the world that the world is eternal and yet at the same time subject to change.

The statement that God not only knows the universe but, further, that this knowledge is the very ground and the cause of the universe, though very

significant in itself, is made by the philosophers essentially within the framework of their deterministic-emanationistic world-view and as such, according to al-Ghazālī, involved them into an embarrassing predicament. There is no sense in talking about the knowledge of an agent when his action is a “natural action” in the sense that it follows from him necessarily and is not the result of his volition. We do not say that knowledge of light possessed by the sun is the requisite condition for the emanation of light from the sun, and this, in fact, is the analogy which the philosophers have employed to explain the procession of the world from the being of God.

Further, according to them, the universe has not been produced by God all at once but has preceded from Him though “the intermediaries and the other consequences and the consequences of those consequences all indirectly connected with these intermediaries.”⁶⁸ Even if it should be granted that the necessary procession of something from an agent requires the knowledge by him of that which proceeds, God’s knowledge at best would be only that of the first intelligence and of nothing besides. That which proceeds from something which proceeds from God may not be necessarily known to Him. Knowledge is not necessary in the case of the indirect consequences of volitional actions; how can it be so in the case of the indirect consequences of necessary actions? Thus, the assertion of philosophers that God’s knowledge is the very ground that cause of that which He knows loses its entire significance because of its moorings in the Plutonian scheme of emanationism.

Through a strange irony of logic the emanationistic argument of philosophers, instead of building a staircase between God and the world, creates almost an unbridgeable gulf between the two. It certainly leads to the conclusion that God is directly related only to the first intelligence, i.e. the first item of the series of emanations between God and the world. On the other hand, the world is directly related only to the lowest end of the series. Further, the argument makes the world an independent and autonomous system, which can be understood by itself because of its insistence on an inexorable causal necessity such as, pervades the entire scheme of things. This conception of a through and through causally determined universe rooted in the intellectual-emanationistic metaphysics of the philosophers was so radically different from his own dynamic-occasionalistic world-view grounded in the theistic-voluntaristic metaphysics of the Ash‘arite tradition that al-Ghazālī declared a complete parting of the way with them. Their world-view, al-Ghazālī declared a complete parting of the way with them.

Their world-view, al-Ghazālī made it clear, militates particularly against the fundamental Islamic doctrine of God’s providence and omnipotence, and leaves no possibility for the happening of miracles such as turning of a rod into a serpent, denaturing fire of its capacity to burn, revivification of the dead, splitting of the moon (all so clearly referred to in the Qur’an).⁶⁹ There certainly is no scope for the exercise of God’s free-will in a universe in which there is no real becoming and in which the future is already given in the present as its necessary effect. Nor, in view of the reign of the inexorable law of causal necessity in such a universe, is there any possibility for the

miracles, except those which can be “naturalized” though scientific explanation.

6. Causality

Al-Ghazālī’s desire to vindicate the truth of the religious position mentioned above led him to make a highly critical and acute analysis of the philosophers’ concept of causality. The analysis, which bears a strikingly close similarity to that of Hume’s, brings⁷⁰ out clearly the most remarkable originality and acumen of al-Ghazālī’s thought. The problem that engaged him at the outset of his inquiry with regard to the 17th disputation in the Tahafut is the problem of the alleged necessity of the causal connection as maintained and insisted on by philosophers. He challenges the validity of this necessity right as he opens the discussion.⁷¹ “In our view,” he asserts, “the connection between what are believed to be the cause and effect is not necessary.”

The reason that he offers for the justification of his position is that the relation between cause and effect is not that of logical entailment. The affirmation of the one does not imply the affirmation of the other, nor does the denial of the one imply the affirmation of the other, nor does the denial of the one imply the denial of the other. Neither the existence nor the non-existence of one is necessarily pre-supposed by the existence or the non-existence of the other. The relation between quenching of thirst and drinking, satiety and eating, burning and fire, or light and sunrise, etc. is not a necessary relation, for in no case does the one term logically imply the other. There is nothing logically contradictory in assuming that fire may not burn and drinking may not quench thirst, and so on.

The alleged necessity of the causal connection is not logically warranted because through no amount of logical reasoning can we deduce the effect from the cause. At best, it is based on observation or experience. We observe that objects succeed one another or that similar objects are constantly conjoined. Now, this proves succession, not causation, or conjunction, not connection. The fire which is an inanimate object has no power to produce the effect of burning, “observation shows only the one is with the other and not that it is by it,” i.e. the effect happens with the cause and not through it (‘indahu la bihi)I.⁷² The notion of necessity is valid only in the case of logical relations such as identity, implication, disjunction, etc. In the sphere of mere natural relations necessity has no scope.

In the order of nature, unlike the order of thought, we deal merely with the contingent and logical entities which remain unrelated to each other, only the ideas of them get connected in our mind by association. The relation between fire and burning is not a necessary relation, for it does not belong to the realm of necessity but to that of possibility such as may happen or may not happen depending on the will of God. “It is only,” al-Ghazālī enunciates clearly, “when something possible is repeated over and over again (so as to form the norm), that its pursuance of a uniform course in accordance with the norm in the past is indelibly impressed upon our minds.”⁷³

Thus, if there is any semblance of necessity in the order of natural relations such as that of cause and effect, it is merely because the two terms

which in nature remain extrinsic to each other, through constant repetition become conjoined in our consciousness. Causal necessity is just the habit of our mind: it is merely a psychological necessity in this that its denial like the latter does not involve us in a logical impossibility. Hence, the miracles, such as the fire not burning the body of Abraham when he was thrown into it, are not impossible to think. Al-Ghazālī insists that the denial of miracles can be justified only when it should be proven that they are logically impossible and where such proof is not forthcoming their denial is sheer ignorance and obduracy.

It is interesting to note further that al-Ghazālī, in the course of his discussion of the principle of causality and the possibility of miracles, comes close to propounding the notion of the composite nature of a cause and also that of plurality of causes. Cause he understands to be the sum total of many contributory factors, some of which are positive while others negative, and all of which have to be considered in conjunction. Take the case of a man seeing a coloured object, he could possess sound vision, he should open his eyes, there should be no obstruction between the eyes and the object of vision, the object should be a coloured one, the atmosphere should not be dark but have sufficient light, etc. Any one condition by itself cannot be taken to be a cause and a single negative condition such as the blindness of the person or the darkness of atmosphere may make the cause non-operative though logically not impossible.

The relation of cause and effect is based on observation and observation as such does not rule out the possibility that the same effect might follow some cause other than the apparent one. Even where we do recognize that there are many causes for the same effect, we cannot limit the number of causes just to those which we ourselves have observed. So there are many causes for the same effect⁷⁴ and a cause is a sum total of many conditions. In view of this it is not possible to negate an effect on the negation of one particular cause but on the negation of all the various causes. This latter possibility, however, is emphatically discounted by al-Ghazālī so far as we are concerned, for it pre-supposes a complete and exhaustive knowledge of all the causes and their conditions, which knowledge we humans can never come to possess. Moreover, causes by themselves are inert entities, will and action cannot be attributed to them. They act only through the power and agency of God.⁷⁵

The only will is the absolutely free-will of God which works unconstrained by any extraneous law or incumbency except the self-imposed law of contradiction. Thus, the things to which God's power extends include mysterious and wonderful facts such as "elude the discernment of human sensibility." Indeed, God's power extends to all kinds of logical possibilities such as turning of a rod into a serpent, or the revivification of the dead. For the same reason, it is not impossible for Him to bring about the resurrection of bodies in the life hereafter and all other things with regard to paradise and hell, which have been mentioned in the Qur'an.⁷⁶ To deny them is both illogical and irreligious.

One may add that, according to al-Ghazālī, not only all miracles are natural but also all nature is miraculous.⁷⁷ Nature, however, seems to be

pervaded by a causal nexus only because, as a rule, God does not choose to interrupt the continuity of events by a miracle; it is possible, however, that He might intervene at any moment that He deems fit. Such a standpoint may make one sceptical of the phenomena of nature, but it may equally lead one to an acute mystical sense of the presence of God to all things. Scepticism of this kind and mysticism need not always be anti-thetical - the former may as well lead to the latter. This indeed is said to have had happened in the case of al-Ghazālī.

Notes

1. 1. For al-Ghazālī's role as a renewer of religion, cf. Abu al-Hassan 'Ali, *Tarikh-i - Da'wat-u 'Azimat, Azamagr, 1375/1955, Part 1, pp. 111 - 81 (Urdu)*; Shibli Nu'mani, *al-Ghazālī, Lahore, 1956, pp. 279 - 352 (Urdu)*. Cf. also A. W. Zuhuri (Tr. and Comp.), *Makatib-i Imam Ghazālī (Letters of Imam Ghazālī), Karachi, 1949 (Urdu)*. See al-Munqidh, English translation by W. Montgomery Watt in his *Faith and Practice of al-Ghazālī, London, 1953, p. 75*. All references to al-Munqidh are to this translation unless mentioned otherwise.

2. Al-Subki (Taj al-Din), *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyah al-Kubra, Cairo, 1324/1906, Vol 4, p. 101*. See also note No. 10, below.

3. The principal sources of the life of al-Ghazālī are his auto-biographical al-Munqidh, S. Murtada Iuihaf al-Sadah, *Cairo, 1311/1893, Vol. 1 (Introduction) pp. 2 - 53, and al-Subki, op. cit., Vol 4, pp. 101 - 82*. For the account of al-Ghazālī's life in English, cf. D.B. MacDonald, "Life of al-Ghazālī with Special Reference to His Religious Experience," *Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 20, 1899, pp. 71 - 132 (Important)*; M. Smith, *al-Ghazālī: The Mystic, London, 1944, Part 1, pp. 9 - 104*; W.H.T. Gairdner, *An Account of Ghazālī's Life and Works, Madras 1919*; S.M. Zwemer *A Moslem Seeker after God, London, 1920*. An account in Urdu can be found in Shibli Nu'mani, *op. cit., pp. 19 - 73*; M. Hanif Nadawi, *Afkar-i Ghazālī, Lahore, 1956, Introduction, pp. 3 - 113*; 'Abd al-Salam Nadawi, *Hukama'-i Islam, Azarngarh, 1953, pp. 386 - 408*.

4. Known as Algazel, sometimes as Abuhamet to Medieval Europe. Some of the Western scholars even now use Algazel (e.g. Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy, London, 1946, p. 477*) or its other variants al-Gazal, Algazali, Gazali, etc. Whether al-Ghazālī should be spelt with a double or single "Z" has been a matter of long and strong dispute. More general practice both with the contemporary Muslim writers and the Orientalises now is to use a single "Z". Cf. Hanif Nadawi, *op. cit. pp. 3 - 6*; D.B. Macdonald, "The name al-Ghazzali," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1902, pp. 18 - 22*; S. M. Zwemer, *op. cit., pp. 63 - 65, 140 - 43*.

5. Known thereafter as al-Ghazālī al-Kabir. He is reported to have taught canon-law (Fiqh) to al-Farmadhi, the Sufi guide of our own al-Ghazālī; cf. Macdonald, "Life of al-Ghazālī - ... "JAOS, p. 126; also al-Subki, *op. cit., Vol, 3, p. 36*.

6. Cf. al-Subki, *op. cit., Vol 4, p. 102*.

7. *Ibid., pp. 103, 106*

8. Cf. ibn Khallikan, *Wafayat al-A'yan (English trans. by de Slane), Paris, 1842 - 1871, Vol. 11, p. 122*.

9. It may be recalled that not only theology but medicine and philosophy were also taught in Baghdad and the school of Baghdad from the first was characterized by its scientific spirit and freedom of thought. The city of Baghdad had more than 35 libraries for the use of scholars and the place attracted all sorts of people belonging to different sects and schools.

A few generations back there flourished the association of the Ikhwan al-Safa; its meetings were attended by Abu al-'Ala' al-Ma'arri, said to be the arch-heretic in Islam who died (at the age of 84) only a year before al-Ghazālī was born, Al-Qushairi, the teacher of Farmadhi, yet himself a student of al-'Ash'ari in theology died in 465/1074 when al-

Ghazālī was a boy of 17, but then probably this is also the date of the death of Nasir-i Khusrau, the Isma‘ili propagandist and philosopher.

‘Umar Khayyam (d. c. 517/1123), the great mathematician, astronomer, and the agnostic philosopher (the Lucretius and the Voltaire of Islam in one), enjoyed with al-Ghazālī the patronage of Nizam al-Mulk. Only a year after al-Ghazālī’s appointment in the Nizamiyyah Academy, Nizam al-Mulk died (485/1092) as the first victim of the Isma‘ili assassins headed by al-Hassan ibn al-Sabbah (483/1090 - 518/1124), the second victim was no less than the king himself (Malik shah) only after an interval of 35 days.

10. He was himself a master of the canon-law and compiled works of the very highest order on it, e.g. al-Basit, al-Wasit, al-Mustasfa, etc. According to Sayyid Murtada (d. 1206/1791), al-Wajlz was commented on by later scholars for about 70 times and that had al-Ghazālī been a prophet he could have claimed this work as his miracle. Al-Ghazālī, on his part, considered canon-law only to be ‘ilm al-mu‘dmalah (knowledge dealing with practical affairs of life) and not ‘ilm al-mukashfah (gnosis of Ultimate Reality); cf. M. Hanif Nadawi, op. cit., pp. 92 - 111.

11. For al-Ghazālī’s criticism of Kalam, cf. his Ijam al-‘Awamm ‘an ‘Ilm al-Kalam and Risalah fi al-Wa‘z wa al-I’tiqad. He, however, approved of Kalam to explain and defend faith; cf. his al-Iqtisad f al-I’tiqad.

12. See note No. 30 below.

13. He is also reported to have gone to Egypt visiting Cairo and Alexandria. There is a good deal of uncertainty about the various places that he visited and the time and order of his journeying (except the first two years of his stay in Syria). These extensive travels must have added considerably to his experience of life in general, to his first-hand contact with the cultures of many lands, and to his involvement with other religions - hence his humanism. For his understanding of Christian religion and involvement with it, cf., J.W. Sweetman, Islam and Christian Theology, London, 1955, Part 2, Vol. 1, pp. 22 - 23, 262 - 309; also L. Massignon in Revue des Etudes islamiques, 1933.

14. The period of al-Ghazālī’s rather unduly long retreat coincides with the time when Barkiyaruq ruled as the great Saljuq. In the civil war between Barkiyaruq and his uncle Tutush, al-Ghazālī is reported to have sided with the cause of the latter. To this may be added the fact that in Syria where al-Ghazālī spent some years Tutush, (r. 487/1094 - 488/1095) and his sons were the kings (488/1095 - 511/1117). All this is strongly suggestive of some possible political complications. Cf. Macdonald, JAOS, pp. 71 - 132.

15. An analytical account of the contents of Ihya’ can be found in D.M. Donaldson’s Studies in Muslim Ethics, London, 1953, pp. 159 - 65. Cf. also Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, London, 1953, Vol. 5. pp. 508a, 509b. A large part of Ihya’ has also been analyzed by Miguel Asin Palacios in his Algazel, dogmatic, moral, asetica, Zaragoza, 1901. Ihya is divided into four parts each comprising ten books. Part 3, Book 2; Part 2, Book 7, Part 4, Book 6, have been translated into English by D. B. Macdonald in his Religious Attitude and Life in Islam Chicago, 1909, Lectures 7 - 10, Journal of Royal Asiatic Society, 1901 - 1902, and Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. 2, pp. 677 - 80, respectively.

Translation of some of the extracts from Parts 3 and 4 can also be found in Syed Nawab Ali’s Some Moral and Religious Teachings of al-Ghazālī, Lahore, 1946, pp. 28 - 133. Hans Bauer has made a German translation of some of the “Books” of Ihya’, cf. his Islamische Ethik (Three Parts), Halle, 1916, 1917, 1922. For a complete Urdu translation of Ihya’, cf. M. Ahsan, Madhaq al-‘Arifin, four vols. Lucknow, 1955 (seventh edition).

16. Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal as an auto-biographical work is unique in the whole of Arabic literature for “the keenness and the fullness of its self-revelation.” It is the most often referred to book and has been translated and edited a number of times. C. Brockelmann in his Arabische Litteratur, Weimar, 1899, Vol 1, pp. 419 - 26, has given 69 items. For some of the important translations of Munqidh, cf. Encyclopaedia of Islam, Leiden, 1913 - 34, vol. 2, p. 149. For Urdu translations see Hafiz M. Anwar ‘Ali, Lecture Imam Ghazālī, Lahore, 1311/1893, 111 pp. (with an Introduction, pp. 3 - 108).

17. Cf. al-Munqidh, pp. 20, 21

18. Bukhari (23:80, 93), also the Qur’an (30:30), (25:1). The term fitrah came to be used by the philosophers in the sense of lumen naturale.

19. Cf. al-Munqidh (English translation by Claud Field, The Confessions of al-Ghazālī, London 1909, p. 13). This is exactly the first of the four rules mentioned by Descartes in his

Discours de la methode and the second rule of his *Regulae ad Directionem Ingenii* composed as early as 1038/1628; cf. E.S. Haldane and G. R.T. Ross (Trs.), *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, Cambridge, 1911, Vol. 1, pp. 3, 92, 191.

20. Haldane and Rose, op. cit., p. 101, where Descartes makes similar observations.

21. Cf. *Ihya'*, Cairo, 1340/1921, Vol. 4, p. 19 where al-Ghazālī refers to a tradition, "People are asleep, when they die, they awake." Cf. also *Kimiya-i Sa'adat* (Urdu tr. by M. 'Inayat Allah), Lahore, n.d. pp. 738, 740.

22. It is, however, a serious though widespread error of interpretation to consider al-Ghazālī to be an anti-intellectualist. Macdonald's statement in his article "al-Ghazālī" in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* that "he taught intellect should only be used to destroy trust in itself," is very unfortunate. So also is Iqbal's allegation that al-Ghazālī denied dynamic character to thought and its self-transcending reference to the infinite (cf. S. M. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Oxford, 1934, pp. 4 - 6).

Al-Ghazālī very definitively and explicitly brings out both these aspects of thought in his analysis of intelligence in the *Mishkat al-Anwar* (cf. English translation by W. H. T. Gairdner, Lahore, 1952, pp. 83 - 91). This section is the *Mishkat* is quite noteworthy in view of the general opinion that the *Mishkat* was written by al-Ghazālī at a time very close to the writing of al-Munqidh (probably after it), a period in the spiritual history of al-Ghazālī during which he came to advocate the supremacy of intuition over reason as against an earlier phase say that of *Ihya'*, when he ranked them as equal and made reason go parallel with intuition (e.g. Part 1, Book 1, Chapter Seven).

True, in al-Munqidh al-Ghazālī makes a delimitation of the province of the human intellect by denying it finality in the field of transcendental problems, yet it would not be altogether right to say that Ghazalian epistemology is a mere intuitive critique of knowledge. Keeping other works of his in view, it may be said that his philosophy is mainly directed to the vindication that intellect and intuition must at the end supplement each other. Cf. M. Umaruddin, *The Ethical Philosophy of al-Ghazālī*, Aligarh, 1949, Vol. 1, Part 3, pp. 228 - 259.

23. Cf. M. Fakhry, *Islamic Occasionalism*, London, 1958, pp. 25 - 48; also D.B. Macdonald, "Continuous Recreation and Atomism," *Isis*, Vol. 9, 1927, pp. 326 - 44.

24. Cf. S. M. Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, London 1908, pp. 25 - 48; also D.B. Macdonald, "Continuous Recreation and Atomism," *Isis*, Vol. 1927, pp. 84, 90

25. For the chronological order of al-Ghazālī's works, cf. Louis Massignon *Recueil de textes*, p. 93, and Introduction to Muirice Bouyges' edition of *Tahafut al-Falsifah*, Beirut 1927. An allied and quite important, though very difficult, problem for a student of al-Ghazālī is the authenticity of his works. Cf. M. Asin Palacios, *La espiritualidad Algazal*, Madrid 1934, Vol. 4, pp. 385 - 90, and W. M. Watt, "The Authenticity of the Works Attributed to al-Ghazālī," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1952, pp. 24 - 45, along with his article "A Forger in al-Ghazālī's *Mishkat*?" in the same *Journal* of the year 1949, pp. 5 - 22. Cf. also Shibli Nu'mani, op. cit., pp. 80 - 84, and M. Hanif Nadawi, op. cit., pp. 54 - 58.

A consolidated study of these references shows that there are in all 13 works with authenticity of which is a matter of dispute besides three considerable sections of works otherwise admitted to be authentic. The "problem of authenticity" requires very careful further investigation.

26. Cf. Henrich Frick, *Ghazalis Selbstbiographie, ein Vergleich mit Augustins Konfessiomen*, Leipzig, 1919, esp. p. 80.

27. See next chapter.

28. Isma'ilites or Batinites were known as Ta'limites in Khurasan. Al-Ghazālī wrote quite a number of books against them, those mentioned in al-Munqidh (p. 52) are: 1) al-Mustazhiri, 2) *Hujjat al-Haqq*, 3) *Mufassil al-Khilaf*, 4) *Durj*, 5) *Qustas al-Mustaqim*. The first work is the most elaborate of them all. For the doctrines of the Ta'limites, of Hanif Nadawi, *Sargudhasht-i Ghazālī*, pp. 19 - 54, also the article "Isma'iliya," *Encyclopedia of Islam*.

29. al-Munqidh, p. 29. Cf. also preface to *Maqsaid al-Falsifah*.

30. Ibid. Al-Ghazālī's statement that , in spite of his arduous duty of teaching and engagement in writing he could master all the sciences of the philosophers unaided by an instructor within the span of two years, is perhaps a story to be taken with a grain of salt.

31. The date 1506 CE for the Latin of Maqasid al-Falsifah given in the Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th edition vo. 2, p. 188b, is incorrect. This is the date when it was printed for the first time in Venice.

Gundisalvus' translation under the title Logica et Philosophia Algazelis Arabes was made in collaboration with John of Seville to whose name it is sometimes ascribed. It might have been the case that John translated it from Arabic into Castilian and Gundisalvus from Castilian into Latin; cf. G. Sarton, Introduction to the History of Science, Baltimore, 1931, Vo. 2, pp. 169 - 72.

32. This confusion was caused by the fact that the Latin translation of Maqasid in circulation among the seventh/13th century Scholastics did not contain the short introduction in which al-Ghazālī speaks disparagingly of the philosophers' metaphysics and makes it clear that his ultimate purpose to make an objective and dispassionate study of it is to refute it in Tahafut al-Falsifah. It may be added that al-Ghazālī again mentions his intention to write the Tahafut in the ending paragraph of the book. How this was overlooked by the Latin scholastics is anybody's guess.

33. Maurice Bougyes in Introduction to his edition of Tahafut al-Falasifah points out that the word "incoherence" does not give an exact meaning of Tahafut and that al-Ghazālī has used it sometimes with reference to philosophers and sometimes with reference to their doctrines. He, therefore, suggests that it would be better to retain the original word Tahafut.

34. The Dahriyyun are those who teach the eternity of time and matter. It is, however, difficult to give a precise translation of the term; in its actual usage in Arabic philosophy, Dahriyyun are sometimes hardly distinguishable from the Tab'iyyun. Cf. the article "Dahriyyah," Encyclopedia of Islam.

35. Cf. Aristotle's Ethica Nicomachea, Section 6 p. 1096 a 15.

36. Cf. M. Iqbal, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, pp. 3 - 4. What was really hinted here is the Platonic and Neo-Platonic bias in the Hellenic thought which inculcates a dichotomy between the empirical and the transcendental - the secular and the spiritual.

37. All the three works can be found in one volume published by Matba't al-'Alamiyyah, Egypt, 1302 - 1303/1884 - 1885: al-Ghazālī's Tahafut al-Falsifah, p. 92; ibn Rushd's Tahafut al-Tahafut, p. 141, and Khwaja Zadah's Tahafut al-Falsifah, p. 137.

38. For an analytical account of the contents of Tahafut al-Falsifah and Tahafut al-Tahafut, cf. A.F. van Mehren, "Etudes sur la philosophie d'Averroes concernant son rapport avec cello d'Avicenne at Gazzali," Le Museon, Vol. 7, pp. 613 - 27; vol. 8 pp. 5 - 20, Louvain, 1888 - 1889.

39. Cf. al-Ghazālī's Tahafut al-Falasifah, English translation by Sabih Ahmad Kamali, The Pakistan Philosophical Congress, Lahore, 1958, pp. 1 - 3. All references to the Tahafut are to this translation.

40. It is not noteworthy that Simon van den Bergh has listed 40 contradictions in Aristotle's Philosophy; see his English translation of Averroes' Tahafat al-Tahafot, London 1954 Vo. 2, p. 215.

41. Cf. Ibn 'Asakir, Tabyin Kadhib al-Muftari, Damascus, 1347/1928, p. 128.

42. Aristotle's notion of potentiality fails to solve the riddle of becoming as propounded by the Eleatics and later by the Megarics. W. D. Ross says, "The conception of potentiality has often been used to cover mere barrenness of thought." Cf. his Aristotle London, 1923 pp. 176 - 78. The Ash'arites like the Megarics denied the existence of potentiality. Cf. 8. van den Bergh, op. cit., pp. 37 - 40.

43. For the thesis of creatio ex nihilo, c.f. the Qur'an 2:117, 30:27, 35:1

44. Critique of Pure Reason 2nd ed., pp. 454 - 61.

45. Tahafut, p. 5. It may be noted here that the Muslim philosophers and theologians sometimes used different terminology with regard to the same subject.

46. Cf. M. Saeed Sheikh, "Philosophy of Religion: Its Meaning and Scope," Proceedings of the Fifth Pakistan Philosophical Congress, Lahore, 1958, pp. 37 - 51.

47. Cf. G. F. Hourani, "Alghazali and the Philosophers on the Origin of the World," The Muslim World (1958), vol. 48, No. 3, pp. 183 - 91.

48. Cf. W. D. Ross, op. cit. pp 89 et sqq.
49. Plotinus uses the light metaphor, for he conceived light to be incorporeal after Posidonius of Rhodes (c. 135 - 50 B.C.) who is perhaps the first to propound the notion of emanation.
50. Cf. Spinoza, Ethics, Part 1, Section 17, note.
51. Cf. Aristotle, De Caelo, 285 a 29, 292 a 20, b1
52. The nine spheres are as follows: the first sphere, the sphere of the fixed stars, the sphere of Saturn, the sphere of Jupiter, the sphere of Mars, the sphere of the Sun, the Sphere of Venus, the sphere of Mercury, and the sphere of the moon.
53. Some Muslim thinkers have referred to the Qur'an (78:38) in support of the notion of the active intellect, e.g. al-Baidawi in his Anwar al-Tanzil, ed. H. O. Fleischer, Leipzig, 1846 - 48, Vol 2, p. 383, also Ihya' (Urdu Tr), Vol 3, p. 5, where al-Ghazālī refers to the Tradition that "the first thing that God created was the Intellect."
54. Cf. Kitab al-Shifa', "Metaphysics," section 4, Chapter 6; al-Najat, Cairo, 1331/1912, pp. 448 et sqq; al-Madinat al al-Fadilala, Cairo, 1368/1948, p. 19. For the Aristotelian ingredients in the theory of emanation as explained above cf. W. D. Ross, op. cit., pp. 181 et sqq., A. E. Taylor, Aristotle, London, 1943, pp. 98 et sqq." and A. H. Armstrong, The Architecture of the Intelligible Universe in the Philosophy of Plotinus, Cambridge, 1940, by index.
55. Cf. Tahafut, pp. 77, 87
56. Cf. F. R. Tennant, Philosophical Theology, Cambridge, 1930 Vol. 2, pp. 125 et sqq. 153 et sqq.
57. Ibid., p. 154
58. In Ptolemy' Almagest the number of stars mention is 1, 025. This number was generally accepted by the Arab astronomers. 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Umar al-Sufi (291/903 - 376/986), one of the greatest Muslim astronomers, in his work Kitab al-Kawakib al-Thabitah al-Musawwar (Illustrated Book of the Fixed Stars), adds that there are many more stars than 1, 025, but they are so faint that it is not possible to count them.
59. Cf. Tahafut, p. 88, Al-Ghazālī, in support of his agnosticism with regard to the modus operandi of God's creativity alludes at the end to tradition, "Think over the product of God's creative activity, and do not think over his essence." Cf. Takhrij al-Hafz al-Iraqi appended to Ihya', Part 4, p. 410; also the Qur'an 17:15, which is referred to by al-Ghazālī earlier, i.e. on p. 80.
60. Metaphisica, p. 1072 b20. Cf. also De Anima, p. 424 a 18.
61. Cf. Tahafut, p. 80.
62. Problem 13th of Tahafut, pp. 153 - 62; cf. also other passages pertaining to God's knowledge by index. For a clear and balanced exposition of the philosopher's position with regard to this problem, see Maqasid al-Falsifah (Urdu trans. by M. Hanif Nadawi, Qadim Yunani Falsafah), Lahore, 1959, pp. 168 - 78.
63. Cf. Ihya', Vol. 2, Book 2, Section 1, English translation by D. B. Macdonald, Development of Muslim Theology, London, 1903, p. 302.
64. Ibn Sina says this in his Kitab al-Shifa', Metaphysics," 8, 6. It is really an allusion to a verse of the Quran (10:61), "...and not the weight of an atom in the earth or in the heaven is hidden from thy Lord..."; also 34:3.
65. Ibid, cf., also al-Najat, pp. 408 et sqq.
66. Tahafut, p. 159. Even though al-Ghazālī is not justified in alleging that philosophers restrict God's knowledge merely to the universals, namely, the genera, the species, and the universal accidents, yet his criticism of the philosophers on this point is not vitiated by this misunderstanding and he is quite right in pointing out the inconsistency in their position.
67. Aristotle's conception of time is essentially intellectualistic and static, whereas al-Ghazālī's stand-point with regard to time in keeping with his theistic occasionalism, in intuitionistic and dynamic much like Berson's duree. Cf. Louis Massignon, Time in Islamic Thought" in Man and Time (Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks), London, 1958, pp. 108 - 14. Also M.F. Clough, Time, London, 1937.
68. Cf. Tahafut, p. 189.
69. Miracles ascribed to the Prophets Moses, Abraham, Jesus and Mohammad respectively; cf. the Qur'an, 20:17 - 23, 38:31, 31:68, 69, 20:124, 37:97, 98, 3:48, 5:110 and liv, 1.

70. Cf. Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, Book 1, Part Three. Cf. also Hanif Nadawi, *Sargudhasht-i Ghazālī*, pp. 62 - 76; also article “Ghazālī ka Nazriyyah-i Ta’lil,” *Thaqafat* (Urdu), Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore, uly 1959, Vol. 7, No. 7, pp. 11 - 19.

71. The real starting point of the discussion on causality belongs to the latter part of the 16th disputation. See *Tahfut*, p. 181.

72. *Tahafut*, p. 186.

73. *Ibid.* p. 189

74. Cf. Mill’s doctrine of the Plurality of Causes, *System of Logic*, Book 3, Chapter 10, Section 2.

75. It is interesting to note that Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese call al-Ghazālī’s conception of God as Etiolary, i.e. cause-worshipping; cf. their compendium: *Philosophers Speak of God*, Chicago, 1953, pp. 106 - 11, esp. p. 109.

76. Cf. Qur’an, 8:5, 16:38, 17:49 - 51, 98, 99.

77. In spite of Hume’s notorious repudiation of the miraculous (*Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section 10, parts One and Two), his notion of causality through its own logic can be finally resolved to the Ghazālī or better, the Ash’arite position expressed in this statement. Cf. A. E. Taylor, “David Hume and the Miraculous,” in his *Philosophical Studies*, London, 1934, pp. 330 - 65; also F. R. Tennant, *Miracle and Its Philosophical Pre-suppositions*, Cambridge, 1925, p., 84.

Chapter 31: Al-Ghazali Part 2

A. Mysticism

1. Introduction

It will not be quite true to say that al-Ghazālī's final resort to Sufi-mysticism was merely the result of his disillusionment with philosophy and dissatisfaction with scholastic theology. This is only a part of the truth; his confessional statement to this effect in al-Munqidh seems to be rather an over-statement of the actual facts. Sufistic influences had all along been working upon his mind right from early childhood. We need only recall that his father was a pious Dervish and his guardian a Sufi devout, where he studied during his youth¹ and even practiced Sufism, first under Yusuf al-Nassaj in Tus and that his own brother, Ahmad al-Ghazālī (d. 520/1126) made a name as a great Sufi.

It is not improbable that he should also learn Sufism from his teacher Imam al-Haramain, for it is reported that the Imam himself had been the student of the renowned Sufi Abu Nu'aim al-Isfahani (d. 430/1038). So al-Ghazālī eventual adoption of the Sufi way of life was in reality a continuation of these early influences and not simply the consequence of failure to find the philosophical solution of theological problems. Further, it has to be emphasized that, in spite of his explicit official denunciation of philosophy, al-Ghazālī could never completely part company with it. His Sufi-mysticism was as much influenced by his thorough study of philosophy as by theology; in its final development it was the mysticism of a philosopher and a theologian.

There is a marked note of Hellenic thought in his mystical doctrines and even the tracings of Neo-Platonism, and yet paradoxical though it may seem they remain circumscribed within the limits of orthodoxy. He is surely a sober kind of mysticism carefully eschewing all kinds of pantheistic extravagances and severely criticizing the antinomian tendencies of the intoxicated Sufis. On the one hand, he tried to make mysticism orthodox and, on the other, orthodoxy mystical. It is the mystical element in religion, he insisted, which is most vital and makes religious life a reality. Both to the philosophers and the scholastic theologians he brought home the fact that the basis of all religious certainty is the first-hand living experience of God. He indeed did his best to vitalize the law and the doctrine of Islam through this emphasis on the living religious experience, and this is evident from the very title of his magnum opus, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* (Revivification of the Sciences of Religion).

But the mystical teaching of al-Ghazālī found in *Ihya'*, meant for all to read, must be studied in conjunction with what is given in his other works dealing more specially with the Sufi doctrine such as *Mishkat al-Anwar*, *al-Ma'arif al-'Aqliyyah*, *Mukashafat al-Qulub* and the like. The theory developed in these works represents what may be labelled as theosophical mysticism and this cannot be properly understood without reference to al-Ghazālī's specific views about the nature of God and the human soul. From the point of view of our present study his mystical views with regard to God

and soul may be profitably compared with those philosophers, i.e. al-Farabi, ibn Sina, and their followers.

2. God

The philosophers have particularly emphasized the absolute unity of God. No positive attributes can be ascribed to God for that leads to the subject-predicate dualism. Even existence can only be referred to Him. He is above all distinctions and above all the categories of thought. The over-emphasis on unity shorn of all qualities reduces God to a mere non-content inanity. He becomes an ineffable, indescribable, unpredictable something. Such is the result of the dialectic of the philosophers' monistic reductionism. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, some (if them, following Aristotle, have described God as thought thinking thought. That which He knows comes into being emanating from the over-effulgence of His Being, but He does not positively will anything, for willing implies a need - a deficiency. He recognizes only Himself or at best His first eminent, the first intelligence, and, thus, is purely transcendent to this world of change and multiplicity.

Like the philosophers, al-Ghazālī lays stress on the unity of God: God is the sole-existent and the ultimate cause and ground of all being, the only self-subsisting reality. Yet He possesses the fullness of being, all the attributes mentioned in the Qur'an inhere in Him, only the modality of this inherence is rationally unknowable. We should, however, understand that all His attributes are spiritual. He is perfect goodness and perfect beauty, the supreme object of love.² He is the light of lights, the eternal wisdom, the creative truth, but above all, He is the eternal will.

To the philosophers God is primarily thought or intelligence, but to al-Ghazālī He is primarily a will which is the cause of creation. "The First Principle," he says, "is an omnipotent and willing agent. He does what He wills and ordains as He likes, and He creates the similar and dissimilar things alike, whenever and in whatever manner He wills"³ So Ultimate Reality is essentially will. The entire choir of the heavens and the furniture of the earth are the direct work of God, produced out of sheer nothingness simply through His terrific "Be."⁴ God has created the universe through His will, sustains it through His will, and one day will let pass away by His will. According to philosophers, God wills the world because He thinks of it. According to al-Ghazālī, "God has cognizance of the world because He wills it and in His willing it."⁵

Like the philosophers, al-Ghazālī also emphasizes the transcendent aspect of God. He is exalted beyond the limitations of space and time, for He is the creator of space and time. He was before time and space, but He is also immanent in this spatio-temporal order, His eternal wisdom and supreme beauty manifests themselves through the wonders and glory of His creation. His eternal will is an action throughout the universe; it is in the swing of the sun and the moon and in the alternation of day and night. Everywhere around is the touch and working of God.⁶ Al-Ghazālī's God is not the Absolute of the philosophers, who is bleak and cold, but a personal God, a living God. He desires inter-course with His creatures and makes it

possible for them to enter into fellowship with Him through prayer and contemplation and, above all, through the gift of mystical gnosis.

3. Soul

The difference between al-Ghazālī and the philosophers with regard to the nature of the soul is not very well marked. He only insists, like Kant,⁷ that the philosophers through their rational arguments cannot give any conclusive proof for the spirituality, substantiality, unity, immortality, etc., of the human soul. His attack on the philosophers on this issue is as incisive and analytic as that of Kant but probably more violent. He actually smashes one by one all the ten arguments which he himself expounds as forcefully as they could be in favour on their thesis.⁸ Like Kant again, he does not disagree with their basic position but only with their method. He even joins the philosophers in their refutation of the position of some of the scholastic theologians, who maintained that the soul is a kind of subtle body or an accident and not a substance.⁹

What is more and rather strange, while determining the place of the soul in the realm of beings, al-Ghazālī talks the very language of the Neo-Platonic philosophers. His cosmological triad of the divine world ('alam al-malakut), the celestial world ('alam al-jabrut), and the material phenomenal world ('alam al-mulk w-al-shahadah) runs closely parallel to that of Plotinus consisting of the universal mind, the universal soul, and matter.¹⁰ Like Plotinus, he seems to vouch-safe that the human soul belongs to 'alam al-Jabarut, i.e. mid-way between the divine world and the material world, and so is neither purely eternal like the former nor merely temporal like the latter but partakes of them both.

Al-Ghazālī's conception of the human soul, however, is essentially based on the teachings of the Qur'an and the Tradition. The interesting thing about this conception is that it runs parallel to his conception of God. Soul, like God, is a unity and like Him, is primarily and essentially a will. Further, as God is both transcendent to and immanent in the universe so is soul with reference to body. "Man is made in the image of God,"¹¹ is saying of the Holy Prophet and it is twice stated in the Qur'an that "Allah breathed into man of His own spirit."¹² The soul is a mirror illumined by the divine spark reflecting the qualities and even the essence of God. "Not only are man's attributes," says al-Ghazālī, "a reflection of God's attributes but the mode of existence of man's soul affords an insight into God's mode of existence..." Knowledge of the self is the key to the knowledge of God, for so is the oft quoted tradition, "He who knows himself knows his Lord." "Both God and soul," al-Ghazālī adds, "are invisible, indivisible, unconfined by space and time, and outside the categories of quantity and quality, nor can the ideas of shape, colour, or size attach to them..."¹³

The soul of man is different from everything else in the sensuous world. There are two worlds: the world of command (amr) and the created world (khalq).¹⁴ Everything devoid of quantity and dimension belongs to the world of amr. Soul belongs to the world of amr also because it proceeds from the command of God; "Say, the spirit proceeded at the command of my Lord"¹⁵ is God's instruction of the Prophet. It is the world of amr that rules the created world, the command is the divine force which directs and regulates

the world. Thus, soul is a spiritual principle which having life in itself vitalizes the body and controls it and regulates it. Body is the instrument and vehicle of the soul. God is primarily a will and man is akin to God especially in respect of will.

Volo ergo sum is the dictum on which al-Ghazālī builds his mystical psychology and epistemology. The essential element of the soul is not thought which in the final analysis is based upon the bodily perceptions and the categories of thought but will which created them both for its own purposes. Man in himself has the infinite spiritual possibilities and it is through his will that he comes to realize them and thus brings himself close to the mind and will of God until God says, “Oh soul at rest, return to thy Lord, satisfied with Him, giving satisfaction unto Him. So enter among My servants and enter My garden.”¹⁶ This final encounter of the soul with God through aspirations is attained by walking on a mystic Path, under the guidance of a Sheikh, and constitutes what is the very essence and acme of religious experience.

4. Religious Experience and Moral and Intellectual Values

Whatever the essence or inner content of religious experience may be, it certainly is not a mere state of pure contemplation or knowledge as the philosophers proclaim it to be. It is a vital experience which must translate itself into good action. Religion without good works, according to al-Ghazālī, is a dead religion. The life of the true mystics is the best life and their character the purest character. “Were the intellect of the intellectuals and the learning of the learned and the scholarship of the scholars...brought together to improve the life and character of the mystics, they would find no way of doing so.”¹⁷ Indeed, the source from which the philosophers derive their ethical theories is the lives and teachings of these moral geniuses, i.e. the saints and the mystics.

In the final analysis, the mystics themselves are illuminated by the light of the lamp of the prophetic revelation. But what if you were to doubt the prophethood of a prophet? So close is the relation between the inner religious life and the outer moral expression of it that you can move from one back to the other. The authenticity of a prophet can be attested by applying a moral test, that is, by making a close study of conduct, by assessing the transformations which his creative will has wrought in human history and by evaluating the new socio-politico-legal system that he has introduced and established in a society. Of the truths of religion, we acquire not a theoretical but a moral certainty, the deed is more important than mere idea, the will is more ultimate than pure intellect.

Though the philosophers do not deny the importance of transforming truth values into moral values, ideas into deeds, so far as their theory of prophecy is concerned, yet in pursuance of the dominant Hellenic tradition they seem to hold that knowledge without consequent action has its own intrinsic value. Good deeds are preparatory to correct thinking. The ultimate perfection of the soul consists in God-like contemplation, in a state of pure knowledge which though not without joy is certainly without action. Al-Ghazālī strongly revolted against this extreme intellectualism of the philosophers, yet he did not remain altogether unaffected by it. It is indeed

futile to look for any lifeless consistency in his attitudes which make a happy synthesis of voluntarism, pragmatism, and idealism. He concedes, for example, that a prophet is a person endowed with extra-ordinary intellect prophetic revelation.¹⁸ Like the philosophers, he also affirms that perfection of the soul consists in knowledge, albeit intuitive knowledge, like them, he also shows pre-dilections for knowledge for its own sake. “The ink of the scholar is better than the blood of the martyr.”¹⁹

It is certainly true so far as by knowledge we here understand knowledge of the religious sciences, but it is also in a sense true of all other sciences. Knowledge of the sciences dealing with things that God has made is regarded by al-Ghazālī as a necessary part of the mystic discipline. “If the soul has not been exercised in the sciences dealing with fact and demonstration, it will acquire mental phantasms which will be mistaken by it to the truths descending upon it...Many Sufis remain stuck for years in such figments of imagination, but they certainly would have been saved from these, had they first followed the path of scientific study and acquired by laborious learning as much of the demonstrative sciences as human power could encompass...”²⁰

It has almost become a fashion to label al-Ghazālī as an anti-intellectualist and to ascribe to him much of the backwardness of the Muslim community ever since the sixth/12th century, as an its anti-liberalism.²¹ It is alleged that al-Ghazālī through his emphasis on fundamentalism and spiritualism initiated a movement in Muslim thought that killed all zest for philosophic inquiry and scientific reflection, if it did not outright create an antipathy for them. The anti-intellectualism or the anti-liberalism of the Muslim community is a highly complex sociological phenomenon and its causes shall have to be explored in a great many areas, it would be too much of an over-simplification of facts to ascribe it to a single name, however great that name may be.

We have only to remember that al-Ghazālī never left philosophy altogether and that he himself was very well acquainted with the scientific knowledge of his day,²² most of which he accepted as true. The charge of the kind mentioned above may be made only with reference to someone particular work but it cannot at all be justified if the whole course of his works is taken into consideration.

Considering, however, the number and complexity of the subjects with which his works deal, the various levels of readers for whom they were written and the fact of his own spiritual development, it is not always possible to reconcile his various views and attitudes and to defend him against all charges of inconsistency.²³ One such difficulty arises when, after having considered his views about the nature of the soul and God, we have come to formulate his position with regards to relations between the two. Whether his conception of this relation makes an allowance for pantheism, is a question which has puzzled some students of al-Ghazālī.²⁴

5. Pantheism

Al-Ghazālī's view of God as being both immanent and transcendent, his firm belief in God being a personal God who allows His creatures to enter into communion with Him, his emphasis on God being a creator who

created the universe at a specific time through an act of volition, one and all, can hardly fit into any scheme of pantheism. The description of the mystic's experience of God at the higher reaches of his ecstatic flights as identification (ittihad) or unification (wasul) with God or inherence or indwelling (hulul) in Him, al-Ghazālī has expressly mentioned as false and erroneous.²⁵ At best, the mystics can claim only a nearness to or proximity with God and no more. But it has been pointed out that in his doctrine of the soul he makes it resemble God so closely both in essence and qualities that there remains hardly any difference between the two.

Al-Ghazālī is aware of this dangerous deduction and asserts most emphatically that there is one special quality (akhassu wasfihi) which belongs to God alone and of which none else partakes and that is the quality of self-subsistence. God is self-subsistent (qayyum)²⁶ while everything else exists through Him and not through its own essence. "Nay, things through their own essence have nothing but non-existence, and existence comes to them only from something else, by way of a loan." But surely there is the lurking danger of pantheism in such a statement if it is stretched to its logical limits. If the contingency of the world should be over-emphasized, it becomes nothing more than a show of shadows having no reality or actuality of its own whatsoever. All actuality is devoured by the being of God.

This conclusion is confirmed by al-Ghazālī's own approval of the pantheistic formula: la huwa illa huwa (there is no it but He) to which may be added his statement, "He is everything, He is that He is, none but He has piety or deity at all."²⁷ To this may be added that al-Ghazālī has taken a very lenient view of some of the obviously pantheistic utterances of the Sufis of extreme type such as "I am the Creative Truth,"²⁸ "Glory be to Me! How great is My Glory," "Within this robe is naught but Allah,"²⁹ etc. Statements of this kind clearly indicate a sense of complete self-deification. But al-Ghazālī has no word of condemnation for them except the comment that "the words of passionate lovers in the state of ecstasy should be concealed and not spoken of." True, statements of this kind should not be taken strictly philosophically but only as emotive expressions indicative of a deep inner experience which has many phases and aspects and a language and logic of its own. But then, al-Ghazālī seems to forget sometimes the advice he has so strongly given to those who have attained the mystic state that they should not try to speak the unspeakable and follow the poet who said, "What I experience I shall try to say; call me happy, but ask me no more."³⁰

B. Ethics

Al-Ghazālī is the best known Muslim writer on moral subjects. Be there are some critics³¹ who have recently made attempts to belittle the importance of his ethical theory by trying to show that it is entirely, or at least mainly, derived from the Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic doctrines and from the writings of the Muslim philosophers whose systems were Hellenic in spirit. Al-Ghazālī was, undoubtedly, a widely read scholar and was, therefore, well versed in the ethical thought of the Greeks, which did influence him. But it would be basically wrong to say that he was dependent on Greek philosophy for his inspiration. He was, in fact, against the

philosophers and their heretical doctrines. Throughout his writings, al-Ghazālī takes his stand upon Islamic teachings and invariably quotes from the Qur'an and the traditions in support of his views.

Following the Qur'an, for example, he lays emphasis on spiritual values like gratitude (shukr), repentance (taubah), reliance (tawakkul), fear (khauf) of God, etc. which were completely unknown to the Greeks. Similarly, al-Ghazālī is thoroughly Islamic in taking the perfect human representation of the moral ideal in the Prophet of Islam (peace be on him), whom God Himself testifies to have the highest character.³² Further, we can legitimately say that the notion of love of God as the summon bonum, leading directly to the beatific vision in the next world, has nothing like it in Greek philosophy. This is undeniably based upon the Qur'anic teachings. All these assertions will become clearer as we proceed with the detailed discussion.

Asceticism is the spirit that runs throughout al-Ghazālī ethics. He does not deal with the heroic virtues like courage, etc. in detail, and lays greater emphasis on the purification of the heart after one has severed all ties with this world, at least in spirit. He says, "The experienced guide and teacher should bring home to the disciple that he should root out anger and keep up wealth...otherwise, if he gets the slightest hint that an excuse for avarice and self-assertion, and to whatever limits he goes he will imagine that he is permitted as far as that. So he ought to be told to eradicate these tendencies."³³ Again, in Minhaj al-'Abidin, al-Ghazālī differentiates between two kinds of virtues: positive, i.e. good actions, and negative, i.e. the abandonment of bad ones. The negative side is better and more excellent. To elucidate this point further, he discusses the question in Ihya' whether marriage or celibacy is better. After counting the advantages and the disadvantages of both, he ultimately tends to the conclusion that celibacy is better. One may marry, he grants, provided one is at the same time like the unmarried, i.e. lives always in the presence of God. All this has a colouring of other-worldliness.

Avoidance of the world is, however, not put forward as an end in itself. It has been over-emphasized by al-Ghazālī simply to counter-act the tendencies to vice, luxury, and pride, which were so common in his days. The curbing or controlling of passions has been stressed merely to achieve moderation; otherwise, he fully knows the psychology of human nature. He is quite aware of the social spirit of the Qur'an and of the Prophet's teaching that there is no asceticism in Islam.³⁴ Accordingly, al-Ghazālī does sometimes lay emphasis on our duties and obligations to other individuals and to society as a whole. Jihad has been mentioned as a necessary obligatory duty, even prayers have to be sacrificed, if need be, during a war.

In the chapter of "Renunciation of the World," in the Ihya' he warns against the evils and holds that renunciation is a grievous sin if a man has dependants who need his support. He defends music by saying that "gaiety and sport refresh and cheer the heart and bring relief to the tired mind..., rest prepares a man for work, and sport and gaiety for grave and serious pursuits."³⁵ Further, among virtues, he includes good appearance (husn al-hai'ah with adornment which is sensible and has no tinge of ostentation in

it. Similarly, there are the virtues of self-respect, dignity, etc. which point to a man's relation with other individuals and pre-suppose a social set-up.

Before discussing al-Ghazālī's theory of ethics we may consider the problem which forms the basis of all ethical systems, viz. the problem of the freedom of the will. The fact that man can change from the state of the insinuating self at peace (al-nafs at-mutma'innah) through a good deal of conscious struggle and deliberate effort necessarily suggests that he is free in his will. The Mu'tazilites had taught that the freedom of the will is an a priori certainty, that man possesses power (qudrah) over his actions and is their real author. The Ash'arites, who represented the orthodox reaction, however, held that "Man cannot create anything. God is the only creator, nor does man's power produce any effect on his action at all.

God creates His creature power (qudrah) and choice (ikhtiyar). He then creates in him action corresponding to the power and choice thus created. So the action of the creature is created by God as to initiative and as to production, but is acquired by the creature. By acquisition (kasb) is meant that it corresponds to the creature's power and choice previously created in him, without his having had the slightest effect on the action."³⁶ This position comes very close to the "pre-established harmony" of Leibniz. It, thus, gives us at the most, only a consciousness of freedom, and not freedom in the real sense of the term.

Over this question al-Ghazālī finds himself on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, God is represented as the disposer of everything. He is the unmoved mover of the material world and the only efficient cause of all creation. Whatever happens in the heavens or on the earth happens according to a necessary system and a pre-determined plan. Not even a leaf can move without His decree, His law is supreme everywhere. "Whomsoever God wishes to guide, He expands his breast to Islam, but whomsoever He wishes to lead astray He makes his breast tight and strait."³⁷ On the other hand, man is shown to be responsible for his actions and for deserving place either in hell or in heaven. This implies complete moral freedom.

Al-Ghazālī seeks to reconcile both these tendencies on the basis of an analysis of the human mind. The heart or of the soul man, according to him, is furnished with two kinds of impressions. Either there are sensations through which one gets the sensible qualities of the outside world, or there is reflection or internal sense which supplies the mind with its own operations. These impressions, which al-Ghazālī calls khwatir (Locke would call them "simple ideas" and James Ward would term them "presentations"), are, according to him, the spring and fountain-head of all activity.

Whatever the heart intends, resolves etc. must come to it as knowledge in the form of such impressions. These impressions or ideas have an inherent tendency to express themselves in overt movements. They have a motive part of their own and are capable of exciting a strong impulse or inclination (raghbah) in the first instance. This inclination must, if the action is to take place, be followed by decision or conviction (i'tiqad). (These three stages correspond pretty closely to what psychologists call respectively appetite,

desire, and wish.) Conviction, in turn, is followed by resolution or the will to act (irahda). Will excites power and then the action comes.

The first two stages of this process, viz impression and inclination, are recognized to be beyond man's complete control; if an individual merely thinks intently of falling forward, swaying forward begins. So "the conclusion would be that, while the occurrences of a strong desire or inclination may come without man's responsibility, his reason is free to make a decision and his will is free to accept the decision of reason as good and to implement the complete control of his desire would be beyond his power."³⁸ Thus, al-Ghazālī tries to reconcile the positions of the determinists and the indeterminists.

In fact, al-Ghazālī recognizes three stages of being. The lowest is the material world where the absolute necessity of God's will is all in all. Second is the stage of the sensuous and the physical world where a relative sort of freedom is recognized. Lastly, comes God who is absolutely free. But His freedom is not like that of a man who arrives at decisions after hesitation and deliberation over different alternatives. This is impossible in the case of God, "To speak of choice between alternatives is to suggest that other than the best might be chosen and this would be inconsistent with the idea of perfection."³⁹

Thus, having established human freedom and responsibility and having justified his discussion of ethical questions, al-Ghazālī goes on to present before us his notion of the moral ideal and the means that are to be adopted for its realization. The path is long and difficult and needs a great deal of patience and perseverance on the part of the seeker. Slowly and steadily, by leading a virtuous life, he has to take his soul towards perfection so that it might be able to attain the knowledge of God and consequently divine love, which is the summum bonum or the Highest Good in this world. This will lead to the beatific vision in the world. It should, however, be remembered that man cannot move a single step forward without the help of God. He is guided throughout by the gift of God (taufiq). Taufiq manifests itself in various forms:

1. Guidance from God (hidayah) is the very condition of all virtues. It stands for the telling of the moral from the immoral, the good from the bad and the right from the wrong. Unless these distinctions are clearly seen, we cannot be supposed to do any good action or avoid evil.

2. Direction (rushd). Mere knowledge of good actions might be necessary but is not sufficient for their performance. We should also have the will to do them. This is "direction."

3. Setting aright (tasdid). It is the power from God which makes the body obey the will in order to realize the end.

4. Confirmation (la'ad). It makes circumstances congenial for the actualization of the will.

Helped by God in this way the individual proceeds to exercise virtues which gradually raise the heart higher and higher up towards the ideal.

Before taking up this enterprise, however, the soul or the heart is to be subjected to a thorough surgical operation and cleansed of all impurities. "He will indeed be successful who purifies it and he will fail to corrupt it."⁴⁰

It is only when the heart has thus been freed of its fetters and the veils of darkness and ignorance have been rent asunder that anything positive can be attempted. Al-Ghazālī explains it by an allegory. Once, the Chinese and the Greeks held a contest on the art of drawing and painting. One part of a big room was given to the Chinese and the other to the Greeks. In between was hung a curtain with many rare colours, but the Chinese proceeded to brighten their side and polish it.

When the curtain was raised, the beautiful art of the former was reflected on the latter's wall and in its original beauty and charm. Such is the way of the saints who strive for the purification of their heart to make it worthy of the knowledge of God Most High. But what are these impurities and what are they due to? What is that which darkens and casts gloom upon the soul of man? Al-Ghazālī's answer is, love of the world, the root from which all the multi-farious sins and vices spring. The pious people avoid it and seek loneliness. "Be in the world as if you are a stranger or on a journey upon the road."⁴¹ On seeing a dead goat, the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) is reported to have said, "The world has lesser value in the eyes of God than this goat has for its owner."

Let us now discuss briefly al-Ghazālī's enumeration of the main kinds of vices that result from the love of the world, the removal of which from the heart is incumbent upon us.

First, there are those vices which are connected with a particular part of the body. Hunger is one of them. It is no, doubt, a very important biological function and, thus, indispensable for the preservation of life. But when it transgresses its limits and becomes gluttony, it is the cause of immense evil and disturbance. "Eat and drink," says God, "but be not prodigal. Verily He loves not the prodigal."⁴² Over-eating dulls the intellect and weakens the memory. It also causes too much sleep which, besides being a waste of time, slackens the mind; the light of wisdom is dimmed and once becomes unable to differentiate good from evil.⁴³ Further, the glutton forgets what need and hunger are. Gradually, he becomes oblivious of, and unsympathetic to, the poor and those who have really nothing to eat. So, one should eat only as much as is barely sufficient to sustain oneself, out of one has earned honestly.⁴⁴

The second group of vices belonging to this category are those arising out of the sex instinct. This instinct is supposed to be the most powerful in man,⁴⁵ and so are its distractions from the right path. The sex appetite must always be directed, controlled, and managed by reason and should not be allowed to run wild: adultery is a moral and social as well as religious evil. Further, says al-Ghazālī, the seeker after the ideal should not marry in earlier stages of his search, for the wife and children may prove a hindrance. But if, in spite of wilful determination, he is not able to control himself, he may marry and then perform all his duties as a husband.

Lastly, we come to the vices of speech, which are many. Talkativeness, using indecent words, ridiculing, abusing, cursing, etc. belong to this kind. Similarly, lying is also a heinous sin, "A painful doom is theirs because they lie."⁴⁶ Lying, however, loses its immoral sting in special circumstances when the end in view is good. We can, for instance, legitimately make use

of it as a war tactic. “War is deception itself,”⁴⁷ goes the tradition. Slandering and tale-bearing are also very prominent vices of speech. “Don’t back-bite one another,”⁴⁸ says God. Similarly, we have been prohibited from making false promises because it is the characteristic of hypocrites (munafiqun).⁴⁹

Next, there are vices arising out of self-assertion. When working in its proper limits, this instinct is, no doubt, natural. But the lack or excess of it makes it an evil. A person, who has no self-assertion, has no self-respect. He is disgracefully meek and silent and dare not make his personality felt. Excessive self-assertion, on the other hand, degenerates into vices like anger (ghadab), malice (hiqd), pride (kibr), and vanity (‘ujb).

Man is roused to anger when some desire of his is not fulfilled, when another person possesses the thing which, he thinks, should rightfully belong to him. When not gratified, anger often turns into malice, which consists in the desire that the desired thing should be lost to the feeling of pain but simply a strong desire that one should also possess a thing like the one the other has. This is known as emulation (ghibtah) and is not undesirable. We can overcome the vices of excessive self-assertion by forbearance, mildness, forgiveness, humility, etc.

Anger, malice, and emulation are aroused when man is not in possession of the objects of his desire. Pride and vanity, on the contrary, occur when he has secured such objects. Vanity is a sense of self-admiration. The individual regards his possessions as great, has no fear of losing them, and forgets that they are merely gifts of God. If he is vain about his intellect, wisdom, and opinion, all development in knowledge ceases and all progress is congealed.

A proud man, on the other hand, actively compares himself with others, is rightly or wrongly aware of some religious or worldly perfection in him, and feels elated and raised above them. He looks down upon them and expects respect from them as a superior. Learned men, worshippers, and devotees are very much prone to this evil. The cure of pride lies in recognizing God and one’s own self. By this he would come to know that pride becomes God and greatness belongs to Him alone. Further, he should remember his humble beginnings and recognize the filthy stuff he is made of. Let him consider the origin and end of his forefathers and of the proud persons like Pharaoh and Nimrud tried to equal God Almighty. Let him consider also that beauty, wealth, and friendship are all transitory and unreliable.

To the third category of vices belongs the love of wealth (hub al-mal) and of position (hub al-jah), hypocrisy (riya’) and willful self-deception (ghurur). Wealth in itself, however, is not bad. It is the use of it that makes it so. Wealth can be spent on the poor and the needy to alleviate their sufferings, but can also lead directly to sins or can supply means for them. Those who love money often forget God and He, in turn, prepares and reserves for them a painful doom.⁵⁰ Love of wealth may lead to avarice: the more one has, the more one desires. It can also lead to miserliness, which means not spending even where one is duty-bound to spend. The cure of all these evils is to give away all that is superfluous and keep only as much as

is essential for supporting life and getting peace of mind. We must further be convinced in our hearts that wealth, like shadows, is a transitory affair and that God is sufficient for us and our children. We should hasten to spend when occasion demands, setting aside the checks and hesitations arising within.

Love of position means the desire to win and dominate the hearts of others. It is generally gained by creating in others a conviction that one possesses the so-called qualities of perfection such as beauty, strength, ancestry. Real perfection, however, lies in knowledge and freedom: knowledge of God and spiritual values, and freedom from the vices and the rebellious nature of passions. Just as wealth is allowed if used as a means for some good, so may we win the admiration of those whose help is necessary to realize the ideal. But if position is sought for its own sake, it is a vice and should be eradicated. One must impress upon oneself that position is not everlasting and that death is a leveller. One should also know that a prominent person creates enemies very easily.

The lover of position generally falls into hypocrisy and tries to deceive people that he possesses something which actually he does not. An individual, for example, may pretend to be a pious man by a thin, lean, neglected body, long prayers, virtuous and humble talk, and so on. In religious matters, hypocrisy has been condemned very much by both the Qur'an and the Sunnah. This deadly disease must be cured, otherwise all the so-called virtuous actions, the inner spiritual basis being absent, will be entirely useless and unacceptable to God. One must perform all good actions, including the religious observances and acts of worship, in secret. We may perform them in the open if our sincere intention is that others may also be persuaded thereby to do the same.

Love of position also gives rise to self-deception. The individual is convinced that he has something which he really does not have. Four classes of people among the believers are, according to al-Ghazālī, very likely to involve themselves in this evil. They are, for example, such religious devotees as do not have the real sense of values. They do not realize what is more important and what is less important and by performing the latter, they assume themselves to be exempt from the former. For instance, they take greater care in the correct pronunciation of the words of the Qur'an than in understanding their true meanings. Instead of helping a hungry neighbour, they would go on pilgrimage to Mecca. Some dress themselves poorly and meekly and think they have become saints. All these persons are deceiving themselves as the true nature of things.

Similar is the case with the Sufis. Some of them learn only the terminology of the real Sufis and think they are likewise able to see God. Some are always wondering about the power and majesty of God and do nothing more. Some do actually try to cleanse the heart and perform good actions but wrongly think that they have passed most of the stages and are the true lovers of God. Again, there are some who make a distinction between Shari'ah and tariqah and regard themselves above Shari'ah. They give the performance of obligatory duties and religious observances. The

same is the case with the learned and the rich, who are generally involved in one kind of self-delusion or another.

Thus, we end the brief and synoptic survey of al-Ghazālī's account of the main vices of character. Now we turn to virtues, which are the redeeming qualities (al-munjiyat) and represent the positive efforts of the seeker towards God. Al-Ghazālī has given us a detailed, interesting, and illuminating discussion on this topic in the fourth quarter of his "Revivification of Religious Sciences." The virtues that, speaking chronologically, come first are repentance, abstinence, poverty, and patience. Repentance belongs to the purgative period of life which is an indispensable pre-requisite for the higher stages. It means abandoning the sins of which man is conscious and resolving never to return to them. It is a sort of spiritual conversion. "Those who repent and believe and do righteous work, for such Allah will change their evil deeds to good deeds."⁵¹ The penitent knows that his heart has been shrouded in the mist and darkness of sins, feels contrition and shame, and abandons them forever.

Love of the world, which is the root of all vices, has, however, to be removed first; the passions have to be subjected to a strict control and the devil within has to be turned out, "...the ascetic who renounces what is sensual and material knows that what is abandoned is of small value in relation to what is gained, just as the merchant knows that what he receives in exchange is better than what is sold, otherwise, he would not sell."⁵² Al-Ghazālī compares the ascetic with a person who is prevented from entering into the palace by a dog at the gate. He throws a morsel towards it and thus, by distracting its attention, enters and gets his desires from the king. The dog is like Satan, who prevents him from going towards God, and the morsel of bread is like the world by the sacrifice of which we can get something better.

This brings us to the virtue of abstinence (zuhd). Repentance is simply turning away from something, whereas abstinence includes turning away from as well as towards something better and more excellent. As a term in Sufistic literature, it signifies severing the heart's attachment from all worldly things, purging it of the rubbish, and then adorning it with the love of God. Abstinence can, in fact, have three grades. We might be inspired and motivated by the love of God itself, by the hope of reward, or by the fear of punishment. The highest grade is the love of God which makes us sacrifice all considerations of heaven and hell for the sake of God. This is absolute abstinence (zuhd al-mutlaq). We are reminded here of the fable of a saint who was carrying in one hand a flame and in the other a glass of water with the alleged purpose of burning heaven with the one and quenching the fire of hell with the other, so that everyone acts sincerely to attain nearness to God.

The individual who renounces the world is a poor man (faqir) in the terminology of al-Ghazālī and, in fact, of all the mystics. So poverty is to be wilfully cultivated. The faqirs are of various kinds: the abstinent (zahid), who is pained when wealth comes to him, the satisfied (radi), who is neither pleased at the possession of wealth nor pained at its loss, and when it comes to him he does not positively hate it, the contented (qani'), who wants to get

wealth but does not actively pursue this desire, the greedy (hāres), who has a very strong desire to get property but is somehow or other unable to do so, the constrained (mudtar), who, being in a state of want such as starvation or nakedness, is ill at ease and in consternation,. The first of these, i.e. one in the state of being a zahid, is the best. The zahid is the one who, being busy in enjoying the love of God is indifferent to all worldly losses and gains.

All the virtues considered above - repentance, abstinence, poverty - demand an immense amount of courage and steadfastness. They are not possible to attain without unswerving passion, which is doubly more difficult to cultivate, impatience being in the very nature of man.⁵³ It, however, does not mean toleration of things that are illegal and against religion. If a man wrongs us, we may pay him back in the same coin, if he strikes us, we can strike him, too (though forgiveness is also commendable). Patience in the real sense of the term has three grades: patience in performing a religious duty, patience in avoiding actions prohibited by God and patience over sufferings and difficulties in the arduous path towards Him. The last grade is the noblest.

Gratitude (shukr), too, is a necessary virtue and also so difficult that only few can exercise it.⁵⁴ It is, according to al-Ghazālī, complementary to patience, “He who eats until he is satisfied and is thankful is in the same station as he who fasts and is patient.” Further, gratitude is based upon man’s knowledge that all that comes to him comes from God and upon the feeling of joy over it. If one is pleased with the gift only, without any reference to the Giver, is no gratitude, “Gratitude is the vision of the Giver, not the gift.” Secondly, we may be pleased with the Giver over a gift because it is a sign of His pleasure. This is gratitude, no doubt, but of a low variety. The highest stage is reached when we are pleased with the Giver and determine to use His gift in order to attain greater and greater nearness to Him. “If you give thanks,” says God, “I shall give you more, but if you are thankless, My punishment is dire.”⁵⁵

After repentance from sin and successful renunciation of the world, the individual directs his attention towards his own self with a view to making it submissive and obedient to the will of God. The process has various steps and stages: assigning the task to the self (musharatbah), watching over the self (muraqabah), taking critical account of the self (muhasabah), punishing the self (mu‘aqabah), exerting the self (mujahadah), and upbraiding the self (mu‘atabah). The whole affair, which results in self-mastery, is so difficult that it has been called the bigger jihad (al-jihad at-akbar). We have to constantly keep a vigilant eye on our thoughts and actions and check ourselves at every step. We have to convince our hearts of the omnipresence of God and His omniscience, that God knows even what lies hidden in the innermost depths of our being. Such a conviction creates in the soul an all-pervading reverence for God. Single-mindedness (ikhlas) is the fruit of the self thoroughly mastered and trained. A fashioned soul has only one motive force, and that is the desire for the nearness to God, the lesser purposes are weeded out.

Single-mindedness leads to the virtue of truthfulness (sidq). Truthfulness is there in words, intentions, and actions. Truthfulness in words consists in

making a statement which is unequivocal and clear and is not aimed at deceiving others. We can, however, in some cases, make ambiguous and false statements if thereby we are aiming at the betterment of society. Such special cases may be war tactics, restoration of happy relations between husband and wife, amity among Muslims, and so on. Further, our intention must be rightful and true. The right direction of intention is very important because actions are judged only by intentions,⁵⁶ if our intention is good and the result incidentally turns out to be bad, we are not to blame. Conversely, if our intention is evil, we are culpable, whatever its outcome.

Lastly, truthfulness in actions lies in the fact that the inward state of a person is literally translated into outward behaviour without any tinge of hypocrisy. The highest truthfulness which is at the same time most difficult to attain is the complete realization of the various attitudes of the soul towards God, e.g. trust, hope, love, etc.⁵⁷

Fear (khauf) and hope (raja') also mark stages in moral progress. Fear may be of the wrath and the awe-inspiring attributes of God, or it may be produced in man by the consciousness of his guilt and the apprehension of divine displeasure. A nobler kind of fear is aroused by the feeling of separation from God who is the ultimate goal of all our aspirations. Hope, on the other hand, is a pleasant tendency. It consists of the expectation, after the individual has tried his best, of the divine love in the world and of the beatific vision in the hereafter. Fear is the result of knowledge - the knowledge of our infirmity as compared with the supremacy of our ideal, hope is the result of assured faith in the loving kindness of our Lord in acceding to our requests and prayers. It lies at a higher plane because it strengthens love and enables man to realize the goal.

The highest virtue, according to al-Ghazālī, is reliance (tawakkul), which is based on the knowledge of God's oneness or unification (tawhid). Those who profess belief in unification may be classified into three groups: those, including hypocrites, who confess the unity with the tongue only, those who believe on the basis of some so-called reliable authority, and those who, on the evidence of their direct, intuitive perception, believe that God is the unmoved mover of the material world and the ultimate cause of all creation and that He alone has real or absolute existence of their direct, intuitive cause of all creation and that He alone can abandon himself to God in complete trust and merge his will in the divine will. The servant no longer finds his own powers and personality to be self-sufficient and has allowed God to dominate his life...he considers himself as a dead body moved by the divine decree and is content that the divine strength should replace his own human weakness."⁵⁸ Reliance, therefore, is the casting of the soul into self surrender and the withdrawal of it from self assertion.

The moral soldier who is sincerely set upon his task must also form the habit of meditation and reflection. He has to reflect on the works of God, on the alternation of day and night, on the waxing and waning of the moon, on the rise and fall of nations, and on the general management of his cosmological scheme. For that purpose seclusion away from the active hustle and bustle of society is absolutely necessary. A heart pre-occupied with worldly things has no place for the knowledge of God. The true

significance of meditation is a firm conviction in the omnipresence of God, which results from the realization that He is aware of what we do under cover of darkness and of what lies buried in the inner-most depths of our hearts. Further, from meditation and reflection the soul is led on to contemplation, which is of three kinds:

- i. contemplation bi al-haqq, i.e. the seeing of things pointing towards divine unity,
- ii. contemplation li al-haqq, i.e. seeing signs of the Creator in created things, and finally,
- iii. the contemplation of God Himself. This form of contemplation surely and undeniably leads to His love, the final aim of all moral endeavours.

The last stage of contemplation and the love of God are not, however, the results of, but are simply occasioned by our concentration and thinking. There is nothing like a casual necessity here. The sacred knowledge is direct and immediate - and is due to God only. The Sufi has the impression that something has dropped upon him "as gentle rain from heaven," a gift of God due to His grace and mercy.

The highest contemplation is the valence of love, absorption of all human attributes in the vision of God, and then annihilations of the everlastingness of God. But why, in the first instance, should mere contemplation lead to His love? In answer, al-Ghazālī explains at length how God is the ultimate and absolute source of all the causes because of which objects are loved. The sentiment of love is, broadly speaking of four kinds.

- i. Self love. An egoistic tendency is ingrained in the very nature of man. Instincts and the so-called organic need points towards that fact. Our soul, life, or the pure ego is, certainly, the dearest to us, but beyond that we also love what William James would call our material and social selves.

- ii. Love of a benefactor for the benefits received from him. This is also a sort of self love, though an indirect one. We love others because they promote our own cause in one way or another. We love the physician because he looks after our health and the engineer because he beautifies our material environments and, thus, make our lives comfortable and happy.

- iii. Love of beauty. Beauty has almost universally been recognized as a thing of intrinsic value. It means the orderly and systematic arrangement of parts, and this is not the quality of material things only, it lies in the activities and the behaviour of man and in his ideas and concepts. Whatever is beautiful is loved by us for its own sake.

- iv. Love due to the harmonious inter-action and secret affinity between two souls. A thief loves a thief and a noble person loves a noble friend.

Now, if love exists for all these separate causes, will not the individual be loved who holds all these in their supreme and perfect form? Such an individual is God Himself, the possessor of the most lovable qualities. It is to Him that we owe our very existence. He is the only real benefactor and from Him all benefits are received. If we get something from a human being, it really comes from God. Had he willed otherwise, we would not have been able to get it. Thirdly, God also possesses the attributes of beauty. There is beauty in His design and in His creative behaviour. "God is beautiful and loves beauty,"⁵⁹ said the Holy Prophet. Lastly, the human soul

has affinity with its divine source: God has created man after His own image. So, once we know God with all these attributes and also know where we stand in relation to Him, our love for Him becomes a necessity. And then He loves us too. “Verily Allah loves the repentant and those who purify themselves.”⁶⁰

But the lover who claims to love the Most Lovable must show some signs. The first sign, according to al-Ghazālī, is that the lover has no fear of death, for it means meeting the Beloved face to face and having a direct vision of Him. This world is a hindrance and a barrier which obstructs the lover’s path. The sooner it is done away with, the better. Another mark of the true love is that the remembrance of God ever remains fresh in his heart. Once the fire of love is kindled, it cannot be extinguished. It remains ever ablaze and the flames go on rising higher and higher. The lover, in fact, feels happy in this condition. This is why he often seeks undisturbed loneliness to brighten these flames by contemplation and one-sided thought. Further, the lover sacrifices his will for that of the Beloved. His likes and dislikes, his behaviour and his ways of life are entirely directed and controlled by God. Lastly, the intensity of love for God demands that we should love all His activities. So, also, we should love our fellow-men for they are all His servants and creatures.

Love includes longing (shauq), for every lover pines to see the beloved when absent. The lover of God craves for the vision of God which would be the noblest grace and the highest delight held out to him. Again, love results in affability (uns), which, according to al-Ghazālī, is one of the most glorious fruits of love and signifies the feeling of pleasure and delight consequent upon God’s nearness and the perception of His beauty and perfection. Thirdly, successful love means satisfaction (rida’). This includes the satisfaction of God with men and the satisfaction of men with Him. “God is satisfied with them and them with him.”⁶¹ This is the stage of the tranquil soul (al-nafs al-mutma’innah). “Oh tranquil soul!” God will say, “Return to thy Lord well-pleased (with Him) and well-pleasing (Him), so enter among My servants and enter into my Garden.”⁶²

Now, because love is consequent upon the knowledge and contemplation of God, the lover is the gnostic (‘arif). Gnosis (ma‘rifah), however, is a gem, a precious thing which is not to be wasted, “The sun which enlightens the heart of the gnostic,” says al-Ghazālī, “is more radiant than our physical sun, for that sun sets and may be eclipsed, but the sun of gnosis knows no eclipse nor does it set. It is an invaluable gift to be given only to those who deserve it and to be given more or less according to the degree of self-mortification to which they attain. The limited human mind is not capable of grasping the entire expanse of divine majesty. The more one knows of God, the more one loves Him. The height of contemplation is reached when plurality passes away entirely, when there is complete cessation of conscious perception of things other than the Beloved, and the individual sees God everywhere. It was in this state that one said, “I am the Truth,” and another, “Glory be to Me! How is My majesty,” and another, “Under this robe is naught but God.” This is the state of absolute unity and identity.

The gnostic and the lover of God in this world will see God in the next world. The Mu'tazilites had denied the beatific vision because it involved a directing of the eyes on the part of the seer and the position on the part of the seen. They said that because God is beyond space, the question of limiting Him to a particular place and direction does not arise. But al-Ghazālī meets their objection by saying that this vision, like meditation, will not have any references to the eye or any other sense-organ. It will be without their mediation. Similarly, just as the conception of God is free from the implication of spatial and temporal characteristics, so will the vision of Him be beyond all such limitations and boundaries.

C. Influence

Al-Ghazālī's influence within Islam has been both profound and the most wide-spread; his works have been and still are being read and studied from West Africa to Oceania more than those of any other Muslim writer, and his teaching has been accepted and made a rule of life more than that of any other theologian. It has been claimed and rightly so that "al-Ghazālī's influence taken singly, on the Muslim community has been perhaps greater than that of all the scholastic theologians."

But we hasten to add that, like any other original thinker in the world, al-Ghazālī did not go without his share of criticism. The unprecedented attempt on his part to make orthodoxy mystical and mysticism orthodox, and both philosophical, naturally incurred suspicion and criticism from all schools of thought and all stages of opinion both before and after his death. Liberals have criticized him for his conservatism, and conservatives for his liberalism; philosophers for his orthodoxy, and the orthodox for his philosophy.

Al-Ghazālī's constant use of philosophical language and his mode of argument and pre-occupation with Sufism led Tartushi (d. 520/1126), al-Mazari (d. 536/1141), ibn Jauzi (d. 597/1200), ibn al-Salah (d. 643/1245), ibn Taimiyyah (d. 728/1328), ibn Qayyim (d. 751/1350) and other famous theologians of the orthodox school to denounce him publicly as "one of the misguided." Ibn Jauzi is reported to have once exclaimed, "How cheaply has al-Ghazālī traded theology for Sufism!"⁶³ Ibn Taimiyyah on the other hand has accused him of having traded "theology" for philosophy.

Qadi Abu 'Abd Allah Mohammad ibn Hamdin of Cordova went so far as to issue a decree (fatwa) against al-Ghazālī's works, with the result that all his books including the *Ihya'*⁶⁴ were burned and destroyed throughout Spain and the possession of them was forbidden on the threat of confiscation of property or even on that of death. The destruction of his philosophical and even theological writings was also ordered in North Africa during the reign of the Marrakush Sultan 'Ali ibn Yusuf ibn Tashifin (477/1084 - 537/1142), who was fanatically orthodox in his religious views. Both of these incidents, however, bear ample testimony to the fact that al-Ghazālī's writings had gained a very wide circulation in the Muslim West even as early as that.

Amongst the philosophers, al-Ghazālī's most renowned and bitterest critic was ibn Rushd (520/1126 - 595/1198). He took a point-by-point refutation of al-Ghazālī's arguments against the philosophers as given in the *Tahafut* and named his own work *Tahafut al-Tahafut* (576/1180). Ibn

Rushd's defence of the philosophers is as subtle and vigorous as is al-Ghazālī's attack against them. Ibn Rushd indeed handles his arguments with accomplished understanding and ingenious skill, yet, in the considered opinion of those who are competent to judge, al-Ghazālī's arguments are in the final analysis more telling than those of his adversary.⁶⁵

Ibn Rushd in the course of his discussion accuses al-Ghazālī of hypocrisy and insincerity by saying that his polemics against the philosophers was merely to win the favour of the orthodox;⁶⁶ there is nothing to substantiate this charge. He also accused al-Ghazālī of inconsistencies in his thought. He alleges, for example, that in the *Mishkat al-Anwar* al-Ghazālī lends wholehearted support to the theory of emanation which he had so vehemently criticized in the *Tahafut*.⁶⁷ Al-Ghazālī's teaching, according to him, is sometimes detrimental to religion and sometimes to philosophy and sometimes to both. It is said, on the report of ibn Taimiyyah, which ibn Rushd was so struck by the duplicity of al-Ghazālī's thought that he would often quote the following verse with reference to him, "One day you are Yemenite when you meet a man from Yemen. But when you see someone from Ma'add you assert you are from 'Adnan!"⁶⁸

The charge of inconsistency against al-Ghazālī has also been made by another Muslim philosopher, namely ibn Tufail (d. 501/1185), who says that in his works meant for general readers al-Ghazālī is "bound in one place and loose in another and has denied certain things and then declared them to be true." In spite of pointing out certain contradictions in Ghazālī's works, ibn Tufail had on the whole great admiration⁶⁹ for his teaching, and the influence of it can be seen in his own greatly admired philosophical romance *Hayy Bin Yaqzan*.

Indeed, the amount of criticism levelled against al-Ghazālī⁷⁰ is itself proof of his wide-spread influence. The number of al-Ghazālī's followers and admirers who accepted his teaching and spread it is immensely greater than that of his critics; it is neither possible nor useful here to give a long catalogue of names. One fact, however, becomes conspicuous that it includes mostly people of two types, namely, the orthodox theologians and the Sufis, or those who were equally qualified as both. This makes it clear that the influence of al-Ghazālī within Islam expressed itself simultaneously in two different traditions, i.e. those of mysticism and orthodoxy, and thus, along with the other forces of history went a long way in determining the permanent attitudes in the religious consciousness of the Islamic community, namely, the attitudes of spiritualization and fundamentalism.

Ihya' indeed is still the most widely read of all the works of al-Ghazālī in all sections of the community, if not in its entirety at least in the form of fragments and summaries which are available in large numbers.⁷¹ It has been so eulogized by some that they have not hesitated to call it the second Qur'an, and the theologians and traditionalists have not tired in writing voluminous commentaries on it.

But it is not within Islam only that Al-Ghazālī's influence exerted itself so strongly, it also had its impact on Western, particularly Jewish and Christian, thought, and indeed has flowed right into the most modern of our

philosophical fascinating subject. It will be dealt with in the next volume in the chapter on “The Influence of Muslim Philosophy on the West.”

Bibliography

So far, the best sources for a bibliography on al-Ghazālī are Sayyid Murtada, *Ittihaf al-Sadah*, Cairo, 1311/1893, Vol. 1, pp. 41 - 44; Carl Brockelman, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, Weimar, 1898, Vol. 1, pp. 419 - 26, Supplementbande, Leiden, 1937, Vol. 1, pp. 744 et sqq.; and *Zweite den Supplementhanden angepasste Auflage*, Vol. 1, Leiden, 1943, pp. 535, et sqq. A list of articles on al-Ghazālī in English and some of the European languages published in the various periodicals, etc. from 1906 - 1955 is to be found in *Index Islamicus*, Cambridge, 1958, pp. 150 - 52. A fairly comprehensive subject-wise classification of al-Ghazālī’s works and a topic-wise, though brief, bibliography can be found in the article “Al-Ghazālī” in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. In the three sections below an attempt has been made to list: 1) those of al-Ghazālī’s works which can be arranged in a chronological order with some measure of certainty, 2) works the authenticity of which has been doubted by the professional students of al-Ghazālī (for both these sections, cf. note No. 24 in the preceding chapter), and 3) books (or sections thereof) and articles most of which have been referred to in the notes but which are not included in any of the sources mentioned above.

Notes

1. *Maqasid al-Falasifah*, Second edition, Egypt, 1355/1936 (statement of the teachings of the Muslim Peripatetics); *Mi‘yar al-‘Ilm*, Cairo, 1329/1911 (an elaborate treatise on logic); *Tahafut al-Falasifah*, ed. M. Bouyges, S. J. Beyrouth, 1927 (against the philosophers); *Mihakk al-Nazar*, Cairo (a smaller work on logic); *al-Mustazhiri*, Leiden, 1916 (against the Batinites); *al-Iqtistad fi al-I‘tiqad*, Cairo, 1327/1909 (on speculative theology); *Ihya’ ‘Ulum al-Din*, 15 vols, Cairo, 1356/1937 - 1357/1938 (magnum opus, a compendium of al-Ghazālī’s whole system); *Bidayat al-Hidayah*, Cairo, 1353/1934, 47 pp. (on religious conduct, the authenticity of the closing section, pp. 40 - 47, doubtful); *al-Hikma fi Makhluqat Allah*, Cairo, 1321/1903 (on evidence of God’s wisdom in His creation); *al-Maqsad al-Asna fi Asma’ Allah al-Husna*, Cairo, 1322/1904 (an exhortation to imitation of the divine qualities); *al-Imla’ ‘an Ishkalat al-Ihya’* (reply to attacks on *Ihya’*, can be found on the margin of Sayyid Murtada’s *Ittihaf al-Sadah*, Vol. 1, pp. 41 - 252, (the definitions of the Sufi terms in the introduction are perhaps not authentic); *al-Madnun bihi ‘ala-Ghairi Ahlihi*, Cairo, 1309/1891 (an esoteric work to be kept from those unfit for it); *Jawahir al-Qur’an*, Egypt (an exposition of the faith of the orthodox on the basis of the Qur’an); *Kitab al-Arba’in*, Cairo, 1328/1910 (a second part of the preceding work); *Kimiya-i Sa‘dat* (in Persian), lithograph edition, Bombay (a summary of *Ihya’*, to be distinguished from a spurious work of the same title in Arabic); *al-Qustas al-Mustaqim*, Cairo, 1318/1900 (a smaller work against the Batinites); *Iljam al-‘Awamm ‘an ‘Ilm al-Kalam*, Egypt, 1309/1891 (a work on the science of dogmatics); *Ayyuha al-Walad*, Egypt, 1343/1924 (advice in the sphere of theology); *al-Munqidh min al-Dalal*, Damascus, 1358/1939 (auto-biographical); *Mishkat al-Anwar*, Egypt, 1343/1924 (on mysticism: an exposition of the light verse in the Qur’an, the authenticity of the veil section at the end is questionable; cf. note No. 24. above).

2. *Al-Durrat al-Fakhirah Koshf ‘Ulum al-Akhirah*, ed. Gauthier, Leipzig, 1877; *Risalah Ladunniyah*, Cairo, 1343/1924 (English translation by Margaret Smith): *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1938, pp. 177 - 200, 353 - 74; *Rawlat al-Taliban wa ‘Umdat al-*

Salikin in Fara'id al-La'ali, Cairo, 1343/1924, pp. 121 - 261; Sirr al-'Alamain wa Kashi ma fi al-Darain, Cairo, 1328/1910; Kimiya' al-Sa'adah (Arabic) in al-Jawahir al-Ghazali, Cairo 1343, 1924; al-Najkh al-Taswiyyah (referred to by Sayyid Murtada in Ittahal); al-Madnun al-Saghir, also known as al-Ajwibah al-Ghazaliyyah fi al-Masa'il al-Ukhrawiyyah, Cairo, 1309/1891; Mankhul (refutation of the Fikh of Abu Hanifah; referred to in Kashf al-Zunan); Me'raj al-Salikin in Fara'ad al-La'ali, Cairo, 1343/1924, pp. 1 - 99; Mukashafat al-Qulub, Cairo, 1328/1910.

3. (A) Books - S. A. Kamali, al-Ghazālī's Tahafut al-Falasifah (English translation), The Pakistan philosophical Congress, Lahore, 1958; W. M. Watt, The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazālī (English translation of al-Munqidh min al-Dalal and Bidayat al-Hadiyyah), George Allen and Unwin, London, 1953; Mohammad Hanif Nadawi, Qadim Yunani Falsafah (Urdu translation of Maqasid al-Falasifah), Majlis-i Taraqqi-i Adab, Lahore, 1959; Sargudhasht-i Ghazālī (Urdu translation of al-Munqidh min al-Dalal with an Introduction), Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore, 1959; Afkir-i Ghazālī (al-Ghazālī's teachings with regard to knowledge and faith based on Ihya' with an Introduction), Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore, 1956 (Urdu); M. Ahsan, Madhaq al-Arifin (Urdu translation of Ihya'), four vols., Matba'ah Tejkumar, Lucknow, 1955 (seventh edition); M. 'Inayat Allah, Kimiya'i Sa'adat (Urdu translation), Din Mohammadi Press, Lahore. n.d. (revised edition); Sayyid 'Abd al-Quddus Hashimi Nadawi, al-Murshid al-Amin (summary of Ihya' in Urdu), Urdu Manzil, Karachi, 1955; Syed Nawab Ali, Some Moral and Religious Teachings of al-Ghazālī (English translation of extracts from Parts Three and Four of Ihya' with Introduction by Alban G. Widgery), Sheikh Mohammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1946; Claud Field, The Alchemy of Happiness (English translation of some parts of Kimiya-Sa'adat), Sh. Mohammad Ashraf, Lahore, n.d. (reprint from the Wisdom of the East Series); W. H. T. Gairdner, Mishkat al-Anwar, Sh. Mohammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1952 (new edition); Sulaiman Dunya, Tahafut al-Falsifah li al-Ghazālī, Cairo, 1947; al-Haqiqah fi Nazar al-Ghazālī, Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, Cairo, 1947; al-Hiqah fi Nazar al-Ghazālī, Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, Cairo, n.d.; A.W. Zuhuri, Makatib-i Imam Ghazālī (Letters of al-Ghazālī in Urdu), Karachi, 1949; M. Umaruddin, The Ethical Philosophy of al-Ghazālī, four parts, published by the author, Muslim University, Aligarh, 1949 - 1951; Some Fundamental Aspects of Imam Ghazali's Thought, Irshad Book Depot, Aligarh, 1946; Nur al-Hassan Khan, Ghazālī ka Tasawar-i Akhlaq (Urdu translation of Dr. Zaki Mubarak's al-Akhlaq 'ind al-Ghazali), al- Maktabat al-'Ilmiyyah, Lahore, 1956; Shibli Nu'mani, al-Ghazālī M. Thana Allah Khan, Lahore 1956 (Urdu); Simon van den Bergh, Averrose' Tahafut al-Tahafut (English translation with extensive notes), two vols., Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1954. An Urdu translation of ibn Rushd's Tahafut al-Tahafut is under preparation, to be published by the Board for Advancement of Literature, Lahore.

(B) Sections of Books - 'Abd al-Salam Nadawi, Hukama'-i Islam, Azamgarh, 1953, Vol. 1 pp. 386 - 408 (Urdu); Abu al-Hassan 'Ali, Tarikh-i Da'wat-u 'Azimat, Azamgarh, 1375/1955, Part One, pp. 111 - 81 (Urdu); Majid Fakhry, Islamic Occasionalism, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1958, chapter two and by index; M. M. Sharif, Muslim Thought: Its Origin and Achievements, Sh. Mohammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1951, pp. 75 - 80; F. Rahman, Prophecy in Islam, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1958, pp. 94 - 99; M. Saeed Sheikh, Studies in Muslim Philosophy (in press), Pakistan Philosophical Congress, Lahore, chapter on al-Ghazālī; D. M. Donaldson, Studies in Sufism, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1956 (second impression), pp. 74 - 75, 79 - 83 and by index; S. M. Afnan, Avicenna: His Life and Works, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1958, pp. 235 - 41; E. I. J. Rosenthal, Political Thought in Medieval Islam, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1958, pp. 38 - 43 and by index; J. W. Sweetman, Islam and Christian Theology, Lutterworth Press, London, 1955, Part 2, vol. 1, pp. 90 - 93, 262 - 309 and by index of authors; C. Hartshorne and W. L. Reese, Philosophers Speak of God, Chicago, 1953, pp. 106 - 11.

(C) Articles - G. F. Hourani, "Al-Ghazālī and the Philosophers on the Origin of the World," The Muslim World, 1958, Vol. 48, Nos. three and four, pp. 183 - 91, 308 - 14; Michael E. Marmura, "Al-Ghazālī and the Argument of Time," The Muslim world, 1959, Vol. 49, no. four; M. M. Sharif, "Muslim Philosophy and Western Thought," Iqbal, July 1959, Vol. eight no. 1, pp. 7 - 14; M. Hanif Nadawi, "Ghazālī ka Nazriyyah'i Ta'lil,"

Thaqafat (Urdu), Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore, July 1959, vol. eight, no. seven, pp. 11 - 19.

1. In the Munqidh al-Ghazālī expressly mentions that he had studied the Qut al-Qutub of Abu Talib al-Makki (d. 386/996), the works of Harith al-Muhasibi (d. 243/857), and the fragments of al-Junaid (d. 298/910), al Shibli (d. 334/945) and Abu Yazid al-Bistami (d. 261/875). At the end he adds that he had read the discourses of all the leading Sufis. In al-Ghazālī's works, indeed, there are references to be found to all the great mystics of Islam. For al-Ghazālī's Sufistic sources, cf. Margaret Smith, *Al-Ghazālī: The Mystic*, London, 1944, pp. 123 - 32. For a comparison of Qut al-Qulub and Ihya' cf. Shibli Nu'mani, *Al-Ghazālī*, Lahore, 1956, p. 107; for the comparison of Muhasibi's *Kitab al-Wasaya* and *Munqidh*, cf. A. J. Arberry, *Sufism*, London, 1950, pp. 47 - 50.

2. Cf. *Ihya'*, Cairo, 1340/1921, Vol. 4, p 259 et.sq.

3. *Tahafut*, p. 88, see note 38 in the preceding chapter.

4. *Qur'an* 2:117, 26:40.

5. T. J. de Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, English trans. by E. R. Jones, London, 1933, p. 163.

6. Cf. *Qur'an* 3:189, 190, 6:100, 10:5, 6, 13:3, 4, etc., cf. also al-Ghazālī's *al Hikmah fi Makhtuqat Allah*, Cairo, 1321/1903.

7. Cf. M. Saeed Sheikh, "Kant's Critique of Rational Psychology and Its Paralogisms," *Proceedings of the Sixth Pakistan Philosophical Congress*, Lahore, 1959, pp. 185 - 93.

8. Cf. *Tahafut*, pp. 200—20. For a comparison of al-Ghazālī's and ibn Sina's views with regard to soul, cf. Sulaiman Dunya, *al-Haqiqah fi Nazr al-Ghazālī*, Egypt, 1367/1947, pp. 356 - 455.

9. Cf. article "Nafs," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, esp. sections 9 and 10; also *Maqasid al-Falasifah* (Urdu translation) by M. Hanif Nadawi, Lahore, 1959, pp. 323 - 32.

10. See *Ihya'*, Cairo 1340/1921, p. 54. Cf. also D. B. Macdonald, *Development of Muslim Theology...*, London, 1903, pp. 234, 235, and A. J. Wonsinek, *The Relation between al-Ghazālī's Cosmology and His Mysticism*, Amsterdam, 1933.

11. See *Kimiya-Sa'dat*, Urdu Trans. by M. 'Inayat Ullah, Lahore, n.d., pp. 8, 36. Also cf. *Qur'an*, 30:30.

12. *Qur'an*, 15:29, 38:72.

13. *Kimiya-i Sa'adat*, English trans. by Claud Field, *The Alchemy of Happiness*, Lahore, n.d. pp. 19, 35.

14. See *Kimiya-i Sa'dat*, Urdu trans. p. 10.

15. *Qur'an* 37:85

16. *Ibid*, 49:27 - 30.

17. *Munqidh*, p. 60; see note no. 1 in the preceding chapter.

18. Cf. F. Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam* London, 1958, p. 96.

19. *Ihya'* Urdu trans. by M. Ahsan Siddiqi, Lucknow, 1955, Vol. 1, pp. 11 et sqq.

20. Cf. *Mizan al-'Amal*, Cairo, 1342/1923, pp. 35, 36; also *Ihya'*, Part 1 Book 1, Section 7 on 'Aql (Intellect).

21. Cf. P. K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, London, 1949, p. 432; Max Meyerhof, *The Legacy of Islam*, ed. T. Arnold and A. Guillaume, Oxford, 1931; and Will Durant, *The Age of Faith*, New York, 1950, pp. 256, 257, 332.

22. He himself wrote a treatise on astronomy. Cf. Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science*, Baltimore, 1927, Vol 1, p. 753.

23. The charge of esotericism, in the narrow sense of the theory of two-fold truth against al-Ghazali, is however, unfounded. Cf. W. Montgomery Swat, "A Forgery in al-Ghazālī's *Mishkat*," *Journal of royal Asiatic Society*, 1949, pp. 5 - 22; also article "al-Ghazālī," (section 3), *Encyclopedia of Islam*. This question is connected with the problem of the authenticity of al-Ghazālī's works.

24. Cf. M. Iqbal, "...to this day it is difficult to define with accuracy, his view of the nature of God. In him, like Borger and Solger in Germany, Sufi Pantheism and the Ash'arite dogma of personality appear to harmonize together, a reconciliation which makes it difficult to say whether he as a Pantheist or a Personal Pantheist of the type" (*The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, p. 75).

Also C. R. Upper, "Al-Ghazālī's Thought Concerning the Nature of man and Union with God," *The Muslim World*, 1952, Vol 42, pp. 23 - 32. C. R. Upper ends this article by a

significant remark, "Al-Ghazālī's occasional pantheism is indubitable, yet is orthodoxy is impeccable. How this can be ist he secret between the various positions. cf. S. R. Shafiq, "Some Abiding Teachings of al-Ghazālī," *The Muslim World*, Vol 54, No. 1, 1954, pp. 43 - 48.

25. Cf. Munqidh, p. 61.
26. Cf. Qur'an, 2:255.
27. Cf. *Miskhat al-Anwar*, English translation by W. H. T. Gairdner, Lahore, p. 62.
28. Saying of al-Hallaj (executed 309/922). Cf. R. A. Nicholson, *The Idea of Personality in Sufism*, Cambridge, 1923.
29. Sayings ascribed to Abu Yazid al-Bistani, who is probably the first of the intoxicated Sufis.
30. Munqidh, p. 61.
31. Margaret Smith, Dr. Zaki Mubarak, and others.
32. Qur'an 58:4.
33. Al-Ghazālī *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* part 3, p.50.
34. Hadith, Ahmad b. Hanbal, Vo. 4, p. 226
35. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihya'*, Pate 2, Chap. on Music.
36. D.B. Macdonald, *Development of Muslim Theology*, p. 192.
37. The Qur'an, 6:125.
38. Donaldson, *Studies in Muslim Ethics*, p. 156.
39. W. R. Sorley, *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 446.
40. The Qur'an, 90:9 - 10.
41. Ibn Hajr, *Bulugh al-Maram*, "Bab al-Zuhd w-al-War'."
42. The Qur'an, 7:31.
43. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihya'*, Part 3, p.72.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 66
45. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
46. The Qur'an, 2:10.
47. *Jama' Tirmidhi*, *Matba'ah Mujtaha'i*, p. 201.
48. The Qur'an, 49:12.
49. Al-Mishkat al-Masabih, "Bab al-Kaba'ir wa 'Alamat al-Nifaq."
50. Qur'an, 9:34.
51. *Ibid.* 25:70
52. Margaret Smith, *Al-Ghazālī: The Mystic*, pp. 167 - 68.
53. The Qur'an 70:19.
54. *Ibid.* 34:13.
55. *Ibid.* 14:7.
56. The opening hadith in al-Sahih al-Bkhari.
57. Al-Ghazālī, *Ihya'*, Part 4, pp. 334 - 35.
58. Margaret Smith, op. cit. pp. 167 - 68.
59. Al-Mishkat al-Masabih "Bab al-Ghadab w-al-Kibr."
60. Qur'an 2:222.
61. *Ibid.* 98:8.
62. *Ibid.* 89:27 - 30.
63. Cf. Jamal al-Din ibn al-Jauzi, *al-Namus fi Talbis Iblis*, Cairo, 1340/1921, p. 377.
64. For the theologians' various objections to *Ihya'* and an answer to them, see M. Hanif Nadawi, *Afkar-i Ghazālī*, Lahore, 1956, pp. 61 - 73.
65. Cf. e.g. Majid Fakhry, *Islamic Occasionalism*, London, 1958, pp. 103 et sqq.
66. Cf. also ibn Rushd, *al-Kashf 'an Manahij al-Adillah*, Cairo, 1319/1901, pp. 57, et sq.
67. Cf. *Miskhat al-Anwar*, English translation by W. H. T. Gardner, Lahore, pp. 17 - 21.
68. Quoted by F. Rahman, op. cit. London, 1958, p. 112. It is significant to note that S. van den Bergh concludes in his introduction to Averroes' *Tahafut al-Tahafut* that resemblances between Ghazālī and Averroes seem sometimes greater than their differences, pp. 35, 36.
69. Cf. ibn Tufail, *Hayy Bin Yaqzan* (Urdu trans. by Zafar Ahmad Siddiqi), Aligarh, 1955, pp. 26 - 30.
70. For a modern criticism of al-Ghazālī cf. M. Zaki 'Abd al-Salim Mubarak, *al-Akhlaq 'ind al-Ghazzali*, Cairo, 1924 (Urdu trans. by Nur al-Hassan Khan, Lahore, 1956). Very

recently F. Rahman in his short treatment of al-Ghazālī's vies on prophecy in the above cited work has made a very strong charge of inconsistency against him.

71. With the exception of al-Ghazālī's own *Kimiya-i Sa'dat* (in Persian), the first of such summaries was written by al-Ghazālī's own brother, Ahmad al-Ghazālī (d. 520/1126), under the title *Lubab al-Ihya'*. A list of these may be found in Sayyid Murtada's *Ittihaj al-Sadah*, Cairo, 1311/1893, p. 41.

Chapter 32: Fakhr Al-Razi

A. Life, Significance Of Thought And Works

The intellectual life of Islam after the attacks of Ash‘ari and Ghazālī upon rationalistic philosophy can be largely described as the gradual transition from rationalism of Aristotelian philosophy toward the intuitive and illuminative wisdom of Ishtāqī¹ and Sufis. Although Islam began to weaken politically and culturally during the latter part of the ‘Abbasid Caliphate, Muslim thought, especially in the Shi‘ah world continued the process of divorcing itself from the categories of Peripatetic philosophy. One of the most influential and colourful figures in this movement, who played a major role in the attack against the rationalists, was Fakhr al-Din Razi, who is considered to be the reviver of Islam in the sixth/12th century as Ghazālī was in the fifth/11th century.² Razi is, in many ways, a second Ghazālī; in fact, he may, without exaggeration, be considered to be one of the greatest Muslim theologians.

Abu al-Fadl Mohammad ibn ‘Umar, known as Fakhr al-Din Razi and also as Imam Fakhr ibn al-Katib, and Imam al-Mushakkikin (the Imam of Doubters),³ was born in Rayy in northern Persia in 543/1149 to a family of scholars who came originally from Talbaristan. His father, Dia’ al-Din, was a well known scholar in Rayy and was Imam Fakhr’s first teacher. Later, Fakhr al-Din al-Jilli (the latter being also the teacher of Sheikh al-Baghawi and Majd al-Din Suhrawardi) and theology with Kamal al-Din Simnani in Rayy and Maraghah, and soon became a master of all the sciences of his time, including mathematics, medical and natural sciences.⁴

Having completed his formal studies, Imam Fakhr set out for Khwarizm to combat the Mu‘tazilites, and from there journeyed to Transoxiana and was warmly accepted at the Courts of Ghur rulers, Ghiyath al-Din and his brother Shihab al-Din. This stay terminated soon due to opposition and jealousy of certain scholars and courtiers. Consequently, Imam Fakhr left Qhur Court for Chaznah, where he taught for a while, and finally, settled in Herat where, under the patronage of Khwarizm Shah ‘Ala al-Din, a special school was built for him. There he spent the rest of his life as a teacher and preacher in comfort and honour among a large number of disciples and students who came from all over the Muslim world to study under him. He passed away at the height of fame and glory in 606/1209.⁵

The career of Imam Fakhr is, in many ways, a repetition of that of Ghazālī’s. Like his great predecessor, he was of the Shafī‘i school, well versed in all the sciences and philosophy and yet opposed to many aspects of the Greek heritage, a critic of the Muslim philosophers, and drawn towards Sufism.⁶ In theology, in which he followed the Ash‘rite school, he was certainly influenced by Ghazālī and Imam al-Haramain. In philosophy he came under the influence of his compatriot, Mohammad Zakariyya Razi, as well as ibn Sina and in physics his master was, without doubt, Abu al-Barakat al-Baghdadi. Like a series of anti-Aristotelian philosophers before him, Imam Fakhr tried to reconcile religion and rational philosophy by reliance upon ideas derived more from the Timaeus of Plato than the Physics of Aristotle.⁷

Imam Fakhr's main role in the intellectual life of Islam was to support the orthodox policy of the Caliphate of his time, to suppress rationalistic philosophy in favour of theology. In the unified view of Islam, politics, religion and intellectual life have never been divorced, so much so, that the political struggle of minorities in the Caliphate, whether they were opposed to Arab domination or, like the Shi'ahs, to the 'Abbasid Caliphate as such, was reflected clearly in the intellectual and religious activities of the period. As the Caliphate supported the Orthodox Sunni theologians against the rationalists, the philosophers sought refuge in the courts of those minor dynasties that were opposed to the central authority of the Caliphs. So we see such figures as ibn Sina and Khuwaja Nassir al-Din Tusi seeking favour of rulers opposed to the authority of Baghdad, and especially of Shi'ah princes.⁸

On the other hand, there appeared a series of great scholars and sages, mostly theologians and Sufis, of whom the most important were Ghazālī, Imam Fakhr, and the Sufi masters, like Shihab al-Din 'Umar Suhrawardi, who lifted their pen in support of the Caliphate and used both theology and Sufism in order to combat rationalistic philosophy.⁹ The works of Imam Fakhr were, above all else, dedicated to his cause. Sunni theology reached its height in his works and weakened considerably with the fall of the 'Abbasid Caliphate, which came to an end about 50 years after his death.

The writings of Fakhr al-Din Razi, of which nearly a hundred are known deal almost with every aspect of Muslim intellectual life and include all the sciences of his time.¹⁰ Some of these, like the commentary upon the al-Isharat w-al-Tanbihat of ibn Sina and upon his 'Uyun al-Hikmah and the Mabahith al-Mashriqiyyah, are written as criticisms of Muslim philosophers, especially ibn Sina, and on general problems of philosophy.¹¹ Others deal with the many branches of the intellectual sciences including logic, mathematics, metaphysics and the natural and esoteric sciences.

Still another set of books deals with theology, of which the most famous are the Kitab al-Arba-in fi Usul al-Din, Laudami' al-Bayyinah, and the Mubassal, a classic among writings of the Kalam. Fakhr al-Din also wrote a large number of works on particular sciences, like the commentary upon the syntax of Zamkhshari, Kitab al-Sirr al-Maktum on astrology and astronomy, Manaqib al-shifi'i on history, the commentary upon the Qanun or Canon of ibn Sina, and many other treatises dealing with medicine, geometry, physiognomy, agriculture, theurgy, etc. Besides these writings, Imam Fakhr composed a large number of works on the purely Islamic sciences of exegesis and jurisprudence, of which the most famous are the Mafatih al-Ghaib, the voluminous commentary upon the Qur'an and al-Ma'alim fi Usul al-Figh on the principles of jurisprudence.

Throughout these writings, the character of Imam Fakhr as a critic and "doubter" is evident. He criticizes not only the philosophers, but also theologians like Ash'ari and historians like Shahrastani, when he accuses of plagiarizing Baghdadi's al-Farq bain al Firaq in his al-Milal wa-al-Nibal.¹² Imam Fakhr's particular genius for analysis and criticism is evident in whatever field he turns his attention to, so that in the annals of Muslim thought he has quite justly become famous as one who is a master in posing

a problem but not in solving it, in entering into a debate but not in concluding it.

B. Theology (Kalam)

Muslim theology, known as Kalam, began as a reaction against the rationalistic school of the Mu‘tazilites, and only gradually developed into a complete science. In the earlier centuries the theologians, following the lead of Abu al-Hassan al-Ash‘ari, tried to use logic, the instrument of their enemies, in order to defend the truths of revelation. From the fourth/tenth century onward, this defence itself became more subtle and systematic, reaching its height in the works of Imam al-Haramain Abu al-Ma‘ali ‘Abd al-Malik al-Juwaini, such as the *Irshad* and the *Shamil*.¹³ With Ghazālī Kalam took a new turn, as opposed to what it was at the beginning to the school of philosophers, it now began to employ the syllogistic method, intellectual (‘aqli) evidence and certain theses of the philosophers, thus laying the foundation of the school of philosophical Kalam of the later theologians.

Imam Fakhr is the greatest master of this later school of theology, surpassing in many ways even the more illustrious Ghazālī. With Imam Fakhr philosophical Kalam reaches its zenith of power and perfection; his works became consequently a continuous source of influence over their later theologians, whether they were Sunnis like al-Ijī and al-Taftazani or Shi‘ahs like Khuwaja Nasr.¹⁴ Properly speaking, Razi must be credited with the foundation of a new school of Kalam, and certain writers have even considered him to be the Third Teacher after Aristotle and Farabi.¹⁵ Actually, he composed works characteristic of both the first period of Muslim theology - marked by a revolt against the philosophers and yet by a dependence upon their methods and even some of their ideas - and the second period, after Ghazālī, in which theology became a more independent science and lost much of its defensive and apologetic quality. Among the first type of writings one may name *Muhassal* and *al-Arabi fi Usul al-Din* and among the second *Asas al-Taqdis* and *Lawamial-Bayyindt*.

The theology of Imam Razi is marked by the integration of theological themes with other sciences. For example, in his Persian treatise, *Asrar al-Tanzil*, he combines theology with ethics, and in the *Lawami‘ al-Bayyindt*, theology with Sufism, giving theology a fragrance of spirituality and a beauty detailed and profound discussion concerning dhikr, the invocation of one of the interior forms of dhikr he writes, “The third kind of dhikr is that man of creation should contemplate the creatures of God until each particle of the essence of creation becomes a polished mirror before the unmanifested world so that when he looks into this mirror with the eye of wisdom the ray of the eye of his should will fall upon the world of Majesty. This is a station without end and a sea with limit.”¹⁶ In this way, Imam Razi raises theology to a height approached only by Ghazālī, far surpassing the usual level of this study.¹⁷

To understand Razi’s approach to theology, it is enough to analyze the structure of one of his treatises. We take as an example perhaps the most famous of his theological works, the *Muhassal*, which became a classical source book on the Kalam almost from the moment of its composition.¹⁸

Here, Imam Razi divides theology into four parts (arkun): preliminaries, being and its divisions, rational theology (ilahiyat), and traditional questions (sam'iyat). The preliminaries include the principles of logic, the sufficiency of demonstration (dalil) to prove the existence of God, and the obligation upon each believer to prove God's existence.¹⁹ The section on Being and its divisions considers the questions of Being and Non-being, the relation of the One to the many, cause and effect, etc. Rational theology, which is interlaced with passages from the Qur'an, concerns the Necessary Being, His attributes, acts and the divine names. Finally, the traditional questions, which are exclusively scriptural, concern prophethood, eschatology, the Imamate, the faith and other related subjects. As a whole, therefore, Imam Razi's theology combines the transmitted or traditional elements of revelation (naqli) and the intellectual and rational evidence concerning religious and metaphysical questions ('aqli) into a science which takes into account the problem of religion while participating in many of the discussions of philosophy.

In the method and problems of theology, Imam Razi followed the Ash'rites. As he writes in his Kitab al-Arb'in, "We (the Ash'rites) believe that God is neither body nor substance, and that He is not in space, yet, we believe that we can see God." But to show his independence of judgment he goes on to assert, "Our companions (the Ash'rites) have given an intellectual reason for the possibility of seeing God, but we have brought 12 objections against it which cannot be answered. Therefore, we only say that we can see God by appealing to transmitted reasoning, i.e. the Qur'anic text."²⁰

Imam Razi also criticized Ash'ari on the question of atomism which is such an essential aspect of the Ash'rite theology. Razi rejected atomism in his earlier works like the Mabahith al-Mashriqiyyah and wrote his Kitab al-Jauhar al-Fard to refute it, but later works like the great Qur'anic commentary, the Majafih al-Ghaib, he accepted it once again. (Atomism does not play a major role in his theology as it does in the system under other Ash'arites like Baqillani.) This change of position occurs also in the rejection of infinity the void, and the plurality of worlds in the earlier writings and their acceptance in later works like the Mafahh.

There are several points in Imam Razi's theology which are of special interest in so far as his particular point of view is concerned. One relates to the question of faith in which he joins most theologians in regarding faith as the necessary and sufficient requirement for being saved. Hell is not for those who have committed evil acts accidentally, but for the infidels who have no faith. Man is, of course, responsible for his work but ultimately all is determined by the divine will. Imam Razi is very emphatic in his determinism and over-throws even the theory of acquisition (kasb) of the Ash'arites. His Qur'anic commentary is full of arguments for determinism, which he defends more openly and ably than any other theologian. God is the creator of both good and evil, faith and impiety, benefit and injury, all these qualities are decreed by the determination of the divine will (qada wa qada). Yet, none of the divine acts can be considered to be inappropriate or

blameable since God is the creator and ruler of the world, and whatever He does in His kingdom is His own affair and is as such, appropriate.

According to Imam Razi, “God’s attributes and names must be interpreted symbolically (ta’wil) in order to be understood.” He follows the method of Imam al-Haramain in applying ta’wil to the Qur’an, especially to those verses in which God is attributed with such anthropomorphic qualities as sight, hearing, etc. This does not mean that Razi tries to overcome the rational difficulties of certain principles of faith by ta’wil, as did many of the philosophers. For example, on the question of resurrection, unlike the philosophers who believed only in the resurrection of the soul, Imam Razi asserts that at resurrection God will create for each soul in the same body, made of the same elements as those it possessed in this life.

On the question of knowledge and the process of reasoning, Imam Razi is of the view that reason is neither the cause of which knowledge is the effect nor the source which produces knowledge. There is an intelligible succession between the two; God creates a reasoning which knowledge follows necessarily.²¹ He accords a definite value to the rational faculty; his aim in theology is, in fact, to create a science which combines and harmonizes reason and revelation, ‘aql and naql. In his Qur’anic commentary, he calls those who have succeeded in integrating these two elements the Muslim sages (hukma’ islamiyya), and praises them greatly. His own importance in Muslim theology lies in his success in establishing the school of philosophical Kalam, already begun by Ghazālī, in which both intellectual and revelational evidence played important roles.

C. Philosophy

The importance of Imam Razi in philosophy lies more in his criticism of the philosophers than in the establishment of a new school. Influenced by the writings of Ghazālī, he studied philosophy to such an extent that he became a definite master of it. Unlike the theologians who rejected Greek philosophy totally or the Peripatetics who followed it strictly, Imam Razi criticized many points of Greek philosophy while accepting certain others.

In the introduction to the *Mughath al-Mashriqiyyah*, the most important of his philosophical works, he writes, “Our associates belong to two groups: one consisting of those who imitate the Greek philosophers, permit no one to discuss their thought and take pride in being able to understand their sayings, and the other comprising those who reject all their ideas with exception. Both of these groups are wrong. We have delved deep into the writings of the previous philosophers and have affirmed the true and rejected the false. We have added certain principles to this philosophy and have put forth some new ideas.”²²

The new ideas of which Imam Razi speaks are mostly those pertaining to the rejection of certain basic elements of Aristotelianism and in some cases of Platonism. In the *Mughath* he rejects the Platonic ideas, since in the Ash‘arite perspective all infinite modes of Being are absorbed in the Absolute. He also criticizes the Platonic notion of knowledge as reminiscence and the most important and penetrating discussions involves criticism of the principle that from Unity only unity can issue forth, *ex uno non fit nisi unum*, a principle held by nearly all medieval philosophers. Imam

Razi puts this view to the test of his severe judgment and criticizes it with his usual genius for analysis. He asserts, on the contrary, that from Unity multiplicity can issue forth, but does not pursue the proof of this assertion very far.

The Mabahith deals with many other subjects treated in the well-known texts of Muslim philosophy like those of ibn Sina. In each case it is the acute criticism of commonly held Peripatetic notions that is of interest. In his commentary upon the al-Isharut w-al-Tunbihat of ibn Sina, which after the Mabihith is his most important philosophical work, this type of criticism and doubts about Peripatetic philosophy continue - doubts with his student Nassir al-Din Tusi, tried to answer in his own commentary upon the Isharut. Ever since these works were written, nearly every student of Peripatetic philosophy in the Muslim world, especially in Persia, has reached this philosophy through the criticism of Imam Razi, so that the thought of Imam Razi has become a permanent heritage of Muslim philosophers.

His other philosophical works, like the commentary upon the 'Uyun al-Hikmah, Lugab al-Iskarut and many treatises on logic and metaphysics, are also significant, but his greatest philosophical importance lies in the criticisms and doubts cast upon that school but opened the horizon for the other modes of knowledge like ishraqi philosophy and gnosis, which are more intimately bound with the spirit of Islam.

D. The Sciences

There have been very few Muslim theologians who have had a lot of knowledge of the mathematical and natural sciences as Imam Razi. His pre-occupation with the sciences is itself of great interest, because, usually the Sunni theologians and doctors of law shunned any discipline outside the sphere of the strictly religious sciences. Imam Razi, on the contrary, studied all the awa'il sciences, that is, the sciences inherited from the Greeks, and was considered by many of his contemporaries to be the greatest authority of his time on them. There is hardly a science in which he did not compose a treatise, although he never occupied himself with the study of nature in the manner of ibn al-Haitham or Biruni. His main importance in the sciences was in considering their principles and their relation to theology and to the spirit of Islamic revelation.

A field in which Imam Razi excelled is medicine, a discipline the mastery of which one hardly expects from a theologian. He wrote several treatises on health, pulse, and anatomy, and a medical encyclopedia entitled al-Jami' al-Kabir or al-Tibb al-Kabir, which he never completed. His most important medical work was his commentary upon the Qanun of ibn Sina, which he often criticized, basing himself on the opinions of Galen and the Muslim physicians, especially Mohammad Zakariyya Razi. The commentary is sufficient evidence that Imam Razi did not learn medicine by reading one or two manuals but studied it thoroughly and was well versed in it. He was, in fact, famous in Herat for his ability and exactitude in diagnosis.

Imam Razi also wrote several treatises on geometry, astronomy, agriculture, politics, history, and comparative religion.²³ Also of interest are his works on the esoteric sciences ('ulum gharibah), to which he devoted

much attention. There remains among his writings treatise on theurgy (talismat), geomancy (raml), physiognomy (firusah),²⁴ astrology, and other similar subjects. It is curious that Imam Razi wrote all these treatises, although he was opposed to certain of these subjects like astrology which he attacked throughout his writings.²⁵ He was, however, more sympathetic to the study of esoteric sciences than either the theologians or the philosophers, as is illustrated by his defence of alchemy against the charges of ibn Sina.²⁶

Of particular interest to the history of Muslim sciences is the scientific encyclopedia of Imam Razi, the *Jami' al-'Ulum*.²⁷ This work offers a good source for the names, definitions, scope, and major principles of the various Muslim sciences. Imam Fakhr begins with a discussion of traditional religious sciences such as theology, jurisprudence, dialectics, comparative religion, inheritance, will and testament, Qur'anic commentary, and reading of the Qur'an and Hadith, and then passes on to the linguistic sciences dealing with grammar, syntax etymology of words, prosody and poetic metre, and, after that to history.

Having considered the transmitted (naqli) sciences, he devotes the rest of the book to the intellectual ('aqli) sciences which include natural pharmacology, the science of the occult properties of things, alchemy, theurgy, agriculture, geometry, science of weights, arithmetic, algebra, optics, music, astronomy, astrology, metaphysics, ethics and its various branches, and even chess and other games.

Imam Razi describes the principles, scope and major problems of each science. Despite the fact that his discussion is always general and characteristic of an encyclopaedist and never penetrates too deeply into any single science, the work is perfect evidence of his vast erudition and encyclopedic knowledge. In this respect Imam Razi is similar to the Isma'ili of whom, like Sheikh Baha al-Din Amili, took great interest not only in philosophy but also in all the cosmological and mathematical sciences. Imam Fakhr's importance in the Muslim sciences is, therefore, mostly in bringing closer together the theological and cosmological traditions which, until his time, had been far apart, and in studying nature with a view of discovering God's wisdom in creation, as was done by many other Muslim scientists.²⁸ In this case, as in so many others, he advanced upon a path already trodden by Ghazālī.

E. Commentaries Upon The Qur'an

Imam Razi's fame in the Muslim world lies as much in his commentaries on the Holy Qur'an as in his theological works. He was greatly devoted to the Qur'an as in his theological works. He was greatly devoted to the Qur'an from childhood and studied Qur'anic commentary with his father. His study of all the other sciences by no means reduced his love for the Qur'an. As he wrote in old age, "I have experienced all the methods of theology and all the ways of philosophy, but I did not find in them the benefit which could equal the benefit I derived from reading the exalted Qur'an."²⁹

Imam Razi's Qur'anic commentaries include the *Tafsir al-Fatihah*, *Tafsir Surat al-Baqarah*, *Asma' Allah al-Husna* and *Risalah fi al-Tanbih 'ala ba'd al-Asrur al-Mau'izah fi al-Qur'an*, which last is a theological commentary

combined with Sufi ideas in which metaphysics (ilahiyat) is based on the chapter (surah) al-Ikhlās, prophecy on the chapter al-A‘lā, resurrection on the chapter al-Tīn and the recording of human actions on the chapter al-‘Asr. The most important of Imam Rāzī’s commentaries is the voluminous Majātib al-Ghaib, known as the “Great Commentary” (Tafsīr al-Kabīr), which was collected and organized by Ibn al-Khū‘ī and Suyūṭī after his death. This work is the most important theological commentary ever written on the Qur’an.

Imam Rāzī makes this also an occasion to expose his encyclopedic knowledge in that he inter-mingles history, geography, and other branches of knowledge in the commentary of the Qur’anic text wherever possible. He mentions and praises often in this work the Muslim sages who combine intellectual principles with the principles of Islamic revelation.

He also analyzes the stories of the Qur’an and interprets their theological and metaphysical meanings. Despite its volume and the number of topics which do not seem very relevant to the immediate subject-matter, the Majātib is an impressive theological Qur’anic commentary. In its intellectual interpretation and the combining of ‘aql and naql, or reason and authority, and in the understanding of the sacred Scripture it remains one of the major commentaries upon the Qur’an.

F. Jurisprudence (Fiqh)

Although primarily occupied with theology, Imam Rāzī occasionally devoted himself to jurisprudence as well. The few works like al-Maḥsul fī al-Uṣul al-Fiḥ, al-Ma‘ālim, and Ihkām al-Ahkām bear evidence to his mastery of jurisprudence which he interpreted according to the school of exegetes. As already mentioned, he belonged to the Shāfi‘ī school of which he was considered to be one of the ‘ulama’ and authentic interpreters. Imam Rāzī was particularly well versed in the principles of jurisprudence (Uṣul), which he treated in a manner similar to theology. This subject has in fact never been able to divorce itself from Kalam, and is still studied almost as if it were one of its branches. The importance of Imam Rāzī in Shāfi‘ī jurisprudence lies more in his contribution to the theoretical principles of Fiqh than in their actual application embodied in the fatwas of the various Shāfi‘ī ‘ulama’.

G. Dialectic, Rhetoric, And Poetry

Following the example of Ghazālī, Imam Rāzī became a dialectical theologian and, as his works testify, excelled in dialectics. He was famous for his eloquence in persuasion and argumentation, for the quickness of his intelligence and keenness of wit. These gifts were combined with a rhetorical power which made him the most famous preacher in Herat. Hardly would a scholar dare enter into debate with him; those who took sides against him would soon feel the thrust of his dialectical and rhetorical weapons.

The Munazarat bears ample evidence of these traits. In its pages one sees Imam Rāzī as a tiger that pounces mercilessly upon his helpless adversary and has little regard for softness in discourse. Much of his energy throughout life was spent in attacking bitterly the small sects which arose against the main orthodoxy, such as the Karrāmiyyah, who probably finally

poisoned him.³⁰ As the Sheikh al-Islam of Herat, his main duty was to preach and defend Islam, and he took the opportunity of using his remarkable gifts of rhetoric and dialectic in a manner which made him one of the most famous of Muslim preachers.

Imam Razi also had the gift of poetry, and many verses both in Arabic and Persian are attributed to him. As in the case of many other sages like Khayyam, poetry became for Imam Razi the vehicle for the expression of gnosis and the form of “ignorance” which lies above all formal knowledge. In a quatrain in Persian he writes:

“My heart was never deprived of science,
There are little of the mysteries that I did not understand.
For 72 years I thought night and day,
Yet I came to know that nothing is to be known.”

H. Sufism

There is little doubt that Imam Razi was sympathetic to Sufism, especially in later life, when he wrote most of his poems like the one mentioned above. Moreover, many of his works are, like his Qur’anic commentary, full of Sufistic ideas, and in *Laudmi’ al Bayyinat* he outlines the degree of knowledge in a manner very similar to the Sufi treatise of Suhrawardi, *Safir-i Simurgh*.³¹ He is altogether a theologian with sympathies towards Sufism.

What is difficult for us to discover is whether Imam Razi was a practicing Sufi or not. Certainly Sufism is not as evident in his writings as in Ghazālī’s and his life, rich in worldly fame and wealth, had none of the ascetic elements of the life of his great predecessor. There is even an extant letter from the master of gnosis, the Anadalusian Sufi, Sheikh al-Akbar Muhyi al-Din ibn ‘Arabi, advising Imam Razi to leave dialectic and discursive thought and try to reach the stage of gnosis and contemplation, telling him that in heaven medicine and geometry will do him little good.³²

Moreover, in his writings as in his life, Imam Razi displayed aggressiveness and fighting quality hardly characteristic of the lives and writings of the Sufis.

Yet, despite all this negative evidence, some of his later writings do show the clear influence of Sufism upon him, and it may be that, because of his social position, even after joining the circle of the Sufis, he, to a large extent, has sympathies and affiliations in order to avoid any external opposition. His own poems and his great love for the blind Arab poet Abu ‘Ala’ al-Ma‘arri, the gnostic who often appears like a sceptic to the uncritical eye, on whose *Diwan* he is said to have commented, point to the fact that Imam Razi was not an ordinary theologian, but knew that there is another form of knowledge, gnosis, which lies above all rational sciences like theology. Whether he actually participated in this knowledge in an effective way, is a question too difficult to answer from either historical evidence or internal evidence from his own writings.³³

There is a poem of Imam Razi which is in itself almost sufficient evidence for his Sufism. In the original Arabic it is so beautiful and effective that hardly any of his biographers has failed to mention it. Written in old age by a man who was the leading scholar and theologian of his day

and who enjoyed all the comfort and glory of the life of this world, it is a vivid reminder that beyond the sphere of all human life and knowledge there is another reality which man must seek in order to remain faithful in his own intimate nature. The poem begins with these verses:

“Our souls fear our bodies as if they want to separate from them.

The result of our life in this world has been nothing but pain to others and sin.”

I. The Significance And Influence Of Imam Razi

The many sided genius of Imam Razi, to which the previous pages bear partial witness, makes him one of the most colourful figures in Islam. Following the example of Ghazālī, by whom he was profoundly influenced and whose retreat in Tus he visited, Razi spent a life time in combating the rationalistic aspect of Greek philosophy. Although not of equal stature to Ghazālī in Sufism and ethics, he, nevertheless, exercised as much influence, especially in theology, as did his more famous predecessor. Possessed of a special gift for posing problems and for analyzing philosophical questions, he left an indelible mark upon all later Muslim philosophers, especially upon Khuwaja Najr al-Din Tusi, his student, who was the reviver of Muslim philosophy after Imam Razi, and was also the most famous of Shi‘ah theologians.

Imam Razi’s role in Muslim intellectual life, besides establishing the school of philosophical Kalam begun by Ghazālī, was to intensify the attack against Peripatetic philosophy, thereby preparing the way for the propagation of the metaphysical doctrines of the Ishraqis and Sufis who, like Imam Razi, opposed the rationalism inherent in Aristotelianism. With the method of doubt in which was the greatest master in Islam, he analyzed and criticized Peripatetic philosophy in a way hardly ever equalled by anyone except Ghazālī. Yet, he was a theologian also interested in the cosmological, natural and esoteric sciences.³⁴

Imam Razi played an important role in bringing theology closer to the sciences and even to Sufism, with which he flavoured this theological works. In the centuries when the Muslim world was turning away from Peripatetic rationalism toward modes of thought more akin to its own spirit, Imam Razi played a major role in this transformation. He remains as one of the most arresting figures among Muslim theologians, a figure the power of whose thought spread over the whole Muslim world at the very moment when the Mongol onslaught was putting an end to the caliphate, to the survival of which his work was to a large extent dedicated.

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Notes

1. For the definition and description of this term refer to the chapter on "Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi Maqtul."

2. According to a hadith, in each century God sends a great sage and scholar into the world to strengthen Islam. Muslim historians, following the hadith, have searched during each century for the fittest person to receive this honour.

3. He was given this title because he doubted so many of the views of previous philosophers and even of theologians.

4. In the Wafayat al-A'yan, ibn Khallikan writes that Imam Razi was the greatest authority on the Greek sciences ('ulum al-awd'il) in his time. The best sources for the biography of Razi are ibn Abi Usaibi'ah, 'Uyan al Anba', ibn al-Qifti, Tarikh al-Hukama', ibn Khallikan, Kitab Wajaydi al-A'yan, Shams al-Din Shahrazuri, Nuzhat al-Arwah wa Raudat al-Afrah, and ibn Taqi al-Din al-Subki, Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyyat al-Kubra

5. Al-Subki, Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyyat al-Kubra, Matba'at al-Husainiyyah, Cairo, 1324/1906, vol. 5 pp 33 - 40.

6. Although not a great Sufi figure like Ghazali, Imam Razi was, nevertheless, sympathetic towards Sufism, especially in the latter period of his life. Subki, op. cit., p. 35, writes that Razi was himself a Sufi and some of his poems and frequent quotations from the Sufi masters like Hallaj and Abu Sa'id certainly pointed in this direction.

7. For an outline of the ideas of the group of Muslim thinkers who were influenced by Platonic physics, see S. Pines, Beitrage zur islamischen Atomenlehre, Berlin, A. Heine Gtubh, Grufenheinichen, 1936.

8. It is far from accidental that the philosophy and the sciences which were connected with the Greek heritage flourished, especially in the fourth/tenth century, when most of the Muslim world was governed by the Shi'ah Buwaibids and Fatimids.

9. The opposition of this group to Greek philosophy was primarily against its rationalistic and syllogistic aspects. The cosmological and certain metaphysical doctrines of the Greeks were not only criticized but were also openly accepted by them. So we see a Ghazali using Hermetic symbolism or a Fakhr Razi writing numerous treatises on the cosmological sciences.

10. For a bibliography of his works, see Subki, op.,cit., pp. 33 - 40 and Imam Razi's I'tiqadat Farq al-Muslimin w-al-Mushrikin, Maktabat al Nahdat al-Misrtyyah, Cairo, 1356/1937, Introduction by Sheikh 'Abd al-Razzaq, pp. 27ff.

11. Imam Razi's student, Khwajah Nasir al-Din Tusi, wrote many works answering his teacher's criticism of ibn Sina and other philosophers.

12. See Fakhr al-Din Razi, Munazarut, Dairatul-Maarif-il-Osmania, Hyderabad, 1355/1936, where he also criticizes certain parts of Ghazali's Tahafut al-Falasifah on the motion of planets. See also P. Kraus, "Les 'controverses' de Fakhr al-Din, Razi," Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypt, t. 29, 1936-37, pp. 187 - 214.

13. For a history of Muslim theology, especially of the Sunni school, see Shibli Nu'mani, *Tarikh 'Ilm-i Kalam*, tr. M. Fakhr Da'i Gilani, Rangin Press, Teheran, 1328/1910, and L. Gardet and M. M. Anawati, *Introduction a la theologie musulmane*, Librairie Philosophique J.Vrin, Paris, 1948.

14. The theological masterpiece, the *Tujrid* of Khwajah Nasir al-Din Tusi, who is the greatest of the Shi'ah theologians, is to a large extent, influenced by Imam Razi's *Masa'il al-Khamzun*.

15. This title, however, is more commonly given to Mir Damad, the master of theology and philosophy during the Sufawid period.

16. Fakhr al-Din Razi, *Lawami' al-Bayyandi*, Library of Imam Rida, Meshed, MS. Cat. No. 233

17. Imam Razi, like the Christian theologians, considered *Kalam* to be the queen of the sciences and sub-ordinated all the other rational sciences like philosophy and the mathematical and natural sciences to it.

18. For a more detailed discussion of this work, see L. Gardet and M.M. Anawati, *op. cit.*, pp 162 - 64.

19. In all Muslim theology it is considered obligatory upon each Muslim to prove the existence of God according to his intellectual ability. See F. Schuon, "Nature et arguments de la foi," *Etudes Traditionelles*, vol. 54, Dec. 1953, pp 344 - 63.

20. Fakhr al-Din Razi, *Kitab al-Arba'in fi Usul al-Din*, *Dairatul-Maarif-il-Osmania*, Hyderabad, 1333/1934, p. 190

21. Many theologians before Razi considered this relation between reason and knowledge to be custom ('*ddah*), but he explicitly rejects this notion.

22. Fakhr al-Din Razi, *al-Mabahith al-Mashriqiyya*, *Dairatul-Masarif-il-Osmania*, Hyderabad, 1343/1924, vol. 1, p.4

23. His historical works include *Kitab Fada'il al-Sahabah* and *Kitab Monaqib al-Imam Shafi'i* and his work on comparative religion, the *I'tiquadat Farq al-Muslimin w-al-Mughrikin*.

24. See Y. Mourad, *La physiognomonie arabe el le Kitab al-Firasah de Fakhr al-Din al-Razi*, *Librarie Orientaliste*, Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1939.

25. See *Munzarat*, pp. 20 - 24.

26. See *Mabahith...*, p. 214.

27. This work Imam Fakhr wrote for Khwarizm Shah Abu al-Muzaffar ibn Malik al-Mu'azzam. It has always been a popular scientific encyclopedia and was printed in a lithographed edition in Bombay in 1323/1905.

28. Imam Fakhr's writings are full of passages in which he appeals to various natural phenomena as "signs" of the different divine qualities and names. See his *Asrar al-Tanzil*, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1301/1883, pp. 68ff.

29. Ibn Abi Usaibi'ah, *Usaibi'ah*, '*Uyun al-Anba' fi Tabaqat al-Atibba'*, *Matba'at al Wahabiyyah*, Cairo, vol. 2, p. 27.

30. There is a story told of Imam Razi's opposition to the Isma'ilis. He used to attack them bitterly in public, accusing them of having no proofs for their doctrines. One day, one of their agents, posing as a student, found Imam Razi alone in his library, pulled out a knife and pointed it to his chest saying, "This is our proof."

Henceforth, Imam Fakhr never attacked the Isma'ilis in public. One day, the disciples asked him why he no longer spoke against this group - the group which he had opposed so bitterly before. he replied, "Because I have seen their proof." This story appears in nearly all the biographies of Imam Fakhr which we have already mentioned and is characteristic of his wisdom in public life.

31. See the chapter on "Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi Maqtul."

32. See Fakhr al-Din Razi, *al-Risalat al-Kamaliyah fi al-Haqaiq al-Ilahiyyah*, Tehran University Press, 1335 Solar, Introduction by Sayyid Mohammad Baqir Sabziwari, p. (kt)

33. There is a story told that Imam Razi met the Sufi Najm al-Din Kubra in a gathering and boasted of his religious knowledge and said that he knew a hundred proofs for the existence of God. Najm al-Din answered, "Is not each proof due to some doubt? God has placed in the heart of the Sufi a light of certainty which dispels all doubt so that he no longer has need of proofs." Imam Razi, upon hearing this answer, surrendered himself to the Sheikh and was initiated into Sufism.

34. It is of great interest that not only in the Muslim world but also in medieval Christianity and in China, many of those who pre-occupied themselves with the science of nature, like the Taoists, Ikhwan al-Safa, and the Franciscans, were opposed to philosophical rationalism and accepted some form of esoteric and metaphysical doctrine based on intellectual intuition and revelation.

Part 5: Political Thinkers

Chapter 33: Political Thought In Early Islam

Chapter 34: Abu Hanifah and Abu Yusuf

Chapter 35: Al-Farabi

Chapter 36: Al-Mawardi

Chapter 37: Political Theory Of The Shiites

Chapter 38: Zizam Al-Mulk Tusi

Chapter 39: Al-Ghazali

Chapter 33: Political Thought In Early Islam

In this chapter we try to elucidate the political thought which laid the foundations of society and State in the early days of Islam, and the changes that crept into it during the first century and a quarter of the Hijrah.

A. Principles of Islamic Polity

Muslim society that came into existence with advent of Islam and the State that it formed on assumption of political power were founded on certain clear cut principles. Prominent among them and relevant to our present discussion were the following:

1. Sovereignty belongs to God and the Islamic State is in fact a vicegerency, with no right to exercise authority except in sub-ordination to and in accordance with the Law revealed by God to His Prophet.¹

2. All Muslims have equal rights in the State regardless of race, colour or speech. No individual, group, class, clan or people are entitled to any special privileges, nor can any such distinction determine anyone's position as inferior.²

3. The Shari'ah (i.e. the law of God enunciated in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, the authentic practice of the Prophet) is the supreme Law and everyone from the lowest situated person to the Head of the state is to be governed by it.³

4. The government, its authority, and possessions are a trust of God and the Muslims, and ought to be entrusted to the God fearing, the honest, and the just, and no one has a right to exploit them in ways not sanctioned by or abhorrent to the Shari'ah.⁴

5. The Head of State (call him Caliph, Imam or Amir) should be appointed with the mutual consultation of the Muslims and their concurrence. He should run the administration and undertake legislative work within the limits prescribed by the Shari'ah in consultation with them.⁵

6. The Caliph or the Amir is to be obey ungrudgingly in whatever is right and just (ma'ruf), but no one has the right to command obedience in the service of sin (ma'siah).⁶

7. The least fitted for responsible positions in general and for the Caliph's position in particular are those that covet and seek them.⁷

8. The foremost duty of the Caliph and his government is to institute the Islamic order of life, to encourage all that is good, and to suppress all that is evil.⁸

9. It is the right, and also the duty, of every member of the Muslim community to check the occurrence of things that are wrong and abhorrent to the Islamic State.⁹

B. Early Caliphate and its Characteristic Features

The rule of the early Caliphs that followed the Prophet was founded on the foregoing principles. Each member of the community, brought up under the guidance and care of the Prophet of God, knew what kind of government answered the demands and reflected the true spirit of Islam. Although the Prophet had bequeathed no decision regarding the question of his successor, the members of the community were in no doubt that Islam demanded a democratic solution of the issue. Hence, no one laid the foundations of a

hereditary government, used force to assume power, or tried to have himself installed as Caliph. On the contrary, the people, of their own free will, elected four persons one after another to this august office.

Elective Caliphate

Abu Bakr was proposed Caliph by ‘Umar, and accepted by the inhabitants of Medina (who for all practical purposes represented the country) of their free will and accord, and they swore him allegiance. Abu Bakr, nearing his end, wrote a will in favour of ‘Umar, then, collecting the people in the mosque of Medina, he addressed them thus, “Do you agree on him whom I am making my successor among you? God knows I have racked my brain as much as I could, and I have not proposed a relation of mine to succeed me, but ‘Umar, the son of Khattab. Hence, listen to him and obey.” Upon this the people responded, “Yes, we shall listen to him and obey.”¹⁰

In the last year of ‘Umar’s reign a man declared during the pilgrimage that when ‘Umar died he would swear allegiance to so and so. Abu Bakr’s installation, he said, had also been so sudden, and succeeded well enough.¹¹ When ‘Umar came to learn of it, he resolved to address the people about it and “warn them against those who designed to impose themselves upon them.”

Alluding to it in the first speech he made on reaching Medina, he gave a lengthy account of what had transpired at Banu Sa‘idah’s Meeting House and explained how in the exceptional circumstances which then prevailed he had suddenly risen to propose Abu Bakr’s name and offered allegiance to him. “If I had not done so,” he said, “and we had dispersed that night without settling the issue, there was a great danger that people might take a wrong decision overnight, then it would be difficult for us to accept it, and equally difficult to reject it.”

“If that was successful,” he continued, “let it not be made a precedent. Who among you is there to match with Abu Bakr in stature and popularity? Now, therefore, whoever will swear allegiance to another without consultation with other Muslims, he and the one whose allegiance is sworn, shall both stand to die.”¹²

When ‘Umar approached his end, he appointed an Elective council to decide the issue of succession. Elucidating his principle enunciated above, he asserted that whoever attempted to impose himself as Amir (ruler) without the consultation of the Muslims deserved to die. He also barred his son from election¹³ lest the Caliph’s office should become a hereditary right, and constituted the Elective Council to comprise those six persons who in his opinion were the most influential and enjoyed the widest popularity. This council in the end delegated its power of proposing a person for the Caliph’s office to one of its members, ‘Abd al-Rahman bin ‘Auf. ‘Abd al-Rahman moved among the people to find out as to who commanded their confidence most and left no stone unturned to ascertain the people’s verdict. Even the pilgrim parties returning home after the pilgrimage were consulted. It was after this “plebiscite” that he concluded that the majority favoured ‘Uthman.¹⁴

When ‘Uthman was killed, a few people tried to install ‘Ali as Caliph. But he said, ‘You have no authority to do so. This is a matter for the Consultative Council (ahl al-shura) and those that fought at Badr (ahl al-Badr). Whomsoever the Consultative Council and the people of Badr will choose, the Caliph will be Caliph. Therefore we shall gather and deliberate.”¹⁵ In al-Tabari’s version, ‘Ali’s words were, “I cannot be elected secretly, and it must be with the consultation of the Muslims.”¹⁶

When ‘Ali lay dying it was asked of him, “Shall we offer allegiance to al-Hassan (your son)?” His replied, “I do not ask or forbid you to do so. You can see for yourself.”¹⁷ When he was addressing his last words to his sons, a person interposed saying, “Oh Commander of the Faithful, why do you not nominate your successor?” His reply was, “I will leave the faithful in the condition in which the Prophet of God left them.”¹⁸

It is evident from these facts the early Caliphs and the Companions of the Prophet regarded the Caliph’s office as an elective one, to be filled with mutual consultation and consent of the Muslim community. They did not regard hereditary succession or one acquired by force of arms as anything valid.

Government by Consultation

The first four Caliphs did not perform their administrative or legislative functions without consulting “the wise” (ahl al-ra’y, lit., those that are able to give advice) of the community. They also realized that those consulted had the right to give their candid opinion without any fear. ‘Umar expressed the official policy in this regard in his inaugural speech before a Consultative Council in this way, “I have called you for nothing but that you may share with me the burden of the trust that has reposed in me of managing your affairs. I am but one of you, and today you are the people that bear witness to truth. Whoever of you wishes to differ with me is free to do so, and whoever wishes to agree is free to do that. I will not compel you to follow my desires.”¹⁹

The Exchequer, a Trust

The treasury (Bait al-Mal) was to them a trust from God and the public. They did not consider it permissible to receive into it or expend from it a sum which the Law did not authorize. To use it for the personal ends of the rulers was, according to them, simply unlawful. ‘Umar in a speech remarked, “Nothing is lawful for me in this trust of God save a pair of clothes for the summer and a pair of clothes for the winter, and subsistence enough for an average man of the Quraish for my family. And after that I am just one of the Muslims.”²⁰

In another speech he said, “I do not regard anything correct in respect of this trust of yours but three things: that it should be taken by right, that it should be expended by right, and that it should be withheld from wrong. My position regarding this property of yours is the same as that of an orphan’s guardian with the orphan’s property. So long as I am not needy I will take nothing from it. When I am needy I shall take as it befits one to take from an orphan’s property under his care.”²¹

When ‘Ali was at war with the Mu‘awiyah he was exhorted by some to use the treasury to win adherents against him who was drawing large numbers to his side by giving sumptuous rewards and gifts. But ‘Ali declined to take that counsel saying, “Do you want me to win success by unfair means?”²² His brother, ‘Aqil, wished to have some help from Bait al-Mal, but he refused him, saying, “Do you wish your brother to give you the money of the people and take his to hell?”²³

Ideal Government

What their idea of government was what they thought of themselves, of their status and duties as rulers, and what policy they followed - questions like these and others were answered in the various speeches addressed by them from the Caliph’s pulpit. Abu Bakr, in the first speech he made following the oath of allegiance to him in the Mosque of Medina said, “I have been made a ruler over you though I am not the best of you. Help me if I go right; correct me if I go wrong. Truth is faithfulness and falsehood is treachery. The weak one among you will be strong with me until I have got him his due, if God so wills, and the strong one among you will be weak with me until I have made him pay what he owes, if God so wills. Beware when a nation gives up its endeavours in the way of God. He makes no exception but brings it low and when it allows evil to prevail in it, undoubtedly He makes it miserable. Obey me as long as I obey God and the Prophet, if I do not obey them, you owe me no obedience.”²⁴

And ‘Umar said in his speech, “No ruler holds so high a position as to have the right to command obedience in defiance of God. Oh people, you have rights on me whom I shall relate before you, and you may take me to task over them. I owe you this that I do not receive anything from your revenue or the fai’ (lands or possessions that accrue to Muslims in consequence of their collective dominance, not as booty in war) given to us by God except in accordance with the law, and nothing that accrues to us in these ways should go from the treasury but rightfully.”²⁵

Al-Tabari quotes ‘Umar giving instructions to all persons whom he sent out as governors in the wise, “I have appointed you governor over the followers of Mohammad (on whom be peace) not to make you masters of their persons and properties but to enable you to lead them to establish prayer, dispose of their affairs with justice, and dispense their rights among them with equity.”²⁶

‘Umar once declared in public, “I have not sent my governors that they may whip you and snatch your property, but that they may instruct you in your faith and the way of your Prophet. If there be any who has been treated otherwise, let him bring me his complaint. By God, I will see that this wrong is avenged.”

Upon this ‘Amr bin ‘As, Governor of Egypt, stood up and asked, “What, when a man is appointed ruler and he chastises someone, will you take revenge on him?”

‘Umar replied, “Yes, by God, I will take revenge on him. I have seen the Prophet of God himself allowing people to take revenge on him.”²⁷

On another occasion ‘Umar collected all his governors at the annual pilgrimage and announced in a general congregation of people that if there

was a person who had a charge of injustice against anyone of them, he should come forward to make his complaint. One person rose from the multitude and complained that he had been undeservedly given a hundred stripes by ‘Amr bin ‘As. ‘Umar asked him to come forward and square the account with. ‘Amr bin ‘As protested, beseeching ‘Umar not to expose his governors to this humiliation, but ‘Umar reiterated that he had seen the Prophet of God himself allowing men to avenge themselves upon him, and asked the aggrieved man to step forward and take his revenge. ‘Amr bin ‘As saved his skin only by appeasing the man with a pair of crowns for each stripe that was to fall on his back.²⁸

Rule of Law

The “Right-going” Caliphs did not regard themselves above the law. On the other hand, they declared that they stood at par with any other citizen (Muslim or non-Muslim) in this respect. They appointed judges, but once a person was appointed a judge he was free to pronounce judgment against them as against anybody else. Once ‘Umar and Ubayy bin Ka‘ab differed in a matter, and the dispute was referred to Zaid bin Thabit for a decision. The parties appeared before Zaid and he rose and offered ‘Umar his own seat, but ‘Umar sat by Ubayy. Then Ubayy preferred his claim which ‘Umar denied. According to the procedure, Zaid should have asked ‘Umar to swear an oath but Zaid hesitated in asking for it. ‘Umar himself swore an oath and at the conclusion of the session remarked that Zaid was unfit to be a judge so long as ‘Umar and an ordinary man did not stand equal in his eyes.²⁹

The same happened between ‘Ali and a Christian whom he saw selling his (‘Ali’s) lost coat of mail in the market of Kufah. He did not seize it from the fellow with a ruler’s might, but brought the case before the magistrate concerned, and as he could not produce adequate evidence to support his claim, the decision of the court went against him.³⁰ Ibn Khallikan reports that once ‘Ali and a non-Muslim citizen (dhimmi) appeared as parties in a case before Judge Shuraih. The judge rose to greet ‘Ali, who was Head of State at that time. Seeing this ‘Ali said to Shuraih, “This is your first injustice.”³¹

Absence of Bias

Another distinctive feature of the early days of Islam was that everybody received an equal and fair treatment exactly in accordance with the principles and the spirit of Islam, the society of those days, being free from all kinds of tribal, racial, or parochial prejudices. As the Prophet of God passed away, the tribal jealousies of Arabs rose again like a held-up storm. Tribal prejudice formed the main impulse behind the claims to prophethood and large-scale apostasy that immediately followed the Prophet’s demise. One of Musailimah’s followers said, “I know Musailimah is a false prophet, but a false one of the (tribe of) Rabi‘ah is better than the true one of the (tribe of) Mudar.”³² An elder of the Banu Ghatafan, similarly taking sides with another false prophet, Tulahah said, “By God, it is easier for me to follow a prophet of one of our allied tribes than one from the tribe of Quraish.”³³

But when the people saw that Abu Bakr (r. 11 - 13/632 - 634), and in his wake 'Umar (r. 13 - 23/634 - 644), dispensed exemplary, even handed justice not only among the various Arab tribes but even among the non-Arabs and non-Muslims were once more inspired with that cosmopolitan outlook which Islam sought to inculcate in them. Abu Bakr and 'Umar's attitude in this respect was most exemplary.

Towards the end of his reign 'Umar became apprehensive lest these tribal currents which, despite the revolutionizing influence of Islam, had not succumbed altogether should shoot up again and cause disruption after him. So, on one occasion talking to 'Abd Allah bin 'Abbas regarding his possible successors, he said about 'Uthman, "If I propose him as my successor I fear he would suffer from the sons of Abu Mu'ait (the Umayyads) to ride the necks of the people, and they will practice sin among them. God knows, if I do so, 'Uthman will do this, and if 'Uthman does this, they will surely commit sins, and people will rise against 'Uthman and make short work of him."³⁴

This apprehension clung to him even in the hour of his death. Summoning 'Ali, 'Uthman, and Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas to his bedside, he said to each one, "If you succeed me as Caliph do not allow members of your clans to ride the necks of other people."³⁵ Besides that, among the instructions which he left for the Elective Council of Six, on which devolved the task of electing the new Caliph, was that the new incumbent was to be asked to give a pledge that he would not show discrimination in favour of his own clan.³⁶ Unluckily, however, the third caliph, 'Uthman (r. 23 - 35/644 - 656) failed to keep up the standard by his predecessors and inclined towards favouring the Umayyads. This was regarded by him as "good office to the kindred." Thus, he used to say, "'Umar deprived his kin for the sake of God, but I provide for my kin for His sake."³⁷ The result was the 'Umar had apprehended. There was a rising against him, which led to his murder and rekindled the sleeping embers of tribal bias into a fire that consumed the whole edifice of the "Right-going" Caliphate.

After the death of 'Uthman, 'Ali (r. 35 - 41/656 - 661) tried to recapture the standard set by Abu Bakr and 'Umar. He had no bias in him and showed himself remarkably free from it. Mu'awiya's father, Abu Sufyan, had taken note of it when he tried to excite this passion in him on Abu Bakr's accession. He had asked him, "How could a man of the humblest family in Quraish become Caliph? If you prepare to rise, I will undertake to fill this valley with horsemen and soldiers." But 'Ali had coldly retorted that this spoke for his enmity for Islam and the Muslims and so far as he was concerned, he regarded Abu Bakr truly fit for that office.³⁸ Therefore, when he became Caliph he treated the Arabs and non-Arabs, gentlemen and poor born, Hashimites and others, all alike. No distinction was made between them, and not received preference over others undeservedly.³⁹

C. Theological Differences and Schisms

The period of the "Right-going" Caliphate, described above, was a luminous tower towards which the learned and the pious of all succeeding ages have been looking back as symbolic of the religious, moral, political, and social orders of Islam par excellence. Abu Hanifah, employed at

elucidating the Islamic ideals in the fields of politics and law, as we shall presently see, also reverted to it as the ideal epoch to take instance from. We have, therefore, devoted a good deal of space to it, that the reader may be able to comprehend his work in the true background.

But before attending to his work we have also to take a brief view of the reactionary movement that had set in towards the end of the “Right-going” caliphate and reached its height by the time Abu Hanifah appeared on the scene. As his efforts were mainly devoted to countering this reaction, it is necessary to take stock of it and the problems that sprang from it, to be able to grasp the true significance of his work.

Differences among Muslims had sprung up during the last years of ‘Uthman’s reign leading to his murder, but they had not yet assumed theological or philosophical shape. When, after his death in the reign of ‘Ali these differences raged more furiously than ever and led to a civil war resulting in bloodshed, as in the Battle of the Camel (36/656), the Battle of Siffin (37/657), the “arbitration” (38/659), and the battle of Nahrawan (38/659), questions like “Who is in the right in these battles and how?” “Who is in the wrong and why?” “If some regard both sides wrong, what is their ground for holding this?” naturally cropped up and demanded to be answered. These questions led to the framing of certain opinions and justifications that were essentially political in the beginning, but as each group sought to strengthen its position by calling theological support in aid of its particular stand, these political factions gradually changed into religious groups.

Then, the bloodshed which accompanied these factional feuds in the beginning and continued during the rules of the Umayyads and the ‘Abbasids, did not allow these differences to remain only theological; they went on growing ever more acute and menacing until they threatened the national unity of the Muslims. Every house was a place of controversy, every controversy suggesting ever new political, theological, and philosophical offshoots. Every new question that cropped up gave birth to a number of new sects which sub-divided themselves into further sects over minute internal differences.

These sects were not content to fill themselves with bias against one another, their polemics often ended up in quarrels and riots. Kufah, the capital of Iraq, where Abu Hanifah was born, was the chief centre of these quarrels. The battles of the Camel, Siffin and Nahrawin had all been fought in Iraq. The heart-rending murder of Hussain (61/680), the Prophet’s grandson, had also taken place here. It was the birth place of most of these sects and the field where both the Umayyads and the ‘Abbasids used the maximum of coercion to repress their opponents. The time of Abu Hanifah’s birth (80/699) and growth coincided with these factional hostilities at their height.

The large number of sub-sects that grew out of these factions had their roots in four main sects: the Shi‘ah, the Khawarij, the Murji‘ah, and the Mu‘tazilah. We shall give here a brief account of the doctrines of each of them before proceeding further.

The Shi‘ah

They were the supporters of 'Ali and called themselves the Shi'ahs (party) of 'Ali. Later (the word of 'Ali was dropped and) they began to be called the Shi'ahs.

Although a section of the people of Banu Hashim and a few others regarded him superior to the other Companions particularly to 'Uthman, and others considered him to be more entitled for the Caliphate because of his relationship with the Prophet, yet up to the time of 'Uthman these opinions had not assumed the form of a creed or religious belief. Nor were the people who held these opinions hostile to the first three Caliphs.

On the other hand, they acknowledged and supported their succession. As a separate party with clear cut views on these matters, they emerged in 'Ali's reign during the battles of the Camel, Siffin, and Nahrawan. Later, the cold-blooded slaughter of Hussain rallied them, fired them with a new wrath, and shaped their views into a separate creed. The indignation provoked among the general Muslim populace by the vile deeds of the Umayyads and the sympathy excited in their breasts for the descendants of 'Ali on account of their constant persecution in both the Umayyad and the 'Abbasid regimes, lent extra-ordinary support to Shi'ite propaganda. They had their stronghold at Kufah. Their beliefs were as follows:

1. The Imam's office (particular Shi'ite term for the Caliph's office) is not a public office the institution of which may have been left to the choice of the public (ummah). The Imam is a pillar of the faith and the foundation stone of Islam. Therefore, it is one of the main duties of the Prophet to institute somebody as Imam instead of leaving the matter to the discretion of the community.⁴⁰

2. The Imam is impeccable, i.e. free from all sins, great and small. He is immune from error. Everything that he says or does is inviolate.⁴¹

3. The Prophet had conferred the Imamate on 'Ali and nominated him as his successor. Thus 'Ali was the first imam by ordinance.⁴²

4. As the appointment of the imam is not left to be made by public choice, every new imam will be appointed by an ordinance from his predecessor.⁴³

5. All the Shi'ah sects are also agreed that the Imam's office is the exclusive right of the descendants of 'Ali.⁴⁴

Beyond this general agreement, however, the various Shi'ahs sects differed among themselves. The moderate among them held that 'Ali was the best created man. He who fought or bore malice against him was an enemy of God to be raised among infidels and hypocrites and destined to live in hell. "If 'Ali had refused to recognize their Caliphate as legitimate and expressed displeasure with them, Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman who preceded him as Caliphs would also have deserved that doom, but as 'Ali recognized them and swore allegiance and offered prayers behind them, we cannot take exception to what he took as right. We do not differentiate between 'Ali and the Prophet except that the latter was endowed with prophethood, for the rest 'Ali was worthy of the same esteem as the Prophet.⁴⁵

The fanatical among them held that the Caliphs before 'Ali were usurpers and those who elected them were ill-guided and unjust, as they belied the

Prophet's will and deprived the rightful caliph of his due. Some went further and pronounced anathema against the first three Caliphs and declared them and their electors ex-communicated.

The softest of them were the Zaidiyyah, followers of Zaid (d. 122/740) son of 'Ali, son of Hussain. They regarded 'Ali as superior to others, but allowed the choice of those who were inferior to him. Moreover, they held that the Prophet's decision in favour of 'Ali was not unequivocal; hence, they accepted the Caliphate of Abu Bakr and 'Umar. All the same, they preferred the choice of an able person from the descendants of Fatima (the Prophet's daughter) as imam, provided he claimed that position and challenged the title of "the kings" to it.⁴⁶ Abu Hanifah was closely connected with Zaid, as we shall see in the course of this chapter, although he did not contribute to the Zaidite doctrine.

The Khawarij

In direct opposition to the Shi'ahs the Khawarij stood at the other extreme. They suddenly grouped together during the battle of Siffin. Until then they were among the staunch supporters of 'Ali, but when, during that engagement, he consented to submit his quarrel with Mu'awiya to the decision of two arbiters, they abandoned him asserting that he had turned infidel by accepting to submit to the verdict of human arbiters instead of God. After that they drifted farther and farther away and being fanatical hot heads, who believed in waging war against those who differed from them and against "unjust government" wherever one was found, they indulged in war and bloodshed for a long time until their power was finally crushed under the 'Abbasid rule. They, too, were most influential in Iraq, their camps being mainly centred in al-Bata'ia between Kufa and Basra. Their beliefs briefly were as follows.

1. They acknowledged Abu Bakr and 'Umar as Rightful Caliphs but 'Uthman, in their opinion, had, towards the end of his reign, erred from the path of justice and right conduct and hence deserved to be deposed or killed. 'Ali also committed, according to them, a major sin when he accepted the "arbitration" of "one besides God." The two arbiters ('Amr bin 'As and Abu Musa al-Ash'ari), their choosers ('Ali and Mu'awiya), and all those who agreed to arbitration were sinners. All those who participated in the battle of the Camel, including Talhah, Zubair, and A'ishah, the Prophet's wife, had been guilty of grievous sin.

2. Sin, with the Khawarij, was synonymous with infidelity. Anyone who committed a major sin (and did not repent and revert) was placed outside the pale of Islam. All the personages mentioned above were declared infidels. Anathema was pronounced against them, and they were considered fit to be censured. The Muslims in general were pronounced infidels, first, because they were not free from sins, and, secondly, because they not only regarded these persons as Muslims but also acknowledged them as reliable guides, and deduced and verified the law from traditions reported by them.

3. The Caliph, according to them, should be elected by the free vote of the Muslims.

4. The Caliph need not be a member of the tribe of Quraish. Whomsoever they elected from amongst the honest Muslims would be a rightful caliph.

5. A caliph was to be obeyed faithfully as long as he acted rightly and justly, but if forsook the path of right and justice; if he was to be fought against and deposed or assassinated.

6. The Qur'an was recognized as the authoritative source of law but their views on Hadith (the Prophet's Tradition) and ijma' (the agreement of Muslims in respect of a rule of Law) were different from those of the majority.

A large group of them, which called itself al-Najdiyyah, did not believe in the very need of a State. The Muslims, they said, should of themselves abide by the right. However, if they needed a Caliph to direct their affairs, there was no harm in choosing one.

Their major section, the Azariqah, dubbed all Muslims, expecting themselves polytheists. The Khawarij, according to them, could not go for prayer in response to any but a Kharijite's call. They could neither take the meat of an animal slaughtered by non-Kharijites, nor marry among them, nor could a Kharijite and a non-Kharijites inherit each other's possessions. They considered war on all other Muslims to be a religious duty and sanctioned the killing of their women and children and the looting of their property. They declared those of their own sect as infidels if they shirked this duty. They allowed treachery with their opponents and were so malicious that a non-Muslim would find himself safer in their midst than an average Muslim.

The most tolerant of them were the Ibadyyah who refrained from declaring the other Muslims as polytheists although they put them outside the pale of Islam and described them as non-believers. Their evidence, the Ibadyyah said, was to be accepted, marriages with them and inheritance to and from them allowed. Their territory, too, was not to be called dar al-kufr (the land of the infidels) or dar al-harb (the land of the people at war) but dar al-tawhid (the land of the people of one God) although they excepted the centres of their government from it. They disallowed secret assaults on other Muslims, although open warfare with them was not repugnant.⁴⁷

The Murji'ah

The conflicting principles of the Shi'ahs and the Khawarij were responsible for the birth of another sect, called the Murji'ah.

Apart from the people who had flung themselves violently in support of 'Ali or against him during his wars, there was a section which had remained neutral either wisely avoiding to indulge in war, which they had deemed a curse to being unable to decide which side fought for the truth. These people quite realized that it was a veritable curse for Muslims to indulge in bloodshed and mutual slaughter, but they were not prepared to blaspheme any of the belligerents, and left it to God to decide the affair between them. He alone would tell, on Judgment Day, which of them struggled for the right cause and in general, but when the Shi'ahs and the Khawarij raised questions as to what was faith and what constituted infidelity ushering in an era of doctrinal wrangling and polemical contests, this neutral group

evolved some theological doctrines in support of its position. Briefly stated, they were as follows:

1. Faith comprises belief in God and the Prophet. One's action does not form an integral part of one's faith. Hence, a believer will remain a believer though he should eschew his duties or commit grave sins.

2. Salvation depends on faith alone. No sin will hurt one who has faith. It is enough for a man's redemption that he should abstain from polytheism and die as a monotheist.⁴⁸

Some of the Murji'ah, taking it a step further, affirmed that short of polytheism, all sins, even the worst, would be forgiven.⁴⁹ A few, taking a further leap in that direction, asserted that if a man cherished faith in his heart but worshipped idols or adopted Jewish or Christian doctrine and spoke heresy in the Islamic State where he lived under no fear, he would yet be quite fast grounded in faith, remain a friend of God, and deserve to go to Paradise.⁵⁰

Another view closely comparable with the one mentioned above was that if one's duty to uphold the right and stem the wrong (amr bi alp-ma'ruf and nahi 'an al-munkar) required one to bear arms, it was a "trial" to be avoided. It was quite right to check others on wrong conduct, but to speak loud against the tyranny of government was not allowed.⁵¹ Al-Jassas was very bitter on these things and asserted that they strengthen the hands of tyrants and greatly demoralized the Muslims' power of resistance against the forces of evil and wickedness.

The Mu'tazilah

This tumultuous period was responsible for the birth of yet another sect known to Islamic history as "the Seceders." Although it did not owe its origin, like the former three, to purely political factors, like them it contributed its share of opinions to the political issues of the day and entered the arena of theological disputes that raged in the Islamic world at that time, particularly in Iraq. The leaders of this group, Wasil bin 'Ata (80 - 131/699 - 748) and 'Amr bin 'Ubaid (d. 145/763) were both contemporaries of Abu Hanifah, and Basra was the centre of their religious contests in the beginning.

Their political views were briefly these:

1. The appointment of an Imam (or, in other words, the institution of the State) was a religious urgency. Some Mu'tazilites, however, opined that the Imam's was a superfluous office. No Imam was needed if the community followed the right path.⁵²

2. The choice of the Imam, according to them, rested with the community, and only the community's choice validated his appointment.⁵³ Some of them held that the choice should be unanimous, and in the event of differences and dissensions the appointment should be suspended and held in abeyance.⁵⁴

3. The community could choose any morally qualified and efficient person as Imam. The condition of his being a Quraishite, an Arab, or a non-Arab was irrelevant.⁵⁵ Some of them actually preferred the appointment of a non-Arab, it was better still if he could be a freed slave, for he would have fewer devotees, and it would be easy to depose him if he turned out to be a

tyrant.⁵⁶ They would rather have a government which was weak and easy to depose than one that was bad but strong and firmly established.

4. According to them, the Friday or other congregational prayers could not be held behind an unrighteous Imam.⁵⁷

5. Amr bi al-ma'ruj w-al-nahi (enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong) was among their fundamental principles., It was a duty with them to rise in arms against an unjust government provided they had the power to do so and hoped to raise a successful coup.⁵⁸ Thus it was that they rose in arms against the Umayyad Caliph Walid bin Yazid (r. 125 - 126/743 - 744) and tried to replace him by Yazid bin Walid who espoused their doctrine of succession.⁵⁹

6. On the question of the inter-relation of sin and infidelity, over which the Khawarij and Murji'ah were at logger-heads, their verdict was compromising. A sinful Muslim was neither a believer nor a disbeliever, but one in the middle state.⁶⁰

In addition to these principles, the Mu'tazilah pronounced bold verdicts upon the differences among the Prophet's Companions and upon the issue of caliphate. Wasil bin 'Ata declared that one of the two opponents in the battles of Camel and Siffin was surely a "transgressor" although it was hard to say who. It was for this reason that he said that if 'Ali Talhah and Zubair came before him to give evidence on a vegetable knot, he would not accept it of them since there was a possibility that they had been guilty of transgression. 'Amr bin 'Ubaid pronounced both sides as "transgressors."⁶¹

They also attacked 'Uthman vigorously and some of them did not spare even 'Umar.⁶² Besides this, many of them practically rejected the Hadith (the Prophet's Tradition) and ijma' (the consensus of opinion) as authoritative sources of Islamic Law.⁶³

The Major Section

In the midst of these violent, wrangling groups the large majority of Muslims went along subscribing to the orthodox principles and doctrines, accredited as authoritative since the days of the "Right-guided" Caliphs, principles and precepts which the Prophet's Companions and their successors and Muslims in general had commonly regarded as Islamic. However, nobody, from the time of the inception of the schism down to the days of Abu Hanifah, had vindicated the stand of the majority in these matters of violent divergences, and presented it methodically in a compact, doctrinal form, although learned men, traditionists and scholars of repute and integrity had from time to time been bringing one or another aspect of it to light by word of mouth or action, or embodying it in their behaviour or sacred pronouncements as opportunity afforded itself.

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4. Al-Kalam: Al-Shahrestani, Kitab al-Milal w-al-Nihal, London; al-Ash'ari, Maqalat al-Islamiyyin, Maktabat al-Nahdat al-Misriyyah, Cairo, 1st ed.; 'Abd al-Qahir al-Baghdadi, al-Farq bain al-Firaq, Matba'at al-Ma'arif, Egypt; ibn Hazm, al-Fasl fi al-Milal w-al-Nihal, al Matba'at al-Adabiyyah, Egypt, 1317 H.

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Notes

1. Qur'an, 4: 59, 105, 5:44, 45, 47, 7:3, 12: 40, 14: 55, 23: 36.

2. Tradition: "Muslims are brothers to one another. None of them has any preference over another, except on grounds of piety." (ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, Matba'ah Mustafa Mohammad, Egypt, 1937, 4, p. 217).

"Oh men, beware, your God is one. An Arab has no preference over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab, nor a white over a black nor a black over a white, save on grounds of piety" (Alusi, Ruh al-Ma'ani, Idarat al-Taba'at al-Muniriyyah, Egypt, 1345-1926, 26, p. 148; ibn al-Qayyim, Zad al Ma'ad, Matba'ah Mohammad 'Ali Sabih, Egypt, 1935, 4, p. 31).

"Whosoever declares that there is no god but God, and faces our qiblah (direction of prayer), and offers prayer as we offer, and eats of the animal we slaughter, is a Muslim. He has the rights of a Muslim, and the duties of a Muslim." (Bukhari, Kitab al-Salah, Ch. 38).

"A Muslim's blood is like another Muslim's blood. They are one as distinguished from others, and an ordinary man of them can offer dhimmah (i.e. stand surety) on their behalf." (Abu Dawud, Kitab al-Diyat, Ch. 11; Nasa'i, Kitab al-Qasamah, Chs. 10 - 14).

"A Muslim is exempt from poll-tax." (Abu Dawud, Kitab al-Imarah, Ch. 34).

3. Tradition: "Nations before you were destroyed because they punished those among them of low status according to law, and spared the high ranking. By God, who holds my life in His hand, if Fatima, daughter of Mohammad, had committed this theft, I would have chopped off her hand." (Bukhari, Kitab al-Hudud, Chs 11, 12).

Says 'Umar, "I myself have seen the Prophet of God allowing the people to avenge themselves on him." (Abu Yusuf, Kitab al-Kharaj, al Matba'at al-Salafiyyah, Egypt, 2nd ed. 1352/1933, p. 116; Musnad, Abu Dawud al-Tayalisi, Tr. No. 55, Dairatul-Maarif, Hyderabad, 1321/1903)

4. Qur'an, 4:58

Tradition: "Mind, each one of you is a shepherd and each one is answerable in respect of his flock. And the chief leader (i.e. the Caliph) is answerable in respect of his subjects." (Bukhari, Kitab al-Ahkam, Ch 1; Kitab al-Imarah, Ch. 5).

5. Qur'an (13:38)

Tradition: "'Ali reports that he asked the prophet of God (on him be peace), 'What shall we do if we are faced with a problem after you die about which there is no mention in the Qur'an nor have we heard anything concerning it from your lips?' He answered, 'Collect those of my people (Ummah) that serve God truthfully and place the matter before them for mutual consultation. Let it not be decided by an individual's opinion.'" (Alusi, op, cit, 25, p.42)

6. Tradition: "It is incumbent on a Muslim to listen to his Amir and obey, whether he likes it or not, unless he is asked to do wrong. When he is asked to do wrong, he should neither listen nor obey." (Bukhari, Kitab al-Ahkum, Ch. 4; Muslim, Kitab al-Imrah, Ch. 8; Abu Dawud, Kitab al-Jihad, Ch. 105; Nasa'i, Kitab al-Bas'ah, Ch. 33; ibn Majah, Abwab al-Jihad, Ch. 40).

"There is no obedience in sin against God. Obedience is only in the right." (Muslim, Kitab al-Imarah, Ch. 8; Abu Dawud, Kitab al-Jihad, Ch. 95; Nasa'i, Kitab al-Bai'ah, Ch. 33).

"Do not obey those of your rulers that command you to disregard the order of God." (Ibn Majah, Abwab al-Jihad, Ch. 50).

7. Tradition: "Verily, we do not entrust a post in this government of ours to anyone who seeks or covets it." (Bukhari, Kitab al-Ahkam, Ch. 7).

"The most trustworthy of you with us is he who comes forward to seek position in the government." (Abu Dawud, Kitab al-Imrah, Ch. 2).

The Prophet of God said to Abu Bakr, "Oh Abu Bakr, the best fitted person for the government is he who does not covet it, not he who jumps at it. He who knows its responsibility and tries to shun it deserves it most, not he who proudly advances to collect for himself. It is for him to whom you could say, "You most deserve it," not for him who says of himself, "I am most deserving." (al-Qalqashandi, Subh al-A'sha, dar al-Kutub al-Misriyyah, Cairo, 1910, 1, p. 240).

8. Qur'an 22:41

9. Tradition: "Whoever of you sees an evil thing let him undo it with his hand. If he cannot, let him check it with his tongue. If he cannot do even this, let him despise it with his heart and wish it otherwise, and this is the lowest degree of faith." (Muslim, Kitab al-Iman, Ch. 20; Tirmidhi, Abwab al-Fitan, Ch. 20).

"Then the undeserving will take their place who will say what they will not do, and will do what they are not asked to do. Therefore, he who strives against them with his hand is a believer, and he who strives against them with his tongue is a believer, and he strives with his heart is a believer, and there is no degree of faith below this." (Muslim, Kitab al-Iman, Ch 20.)

"The best of jihad (endeavour towards God) is to say the right thing in the face of a tyrant." (Abu Dawud, Kitab al-Malahim, Ch. 27; Tirmidhi, Abwab al-Fitan, Ch. 12; Nasa'i, Kitab al-Bai'ah, Ch. 36i; ibn Majab, Abwab al-Fitan, Ch. 20).

"When the people see a tyrant and do not seize his hand, it is not far that God should afflict them with a general ruin." (Abu Dawud, Kitab al-Malahim, Ch. 17; Tirmidhi, Abwab al-Fitan, Ch. 12).

"Some people are going to be rulers and not after me. He who supports them in their wrong and assists in their tyranny has nothing to do with me, nor Have I anything to do with him." (Nasa'i, Kitab al-Bai'ah, Chs. 34, 35).

10. Al-Tabari, Tarikh al-Umam w-al-Muluk, al-Matba'at al-Istiqamah, Cairo, 1939, Vol 2, p. 618

11. The reference was to the abrupt rising of 'Umar from his place during the meeting at Banu Sa'idah's Meeting House when he proposed Abu Bakr's name as the Prophet's successor and extending his hand to him offered him allegiance. There has been long deliberation before electing Abu Bakr to be Caliph.

12. Bukhari, Kitab al-Muharibin, Ch. 16; Ahmad, Musnad, Third edition, Dar al-Ma'arif, Egypt, 1949, 1. Tr. 391. According to this version, the words are as follows, "Whoever swears allegiance to an Amir without the consultation of Muslims offers no allegiance, and he who receives allegiance from him receives no allegiance." In another version the following words are reported, "He who is offered allegiance with consultation, it is not lawful for him to accept it." (Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari, al-Matba'at al-Khairiyyah, Cairo, 1325/1907, Vol, 2, p. 125)

13. Al-Tabari, op. cit., Vol 3, p. 292; ibn al-Athir, Idarat al-Taba'at al-Muniriyyah, Egypt, 1356/1937, Vo. 3, pp 34, 35.

14. Al-Tabari, op. cit., Vol 3, p. 295 - 96; ibn al-Athir, Idarat al-Taba'at al-Athir, Vol. 3 pp. 36 - 37. Also ibn Qutaibah, al-Imamah w-al-Siyasah, Matba'at al-Futuh, Egypt, 1331/1912, Vol. 1, p. 23.

15. Ibn Qutaibah, op. cit., p. 41

16. Al-Tabari, op cit., Vol. 3, p. 450

17. Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 112; al-Mas'udi, Muruj al-Dhahab, al-Matba'at al-Bahiyyah, Egypt, 1346/1927, Vol. 2 p. 42.

18. Al-Mas'udi, op. cit. p. 42.

19. Abu Yusuf, op. cit.. p.25

20. Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah w-al-Nihayah, Matba'at al-Sa'adah, Egypt, Vol. 7, p. 134

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25. Abu Yusuf, op. cit., p. 117.

26. Al-Tabari, op. cit., p. 273

27. Abu Yusuf, op. cit., p. 115; Musnad, Abu Dawud al-Tayalisi, Tr. No. 55; ibn al-Athir, Vol. 3, p. 30; al-Tabari, op. cit., Vol 3, p. 273

28. Abu Yusuf, op. cit., p. 116

29. Balhaqi, al-Sunan al-Kubra, Dairatul-Maarif, Hyderabad, First ed., 1355/1936, vol. 1 p. 136

30. Ibid

31. Wafayat al-A'yan, Maktabat al-Nahdat al-Misriyyah, Cairo, 1948, vol. 2, p. 168.

32. Al-Tabari, op. cit., Vol 2, p. 508
33. Ibid., p. 487
34. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Isti'ab, Dairatul-Maarif, Hyderabad, 2nd , Vo. 2 p. 467
35. Al-Tabari, op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 264
36. Ibn Qutaibah, op. cit., Vol 1, p. 25
37. Al-Tabari, op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 291
38. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 449, ibn 'Abd al-Barr, op. cit., p. 689
39. Ibn Abi al-Hadid, op. cit., pp. 180, 182
40. Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddimah, Matba'ah Mustafa Mohammad, Egypt, p. 196; al-Shahrastani, Kitab al-Milal w-al-Nihal, London, Vol. 1, pp. 108, 109.
41. Ibn Khaldun, op. cit., p. 196; al-Shahrastani, op. cit., p. 109
42. Al-Shahrastani, op. cit., p. 108; ibn Khaldun, op. cit., pp. 196 - 97.
43. Ibn Khaldun, op. cit., p. 197, al-Ash'ari, Maqalat al-Islamiyyin, Maktabat al-Nadat al-Misriyyah, Cairo, 1st ed., p. 87; al-Shahrastani, op. cit., p. 109.
44. Al-Shahrastani, op. cit., p. 108
45. Ibn Abi al-Hadid, op. cit., Vol 4, p. 520
46. Al-Ash'ari, op. cit., Vol, 1 p. 129; ibn Khaldun, op. cit., pp. 197 - 98; al-Shahrastani, op. cit., pp. 115 - 17.
47. 'Abd al-Qahir Baghdadi, al-Farq bain al-Firaq, Matba'at al-Ma'arif, Egypt, pp. 55, 61, 63, 64, 67, 68, 82 ,83, 99, 313, 315; al Shahrastani, op. cit., pp. 87, 90 - 92, 100; al-Ash'ari, op. cit., pp 156 - 57, 159, 189, 190; al-Mas'udi, op. cit., p. 191.
48. Al-Shahrastani, op.cit., pp. 103, 104; al-Ash'ari, op. cit., pp. 198, 201.
49. Al-Shahrastani, op. cit., p. 104
50. Ibn Hazm, al-Fasl fi al-Milal w-al-Nihal, al-Matba'at al-Adabiyah, Egypt, 1317/1899, Vol 4, p. 204
51. Al-Jassas, Ahkam al-Qur'an, al-Matba'at al-Bahiyah, Egypt 1347/1928, Vol 2, p.40
52. Al-Mas'udi, op. cit., p. 191
53. Ibid
54. Al-Shahrastani, op. cit., p. 51
55. Al-Mas'udi, op. cit., p. 191.
56. Al-Shahrastani, op. cit., p. 63.
57. Al-Ash'ari, op. cit., p., 124
58. Ibid., p. 125.
59. Al-Mas'udi, op. cit., pp. 190, 193; al-Suyuti, Tarikh al-Khulafa', Government Press, Lahore, 1870, p. 255
60. Al-Baghdadi, op. cit., pp. 94 - 95.
61. Ibid., pp., 100, 101; al-Shahrastani, op. cit., p. 34.
62. Al-Baghdadi, op. cit., pp. 133 - 34; al-Shahrastani, op. cit., p. 40
63. Al-Baghdadi, op. cit., 138 - 39.

Chapter 34: Abu Hanifah and Abu Yusuf

A. Abu Hanifah

Life

It was under the circumstances explained at the close of the preceding chapter that Abu Hanifah appeared on the scene and began his work. His original name was Nu'man bin Thabit. Born in Kufah, capital of Iraq, in 80/699 according to authentic reports, in the reign of 'Abd al-Malik bin Marwan, when Hajjaj bin Yusuf ruled over Iraq, he lived the first 52 years of his life in the Umayyad regime, the latter 18 in the 'Abbasid reign. He was 15 years old when Hajjaj left the stage, at the time of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz when he was a youth. The stormy days of the rule of Yazid bin Muhallab, Khalid bin 'Abd Allah al-Qasri and Nasr bin Sayyar, over Iraq, passed before his eyes.

He himself was a victim of the persecution of ibn Hubairah, the last Umayyad governor. He saw the rise of the 'Abbasid movement with its centre at Kufah, his home town, which remained virtually the main stronghold of the new born 'Abbasid State before the founding of Baghdad. His death occurred in 150/767 during the reign of Mansur, the second 'Abbasid Caliph.

Abu Hanifah's ancestors belong to Kabul. His grandfather, Zuta (according to some, the pronunciation is Zauta), came to Kufah as a prisoner of war, accepted Islam, and settled there under the friendly protection of Banu Taim Allah. Zuta was a trader by profession and was known to 'Ali, the "Right-going" Caliph; in fact, he was close enough to him and sometimes entertained him with gifts.¹ Abu Hanifah's father, Thabit, also owned a business at Kufah. According to a report coming from Abu Hanifah, he owned a bakery there.²

Abu Hanifah's own account of his education describes him as applying himself first to recitation (reading the Qur'an properly), Hadith (Tradition), grammar, poetry, literature, philosophy and other subjects in vogue in those days.³ Then he turned to specialize in dialectical theology and mastered it to such a degree that people looked to him as an authority in that science. His student, Zufar (bin al-Hudhail), reported that his master told him that at first he took such an interest in theology that people would lift their fingers towards him.⁴ In another report Abu Hanifah says that at one time he was a past master in the art of controversy and spent most of his time in debates. As Basra was the main venue of these contests, he had been there about 20 times, occasionally staying there for six months or so at a stretch and remained engaged in controversies with the different sects of Kharijites, the Ibadiyyah, the Sufriyyah, and Hashwiyyah.⁵

It may be easily concluded from this that he was well versed in philosophy, logic, and theological divergences of the numerous sects without which a man cannot enter the field of controversy at all. The beautiful use that he later made of reason and common sense in the interpretation of Law and the resolving of abstruse legal problems won him immortal fame and a great deal to the intellectual training which he had received earlier from these exercises of logical argumentation.

After keeping himself busy in polemical controversies for a long time and growing sick of them, he turned to Fiqh, i.e. Islamic Law. Here, with the strength of mind that he possessed, he could not interest himself in the Traditionist school (ahl al-hadith). He, therefore, joined the Iraqi school of reason with its centre at Kufah. This school of law traced its origin to ‘Ali and ibn Mas‘ud (d. 32/652), after whom their disciples Shuriah (d. 78/697), ‘Alqamah (d. 62/681), and Masruq (d. 63/682) became its accredited leaders, followed in their turn by Ibrahim Nakh‘i (d. 95/714) and Hammad (d. 120/737). Abu Hanifah took Hammad for his master and kept him company for 18 years, until the latter’s death. Frequently, he also consulted other learned masters of Law and Tradition in the Hijaz on the occasions of pilgrimage, and acquainted himself also with the Traditionist school of thought.

On Hammad’s death he was chosen to succeed him. He occupied that place for 30 years, delivering lectures and discourses, issuing legal verdicts, and doing the work which formed the foundation of the Hanafi School of law named after him. In these 30 years he answered some 60,000 (according to other estimates, 83,000) legal queries, all of which were later compiled under different heads in his lifetime.⁶ Some seven to 800 of his students spread to different parts of the Islamic world and filled important seats of learning. They were entrusted with issuing legal opinions and guiding the education of the masses, and became objects of heartfelt veneration for the multitudes. About 50 of them were appointed judges after his death during the ‘Abbasid reign. The law which he codified by him was adopted as the law of the great part of the Muslim world. The ‘Abbasids, the Saljuqs, the Ottomans, and the Mughuls accepted it and with millions of people still following it today.

Abu Hanifa, like his forefathers, earned his living by trade. He dealt in a kind of cloth, called khazz, in Kufah. Gradually, his business flourished until he had a factory where this cloth was manufactured.⁷ The business was not restricted to Kufah; his goods had a good market in far off places. The growing recognition of his integrity converted his firm into a bank where people deposited huge sums of money on trust. These deposits ran to 50 million dirhams at the time of his death.⁸

Extensive experience of financial and commercial matters gave him a deep insight into various aspects of law such as seldom falls to the lot of a theoretical lawyer. Later on, when he set himself to the task of codifying the Law of Islam this personal experience proved of immense help to him. A further testimony to his deep understanding and proficient handling of practical affairs is provided by the fact that when in 145/762 Mansur undertook the task of constructing the new city of Baghdad, he appointed Abu Hanifah to supervise the work and for four years it remained under his supervision.⁹

In his private life he was most pious, a man of known integrity. Once he sent out his partner in business to sell some merchandise. A part of the goods to be sold were defective and he instructed his partner to let the buyer know the defect. The partner, however, forgot to do so, and returned after selling the whole without apprising the buyer of the defect. Abu Hanifah did

not keep the money. He gave away the whole of it (and it amounted to 35,000 dirhams) to charity.¹⁰

His chroniclers have recorded occasions when ignorant people would come to his firm selling goods at lower rates than what they were worth. Abu Hanifah would tell them that their wares were worth more than what they would put them at, and bought them at their actual rates.¹¹ All his contemporaries speak highly of his honesty. The famous learned divine, ‘Abd Allah bin Mubarak¹² said, “I have yet to see a more pious man than Abu Hanifah. What will you say about the man to whom they offered the world and its wealth and he kicked it away, who was flogged and remained steadfast, and who never accepted those posts and honours which people hankered after.”

Justice ibn Shubrumah said, “The world followed him but he would have none of it. As for us, the world would have none of us and we run after it.”¹³ According to Hassan bin Ziyad, Abu Hanifah never accepted a gift or favour from the rich.¹⁴

He was also very generous, never sparing in spending, particularly on the learned and the scholarly. A part of his profits was ear-marked for them and expended throughout the year, and whatever of it was left over was distributed among them. Extending them such help he would say, “Be pleased to spend it on your needs, and thank none but God for it. I do not give you anything of mine for it is a bounty from God. He has given it to me for your sake.”¹⁵ A number of his students depended entirely on him, particularly Yusuf. He met all the expenses of the latter’s house since his parents were poor and wanted their son to give up studies and take to some work to earn a living.¹⁶

That was the man who tackled in the first half of the second/eighth century the knotty problems arising from the awkward circumstances that followed the “Right-guided” Caliphate.

Abu Hanifah’s Pronouncements and Opinions

First of all, we shall take those problems about which his opinions as recorded by himself are available to us. He has no prolific writer, therefore, in order to know his views we have to generally resort to other reliable sources. But on certain issues, mainly raised by the above-mentioned sects (the Shi‘ites, the Kharijites, the Murji‘ites, and the Mu’tazilites) he has written, against his wont, with his own pen, drawing up in brief but eloquent words the creed and doctrine of the ahl al-sunnah w-al-jama‘ah (lit., the followers of the Prophet and his Companions’ tradition) who formed (as they still do) by far the largest section of the Muslim community. Naturally, in an estimate of his work the first place must be given to what flows from his pen.

Al-Fiqh al-Akbar

We have already stated in the preceding chapter how the differences that cropped up among the Muslims during ‘Ali’s reign and the first years of the Umayyad regime led to the birth of four big sects in the community, which not only expressed but also adopted as tenets of faith contradictory opinions on certain vital issues affecting the constitution of Muslim society, the

Islamic State, the sources of Islamic Law, and the decisions in regard to these matters was clear; it was embodied in the practice of the great divines and men of learning. But nobody had drawn up in clear cut words and put it into the form of a treatise. Abu Hanifah was the first person to put down perspicuously in his famous work, *al-Fiqh al-Akbar*,¹⁷ the Sunni point of view regarding matters of divergence against the doctrines of other sects.

The first question relevant to our discussion answered by him in the book is regarding the position of the “Right-guided” Caliphs. The dissenting sects had posed the question about some of them whether they were rightly raised to the office of the Caliphate. Some wanted to know who were superior to whom, and whether there was any among them who could not be called a Muslim at all. These questions were not merely queries regarding some personages of old history; in fact, they mooted another fundamental question, viz., whether the way these Caliphs were elected to their office was to be recognized as the constitutional way of electing the Head of the Islamic State or not. Moreover, if the title of anyone of them proved doubtful, the question would be raised whether the decisions taken by “consensus of opinion” in his regime would form part of the Islamic Law or not, whether his own decision would continue to form precedents in law or cease to operate as such.

Besides that, the questions whether they were entitled to the Caliphate, whether they were endowed with faith at all, and whether some of them were superior to others, naturally gave rise to another question of a very vital import, and that was, whether the Muslims of later times could repose any trust in either the members or the collective decisions of the early Islamic community brought up under the direct care and supervision of the Prophet of God, the people through whom the teachings of the Qur’an, the Prophet’s Tradition, and the Islamic Law came to be transmitted to later generations.

The second question related to the position of the Prophet’s Companions. One of the sects, the Shi‘ah, called the vast majority of these Companions sinners, gone astray and even infidels, because they had selected the first three Caliphs to rule them, and a fair number were put outside the pale of faith or declared “transgressors” by the Kharijites and the Mu‘tazilites for reasons of their own. This, too, was not a purely historical question, for it naturally led one to ask whether the laws and traditions transmitted by persons of doubtful bona fides to posterity would remain authentic sources of Islamic Law or not.

The third basic question dealt within the book relates to “faith,” its definition and distinction from disbelief, and the consequences of sin, issues of grave controversy and debate in those days among the Kharijites, the Murji‘ites, and the Mu‘tazilites. This again was not merely a theological question but one that was closely related to the constitution of Muslim society and its answer affected the civic rights and social relations of Muslims. A question that closely followed from it was whether in a Muslim State governed by the sinful and the wrong-doer, it was possible to perform correctly such religious duties as the Friday and other prayers, or political functions like dispensing justice or participating in war.

Abu Hanifah's answers to these questions embodying the Sunni creed are as follows:

1. "The best of men after the Prophet of God (on who be peace) was Abu Bakr. After him was 'Umar, after him 'Uthman, and after him 'Ali. They were all just men and abided by the right."¹⁸ 'Aqidah Tahawiyyah further explains it like this, "We believe Abu Bakr (with whom God be pleased) to be the best of men after the Prophet of God (on whom be an everlasting peace). We recognize his title as the Caliphate as prior to that of others, then 'Umar's, then 'Uthman's, then 'Ali's - and they are the Right-guided Caliphs and the 'Right-going leaders.'"¹⁹

It is a matter of interest to note that personally Abu Hanifah loved 'Ali more than 'Uthman,²⁰ and believed that neither of them should be ranked above the other.²¹ Formulating the creed, however, he accepted wholeheartedly the decision of the majority of his day in choosing 'Uthman as Caliph after 'Umar, and agreed that in the ranking of the "Right-guided" Caliphs the order of their Caliphate was also the order of their superiority to one another.

2. "The Companions of the Prophet are not to be spoken of but respectfully."²² 'Aqidah Tahawiyyah elucidates it further, "We treat all the Companions of the Prophet respectfully. We do not love anyone of them beyond measure, nor censure anyone of them. We do not like one who bears them or mentions them with disrespect. We mention them in none but a good way."²³

Abu Hanifah did not hesitate to express his opinion on the mutual war of the Companions, and said unambiguously that in the war between 'Ali and his adversaries (and evidently the participants of the battles of the Camel and Siffin are included among them) 'Ali stood by right more than they,²⁴ yet he altogether refrained from inflicting reproach on the other side.

3. "Faith is synonymous with owning and believing. To have faith is to own and believe (in God and his Prophet)."²⁵ In al-Wasiyyah it is explained in these words, "To have faith in something is to own it with the tongue and believe in from the heart," and further, "Faith is not owning alone, nor believing alone." In another place we find, "Action is something different from faith, and faith is different from action. Often a man is exempt from a certain action but he is not exempt from faith. For instance, it may be said that a poor man is exempt from the payment of zakat (prescribed charity), but it cannot be said that he is exempt from bearing faith, also."²⁶ Thus, Abu Hanifah refuted the Kharijite theory that action formed part of faith and hence sin was synonymous with disbelief, or, in other words, that a crime necessarily meant treason.

4. "We do not ex-communicate a Muslim for any sin, however grave it may be, unless he affirms that it is 'allowed.' We do not divest him of belief. We call him a believer. A believer may be a transgressor, without being an infidel."²⁷

In al-Wasiyyah he writes, "The sinners among the followers of Mohammad (on whom be peace) are all believers, not infidels."²⁸ 'Aqidah Tahawiyyah elucidates further, "A man does not go out of the pale of faith except by denying the creed that had put him inside it."²⁹ A discussion of

the Kharijites with Abu Hanifah over this issue throws further light on this doctrine and its social consequences. A large part of them once came to him and said, "There are two biers at the gate of the Mosque. One is of a drunkard who died drinking, the other of a woman who had gotten herself illicitly pregnant and too her own life in shame."

"To which community did they belong? Jews were they?" he asked.

"No," they said.

"Christians, then, or Majusis?"

"No," they answered again.

"Then, to which community did they belong?" he asked.

"To the community which bears witness to the creed of Islam," they replied.

"Is that one-third of the faith or one-fourth of faith?" he asked.

They said, "There is no one-third or one-fourth of faith."

"After all, what part of faith is this bearing witness to the creed of Islam?" he said.

"The whole faith," they said.

"When you yourself call them faithful, what is it you want of me?" he asked.

"We ask whether they would go to heaven or hell."

He replied, "If you ask me that, I will say about them what the Prophet of God, Abraham, said about sinners worse than they, 'Oh God, he who follows me is mine, and he who disobeys - Thou art the Forgiving, the Compassionate', or what the Prophet of God, Jesus, said about sinners worse than they, 'If You punish them they are Your creatures, and if You forgive them, Thou art All-powerful and wise', or what the Prophet of God, Noah, said, 'Their reckoning rests with God, would that you understood, and I do not wish to turn my back upon the believers.'"³⁰

Hearing this, the Kharijites felt out-witted and avowed their mistake.³¹

5. "Prayers can be offered behind any of the faithful, good or bad."³² 'Aqidah Tahawiyyah elucidates it further like this, "The pilgrimage and jihad (war) will continue to be performed to the Day of Judgment under the rulers of the faithful, whether they be good or bad. Nothing will make them unlawful or discontinue them."³³

Al-Jassas has more clearly explained Abu Hanifah's point of view in this matter. "Some people," he writes, "suppose that Abu Hanifah approves the Imamate or Caliphate of the corrupt. If it has been deliberately invented, the misunderstanding probably springs from this that Abu Hanifah (and not he alone, all the learned scholars of Iraq whose opinions are widely known are one with him in this) says that if a judge is himself just, his decisions will be accepted, no matter how corrupt a master has appointed him, and prayer may be lawfully offered behind corrupt masters despite their corruption. This attitude is absolutely correct in its own place, but it does not mean that Abu Hanifah finds no fault with the Caliphate of the corrupt."³⁴

These elucidations make it clear that Abu Hanifa, unlike the Kharijites and Mu'tazilites, differentiated between Caliphs de jure and Caliphs de facto. A necessary corollary to the position taken by the above-mentioned sects was that in the absence of a just and pious ruler, i.e. a Caliph de jure,

all functions of Muslim society and State would remain suspended. There would be no pilgrimage and no Friday or other congregational prayer, the courts would stop, and there would no other religious, social, or political work. Abu Hanifah, on the other hand, contended that if at a time the Muslims were deprived of a Caliph de jure, the functions of their society would continue to be exercised lawfully under a Caliph de facto, though his right to caliphate may be disputable. In the pages to come we shall point out what, according to him, were the essential pre-requisites of a lawful Caliphate and what he thought of corrupt and unjust Caliphs.

6. “We do not say that sin does not do a believer any harm. We neither say that a believer will never go to hell, nor that he will live eternally in hell if he is a transgressor.”³⁵ “We also do not say, like the Murji’ites, that our good deeds will be certainly rewarded and our bad deeds undoubtedly forgiven.”³⁶

‘Aqidah Tahawiyah has a further addition to it, “We decide in respect of no believer that he is destined to go to heaven or to hell. We do not accuse any Muslim of infidelity, polytheism, or hypocrisy, unless we see him actually engaged in them. As for intentions and motives we leave them to God to judge.”³⁷

Thus, Abu Hanifah steered a middle course through the opinions held by the Murji’ites, the Kharijites, and the Mu‘tazilites, and formulated a doctrine of balance which, on the one hand, preserves the Muslim society from disintegration through mutual hatred and violence, and, on the other, insures against its falling into moral indiscipline and getting emboldened to commit sins with impunity.

Abu Hanifah on State and Caliphate

The opinions mentioned above related to issues which had cropped up in consequence of the political turmoil of the day and vitally affected the legal system and the political and social orders of Muslim society. Now, let us examine Abu Hanifah’s views concerning the State and Caliphate. Since there is no work of his own touching these matters, we have to resort to the following two kinds of sources for information: first, his opinions quoted in the traditions and books of the Hanafi School and, secondly, the attitude he adopted towards his contemporary governments of the Umayyads and the ‘Abbasids. The latter also includes a number of spoken words coming from his mouth during the course of his struggle with these governments, and these throw further light on his points of view under discussion.

The Problem of Sovereignty and Legislation

Abu Hanifah’s views on sovereignty were identical with the generally known basic view of Islam on this issue, namely, 1) that the true sovereign is God, 2) that the Prophet is to be obeyed as God’s accredited vicegerent, and 3) that the Shari‘ah, i.e. the Law of God and His Prophet, is the supreme Law to which all must submit with demur or reservation. Abu Hanifa, pre-eminently a jurist, has stated this doctrine rather in terms of law than of politics. He says, “When I find an order in the Book of God, I take it from there. When I do not find it there I take from the accredited practice, word,

or tradition of the Prophet, coming down to us through reliable sources. When I do not find it either in the Book of God or in the Prophet's Sunnah, I follow the (agreed) opinion of the Prophet's Companions. In case of difference of opinion among them I adopt the opinion from outside...As for others, I have as much right to sift and draw conclusions as they have."³⁸

Ibn Hazm states, "All his students are agreed that Abu Hanifah's practice was that even a weak tradition was to be preferred to (one's own opinion formed by analogical reasoning (qiyas) or private judgment (ra'y))."³⁹

This leaves absolutely no doubt that Abu Hanifah regarded the Qur'an and the Sunna as the final authority. Legal sovereignty, according to him, rested with God and the Prophet, and reason and judgment (qiyas and ra'y) were to be employed in the service of legislation only in matters where they had given no instruction. The precedence given by him even to an "isolated" opinion of the Companions was also based on the possibility of their being aware of some instruction from the Prophet (about the matter under reference) which may have been the basis of the opinion.

That was also why, when he saw a difference among the Companions, he accepted the opinion of some of them rather than differ with all of them - he would avoid the danger of going against the Sunnah, even inadvertently. In any case, he employed to the utmost power of reasoning and judgment to find out whose opinion seemed best to approximate the Sunnah.

The charge that he preferred to his own discretion to a clear ordinance (nass) was laid at his door even in his life-time but he refuted it say, "God knows that he who stated that I preferred my own discretion to 'ordinance' told a lie and accused me unjustly. How can we dare use our discretion when we have an 'ordinance?'"⁴⁰ The Caliph Mansur once wrote to him saying that he had heard that he (Abu Hanifah) gave precedence to deductions from analogy over the Prophets tradition. In reply, he wrote, "Oh Commander of the Faithful, what you have heard is incorrect. I go first by the Book of God, then by the Sunnah of the Prophet, then the decisions of Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, and 'Ali and then the decisions of other Companions, but when I find disagreement among them, I resort to discretion"⁴¹.

Establishment of the Caliphate

Regarding the Caliphate his views were most clear cut and unambiguous. According to him, to seize power by force and later regularize it by exacting allegiance under duress was no lawful way of being chosen for it. A Caliph should be chosen after consultation and in conference with the wise that are entitled to give opinion (ahl al-ra'y). Abu Hanifah expressed this opinion in face of the peril of losing his life. Mansur's Chamberlain, Rabi' bin Yunus, relates that the Caliph summoned Malik ibn Abi Dhi'b and Abu Hanifah before himself and asked, "What do you say about this power that God has given me over the people, am I not deserving of it?"

Malik answered, "Had you not deserved, God would not have conferred it on you."

Said ibn Abi Dhi'b, "God grants the kingdom of the world to whom He pleases, but the kingdom of the hereafter is given to him who strives for it and is helped by God to make way to it. The help of God will attend you if

you obey him; in case you disobey, it will keep away from you. As for the Caliphate, the truth is that only a conference of the God-fearing can institute it, and one who seizes it by force has no righteousness in him. You and your associates are deprived of the help of God, and have turned aside from truth. Now, if you ask the Almighty to grant you peace and try to gain nearness to Him with deeds of piety, you may win His grace, otherwise, you are only a self-seeker.”

Abu Hanifa tells us that when ibn Abi Dhi’b spoke those words, Malik and he folded their clothes about them expecting his head to be off his shoulders that very moment and his blood to fall on these clothes. But Mansur turned to Abu Hanifah and inquired, “What say you?”

He replied, “The man who sincerely seeks the right path to guide himself eschews wrath. If you consult your conscience you will see that you have not invited us for the sake of God but make us say, out of dread, something that suits you and that should reach the people. The truth is, you have become a Caliph without even a couple of men from amongst the ahl al-fatwa (those whose opinion is respected as authoritative) agreeing to it, whereas a Caliph should be chosen with the conference and concurrence of Muslims. You know, Abu Bakr refrained from making decisions for six months until the (news of the) Yemenites’ allegiance arrived.”

Then all three rose and went their way. Mansur dispatched Rabi’ after them with a bag full of coins for each with instructions that if Malik accepted it, it should be made over to him, but if Abu Hanifah or ibn Dhi’b accepted it, he should bring their heads to him. When the gift was offered to Malik he took it, but when Rabi’ offered it to ibn Abi Dhi’b he said that he did not consider it lawful for Mansur himself, how could it be lawful for him. And Abu Hanifah said, “I will not touch it, not even if you cut off my head.” When Mansur heard it, he said, “Their contentment has saved their lives.”⁴²

A Caliph’s Qualifications

Until Abu Hanifah’s time the qualifications which entitled a man to Caliphate were not described at length as they were compiled later by scholars like Mawardi and ibn Khaldun. They were for free, and well versed in religion, and sound body and mind. Two things, however, were doubtful and needed clarification: first, whether a ruthless or corrupt person could be a Caliph or not; secondly, whether it was necessary for a Caliph to belong to the tribe of Quraish.

Abu Hanifah’s opinion with regard to the first was that a Caliph must be a just person. One who is cruel and corrupt cannot be a Caliph, a judge, a governor, a pronouncer of legal verdict (Mufti), or an arbiter. If such a person comes to office, his Caliphate will be null and void and the public owes him no obedience. However, notwithstanding his usurpation of power, all the social dealings and obligations executed by Muslims under him in accordance with the Shari’ah will have legal sanction and the just decisions of the judges appointed by him will take effect.

Abu Bakr al-Jassas, a well-known Hanafi jurist, has explained this point in greater detail. He observes, “It is not lawful that a cruel or corrupt person should be a prophet or his successor (Khalifah) or a judge or hold any office

by virtue of which he should be in a position to impose his will on the people in matters relating to religion; he cannot, for example, be a Mufti or a witness or a reporter of the Prophet's traditions. The Qur'anic verse, "My covenant does not extend to the wrongdoers"⁴³ shows that all those people who come to the helm of affairs in matters connected with religion must be just and virtuous.

This verse categorically proves that the Caliphate of the corrupt is unlawful. No person of wicked reputation can be a Caliph. If any of that character should install himself in that office, the people are under no obligation to follow or obey him. The same was meant by the Prophet of God (on whom be peace) when he said that none among the created was entitled to command obedience in defiance of the Creator. The verse is also conclusive that no corrupt person can become a judge, a governor, or a magistrate, and if he becomes one, his orders will not be valid. Nor can his evidence be acceptable, nor his transmission of a report from neither the Prophet of God, nor the verdict (fatwa) of which he is the pronouncer."⁴⁴

Al-Jassas further affirms that this was Abu Hanifah's opinion. He regrets how unjust it is to accuse him of allowing the Caliphate of the corrupt. We have already alluded to that controversy and need not repeat it here.

Al-Dhahabi also affirms this to be Abu Hanifah's view. According to him, Abu Hanifah held that the caliph who misused public money (fay') or gave unjust orders was not entitled to remain Caliph and his orders were not valid.⁴⁵

About the second question Abu Hanifah's opinion was that the Caliph should belong to the tribe of Quraish.⁴⁶ Not this alone; it was the agreed view of all the Sunnites.⁴⁷ However, they held this view not because the Caliphate was constitutionally the exclusive right of one tribe, but because in the particular circumstances of those days only a Quraishite Caliphate could hold all Muslims together. In other words, this opinion was based on political expediency of time and not on any legal constitutional right of the Quraish. Ibn Khaldun explains in detail that in those days the Arabs were the mainstay of the State and there were far more chances of the Arabs agreeing on a Quraishite Caliph than on anyone from some other tribe.

The chances of strife and rift that lay in the choice of a non-Quraishite Caliph were so many that none could afford to put the Caliphate in that peril.⁴⁸ That incidentally unfolds the wisdom and implications of the Prophet's timely instruction that the Imams should be chosen from the Quraish.⁴⁹ Had the Caliph's office been forever forbidden to the non-Quraishite, 'Umar would not have said at the hour of his death, "If Hudhaifa's freed slave Salim, were alive, I would have proposed him my successor."⁵⁰

The Prophet, while instructing the Caliphate should go to the Quraish; he had made it clear that this office would be held by the Quraish as long as they retained certain merits.⁵¹ This clearly implied that when the Quraish became bereft of those merits, the Caliphate should devolve on the non-Quraish. This was the essential difference between the view of the Sunnites, including Abu Hanifah on one side and that of the Kharijites and Mu'tazilites on the other. The latter allowed Caliphate for the non-

Quraishites irrespective of all conditions. Not only that, they went a step further and said that the non-Quraishites had a better title to it. Their main anxiety seemed to be democracy, even though it might lead to confusion and disintegration. With the Sunnites, democracy and the stability of the State were equally important considerations.

The Exchequer and the Public's Right of Ownership

The most reprehensible of all indulgences of the Caliphs of his day in eyes of Abu Hanifah were their reckless waste of public exchequer and their illegal seizure of people's properties. As we have already quoted al-Dhahabi, according to Abu Hanifah, oppression and illegitimate use of public money in a ruler rendered his title to Caliphate void. Not only that, he even did not allow the tokens of goodwill and presents received from foreign States to be made the personal property of the Caliph. These things were also deposited into the treasure, not with the Caliph or his family, for the obvious reason that had he not been the head of State and thereby become conspicuous in the international world, none would have sent him those presents.⁵² He also objected to the Caliph's squandering of public money and his giving gifts out of it. This was one of the main reasons why he himself accepted no gifts from the Caliphs.

Separation of the Judiciary from the Executive

His views on the position of the judiciary vis-a-vis the executive were unequivocal. If justice was to be ensured, he said, the judiciary must be independent of the executive. Not only that, the judge must also be able to enforce his decree against the Caliph if the latter encroached upon the rights of people. Towards the close of his life when he was sure that the Government would not let him live any more, he gathered his disciples and addressed himself to them. Among other important things, he gave them this instruction, "If the Caliph is guilty of encroachment upon the rights of the people, the judge next to him in rank (i.e. the Chief Justice) should make him submit to the rule of Law."⁵³

The main thing which prevented him from accepting an official position, particularly of a judge during the Umayyad and 'Abbasid rule was that he did not see the judiciary as independent. There was no chance of making the Caliph submit to the rule of law. On the other hand, he feared that he would be made an instrument of injustice and asked to give wrong decisions, and that not only the caliph himself but also those attached to the palace would interfere with his work.

Yazid bin 'Umar bin Hubairah was the first of the Umayyad governors of Iraq who pressed Abu Hanifah to accept office. This was in 130/747 when the upsurges in Iraq against the Umayyad regime were rising with a speed that completely overthrew that government within a couple of years. Ibn Hubairah wanted to enlist the support of influential men of learning and use them to the advantage of the Umayyad cause. He invited ibn Abi Laila, Dawud bin Abi al-Hind, ibn Shubrumah, and others and gave them lucrative appointments. Then summoning Abu Hanifah, he said, "Here I give you me seal. No order will be enforced here until you put the seal on it, and no money will be drawn from the treasury without your sanction." But Abu

Hanifah declined to accept the responsibility. Yazid put him in prison and threatened him with whipping.

Then the other learned men came round Abu Hanifah and requested him to take compassion on himself. "This service is as repugnant to us," they said, "as it is to you. But we have accepted under duress, so should you." Abu Hanifah replied, "Ah! Had he asked me to count the gates of the mosque of Wasit, I would not have done it for his sake. Then how can I agree that he should write the death warrant of an innocent person and I should put the seal on that order? By God, I will accept no share of his responsibility." Ibn Hubairah then made him other offers but found him cold. At last, he decided to appoint him the Chief Judge of Kufah and swore that if Abu Hanifah declined the appointment he would have him flogged. Abu Hanifah swore in return saying that the flogging of this world was easier for him to endure than the flogging of the hereafter, reiterating that he would never accept it, even though that would cost him his life.

At last the tyrant gave him 20, or (according to another report) 30, blows of the stripe on the head. According to some accounts, he kept it up with ten stripes daily for about 11 days, but found his victim firm like a rock. Then someone informed him that he was likely to die. Ibn Hubairah replied, "Is there none to counsel this man to ask me for a reprieve?" When Abu Hanifah heard of this he asked to be set free for Mecca, not to return to it before the final wiping out of the Umayyad dynasty.⁵⁴

In the 'Abbasid period, again Mansur insisted he accept the office of a judge. As we shall presently see, Abu Hanifah, having openly participated in a revolt launched against Mansur by al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah and his brother Ibrahim, Mansur cherished such malice against him that in al-Dhahabi's words, he was all but consumed in the fire of wrath.⁵⁵ However, it was not easy to lay hands upon a person of Abu Hanifah's eminence. Mansur knew how the murder of Husain had provoked feelings of wrath against the Umayyads and how easily had they been uprooted on that account.

Therefore, instead of killing him, he would rather lure him into a cage of gold and use him to advance his ends. With this in view he offered him the post of a judge again and again, in the end asking him to become the Chief Justice of the whole of the 'Abbasid Empire, but Abu Hanifah always put him off under one pre-text or another.⁵⁶

Ultimately, seeing him persist too much he told him frankly the reason why he was unable to accept these offers. On one such occasion he excused himself politely saying, "None can be fit to become a judge unless he has strength enough to impose law on you, your princes, and your commanders. I have not that strength in me. I am so built that whenever you call me, I cannot breathe easily until I leave your presence."⁵⁷ On another occasion the talk took a harsh turn.

Addressing the Caliph, he said, "Even if I accepted this office willingly, not reluctantly, sure enough I would not prove worthy of your trust. If I decided a case against your desire and you wanted me to alter the decision on pain for being pushed into the Euphrates to drown, I would rather drown than alter my decision. When talks like these led Mansur to conclude that this man could not be caught in a cage of golden bars, he resorted to open

persecution. He had him whipped and flogged, put him in jail where they subjected him to tortures of hunger and thirst. Later, he was confined in a cell wherein he died, according to some, a natural death, according to others, of poisoning.⁵⁸

Freedom of Expression: A Right and a Duty

According to Abu Hanifah, freedom of expression in a Muslim society and in an Islamic State is of as much importance as the independence of the judiciary. The Qur'an terms this freedom as *amr bi al-ma'ruf and nahi 'an al-munkar* (enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong). No doubt, an unqualified right of freedom of expression may sometimes assume an unbecoming, mischievous, immoral, or even offensive form which no law can tolerate. But the Qur'an, by using the above-mentioned term for this freedom, clearly distinguishes it from all other kinds of freedom and, thus, circumscribing it within well-defined limits, declares it to be not only an inalienable right but also a duty of the public.

Abu Hanifah was particularly conscious of this right and duty because the political order of his day had rid the people of this right to such an extent that they actually doubted if it had anything of the nature of a duty about it. We have pointed out elsewhere that the Murji'ites, by preaching ultra-liberal doctrines were emboldening people towards sin. The Hashwiyyah professed that "Enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong" where the government was involved was mischievous and the Umayyad and 'Abbasid governments crushed the spirit of the people to raise a voice against the corruption and high-handedness of the ruling cliques. Abu Hanifah, with both speech and action, attempted to resurrect this spirit among the people and elucidated the extent to which it could be exploited. This is clear from Abu Hanifah's answer to a question from Ibrahim al-Sa'igh related by al-Jassas.⁵⁹

Abu Hanifah asserted the right of freedom of expression against law courts in the same manner, as well. If any court of law gave a wrong decision, he would not hesitate to point out whatever flaws of law or procedure he found in it. With him the respect of the courts did not mean letting the courts give wrong decisions. He was forbidden to pronounce verdicts on this account for a long time.⁶⁰

He was zealous in the matter of freedom of expression that he did not consider it lawful to imprison or otherwise punish a person who spoke ill, even of a legitimate ruler or his just government, not even if he went to the extent of abusing the Caliph and expressing an intention to kill him, until there was resolve on his part of an armed revolt or breach of peace. He argued this from an incident during the Caliphate of 'Ali. Five people were arrested and brought before him on the charge of abusing him openly in the streets of Kufah. One of them was also accused of saying that he would assassinate him. 'Ali ordered their release. It was said, "But they intended to kill you." He asked in reply, "But should I kill them only for expressing the intention to kill me?" It was added, "But they also abused you." He said, "If you like you may also abuse them."

The Question of Rebellion against Tyrannical Rule

Another important question that baffled the people of those days was whether or not it was lawful for the Muslim to rise in revolt against a ruler who perpetrated tyranny or transgressed the limits of Shari'ah. The Sunnis themselves were divided on this. A large section of the Traditionists (ahl al-hadith) allowed that they could raise voice against his tyranny and speak their mind before him but they could not rise in rebellion, even though he should seize upon their lawful rights and indulge in unjust bloodshed and open transgression.⁶¹ But Abu Hanifah's creed in this matter was that the Caliphate of an unjust incumbent was basically wrong and insupportable, and deserved to be overthrown, that people not only had the right, but it was their duty to rise in rebellion against it, that such a rebellion was not only allowed but obligatory, provided, however, that it promised to succeed in replacing the tyrant or transgressor by a just and virtuous ruler, and not fizzle out in mere loss of lives and power.

Private Council and Codification of Islamic Law

Abu Hanifah's greatest work which won him lasting eminence in the history of Islam was that he filled, on his own initiative, the vast gap caused in the Islamic legal system by the discontinuance of the shura (the Consultative Council) after the "Right-guided" Caliphate. We have already alluded to the consequences that followed this ill-happening. The loss resulting from this state of affairs lasting over a century was a matter of grave concern to every thinking person. The State had extended its boundaries from Spain to Sind, taking in its fold scores of peoples with various cultures, customs, rites, and habits of their own.

Facing it at home were problems relating to finance, commerce, agriculture, industry, marital relations, and the rest. There were civil and criminal cases to decide and ever-new constitutional, legal and procedural problems to solve. Abroad, the relations of this large State with the other States of the world, and issues like war, peace, diplomatic relations, foreign trade, communications (by land and sea), customs, etc., demanded urgent attention.

As the Muslims were a people with a distinct ideology, and claimed to guide themselves by principles and law of their own, it was necessary for them to solve their problems in the light of that ideology and those laws and principles.

But the institution of Shura having been discontinued there was no other properly established body or institution in which the trusted scholars, jurists, and lawyers of the community should meet to deliberate and devise such an authentic solution of every outstanding legal issue, as should be recognized as the accredited and uniform law of the land throughout the State. Thus, Islam was faced with a mighty challenge and there was no machinery to meet it.

The loss was being felt all round, from the Caliph to the governors and judges. It was not easy for every judge, lawyer, or head of a department to decide the innumerable problems that rose every day, there and then, on the strength of his own knowledge or by dint of his own understanding. Not only that, such individual decisions also conflicted with one another and created confusion. But a body whose verdict carried authority could be

established only the Government which, unluckily, lay in the hands of such people as knew for certain that they enjoyed no esteem or confidence with the public, nor were they prepared to face, nay, even endure, the learned, who, they feared, would confront them with things they would not like. They also knew that laws enacted under their patronage could never be accepted as parts of the Law of Islam.

Ibn al-Muqaffa' proposed to Mansur that in order to stop this gap he should convene a council of the learned lawyers of all schools of thought who should sit together and express their opinions on the various problems at hand. After hearing these opinions the Caliph himself should pronounce his decision on every case and that decision should be adopted as law. But Mansur knew his own position too well to make this mistake. His decisions could not equal decisions of Abu Bakr and 'Umar. They could, at best, have the whole realm that would respect and willingly follow a law enacted by him. He could make a secular law all right, but he could not make a law which would become incorporated in the Islamic juridical code.

In these circumstances it struck Abu Hanifah to try an entirely new path to redeem the loss, and this was to institute a private legislative body, on his own initiative, independent of the Government. Only a far-sighted person like him could think of such a plan and only he could dare the adventure who trusted his own resources, character, and moral prestige well enough to be sure that the laws passed by a body raised under his auspices would enforce themselves by dint of their excellence in sufficiency, precision, adaptability, and the moral influence of their devisers, even without any political sanction behind them, and they would be adopted by the people of their own accord, and recognized by the different governments of their own free-will.

Abu Hanifah was no seer of the hidden future to perceive the results which his efforts produced within half a century of his departure, but he knew himself and his colleagues well enough. He knew the collective temperament of his community and had an eye on the circumstances of this day. With the perfect eye of a man of sharp intelligence and foresight he gauged that he could fill the yawning gap with his private endeavour if he would, and that surely it would be filled satisfactorily.

Abu Hanifah's own students, trained under his care and guidance in his college of law for years in deliberating over legal questions, looking into them in the proper scientific spirit, and arriving at conclusions with arguments, formed the members of this council. Almost all of them had learned the Qur'an, literature, history, and Sirah (biography of the Prophet) not only from Abu Hanifah, but also from many other learned scholars of the day. Many of them had specialized in certain branches.

Some had made a name in the field of "arguing conclusions by analogy," others for incomparable knowledge of the Prophet's traditions and precedents set by the Companions, judges, and Caliphs of old. Others yet had a reputation for interpreting the Qur'an or for being skilled in a particular branch of law or in grammar on Sirah. Abu Hanifah himself once described them by saying, "These are 36 men of whom 28 are fit to be

judges, six to pronounce legal verdicts, and two good enough to teach judges and jurists.”⁶²

The procedure of work adopted in this council as reported by the authentic chroniclers of Abu Hanifah should be described in their own words. Al-Muwaffaq bin Ahmad al-Makki (d. 568/1172) writes, “Abu Hanifah framed his legal system with the consultations of his learned students. His passion to do all that he could for the sake of his religion and his love of God, the Prophet, and the believers did not allow him to undertake his work by himself to the disregard of his student colleagues.

He put every problem before them, threw light on its various aspects, carefully heard all that each one of them had to say on it and put forth his own point of view for their consideration. These deliberations and discussions were so exhaustive that some questions took a month or even more to decide. At last, when unanimity was achieved, Abu Yusuf recorded it in the fundamental compilations of Hanafi Law.”⁶³

Ibn al-Bazzaz al-Kardari (d. 827/1424), author of Fatawa Bazzayyah in his *Manaqib al-Imam al A‘zam*, “His students debated each question to their heart’s content and discussed it from every point of view. Abu Hanifah, all the while, sat quietly listening to the discussion. When it was his turn to speak, there was such a silence in the house, as if there was none other present.”⁶⁴ “Abd Allah bin Mubarak tells that once the discussion on an issue lasted three days. On the evening of the third day he heard cries of Allah-u Akbar (God is most Great) from within and understood that a solution had been achieved.”⁶⁵

It is recorded by another student, Abu ‘Abd Allah, that when Abu Hanifah had his views recorded on an issue, he had them afterwards read out to him to ensure their correctness. His own words are, “I read out the Imam’s words to him. Abu Yusuf (in recording the proceedings) used to record his own views, too, therein. Hence, I tried to read out the Imam’s words only, leaving out those of Abu Yusuf. Once I made a slip and read the other view, also. The Imam at once cut in, ‘Whose view is this second?’”⁶⁶

Another thing that we gather from al-Makki is that the work of classification of this council’s decisions under different heads and chapters also was completed in the life-time of Abu Hanifah. He says, “Abu Hanifah is the first man to gather the knowledge of the Shari‘ah (Islamic Law). None before him had done this work - Abu Hanifah compiled it in books, under different heads and chapters.”⁶⁷

This council recorded decisions on about 83,000 legal issues. These embraced not only those questions with which the public or the state was currently or had formerly been confronted but also others that might arise in the future. Possibilities were conceived and discussed freely to ensure that if ever they turned into actualities there should be laws ready to meet them. They related to almost all branches of law, internal (covered under the term *al-siyar*),⁶⁸ constitutional, civil, criminal, of evidence, of procedure, laws governing different aspects of economic life, marriage, divorce, and inheritance, personal, and aspects of economic life, and those dealing with worship. We can find all these subject-heads among the contents of books

compiled by Abu Yusuf and later by Mohammad bin Hassan al-Shaibani from the material provided by the deliberations of this “legislative council.”

This regular codification of law soon deprived individuals of the confidence they enjoyed in its absences in their efforts at law-making. The opinions and verdicts of scattered individuals, be they doctors or judges of repute, could not carry weight before the wholesomely judicious and precise decisions arrived at in council of legists presided over and guided by a man of Abu Hanifah’s foresight and calibre, after thorough sifting of the Qur’anic injunctions and the Prophet’s Tradition and keeping in view of precedents and the verdicts of the scholars of old, drawn as they were with thoughtful and steady labour, bearing in mind the principles of ijtihad (deducing conclusions with thorough discretion) in the light of the Shari‘ah, embracing all aspects of life, and able to meet all exigencies. Therefore, as soon as it came to light, the common people, the rulers, the judges, all felt forced to turn to it. It answered the demand of the day. As a matter of fact, it was the long awaited help which everybody had been seeking.

The famous legist Yahya bin Adam (d. 203/818) tells that the opinions of other jurists paled into insignificance before those of Abu Hanifah, his ideas spread everywhere, the judges, rulers, and officers of every place decided their cases in accordance with his law; in short, everything went according to it.⁶⁹ By the time of al-Mamun (198 - 218/813 - 833) it had acquired such popularity that one day Premier Fadl bin Sahl was advised by a jurist who was hostile towards Abu Hanifah, to issue orders to stop the use of Abu Hanifah’s code. Fadl invited the wise and prudent man to advise him on this. They told him not to take this step for it would not succeed. On the other hand, the whole country, they said, would turn against the Government, adding that the man who had given him the counsel was surely a fool. The Premier agreed with them, saying that he himself did not see any wisdom in the course, nor was the Caliph likely to agree to it.⁷⁰

Thus came about the historical reality that a system of law was devised by a private legislative council became the law of countries and empires on the strength of its merits and the moral prestige of those who framed it. It had also another important consequence in that it opened up for Muslim thinkers’ new lines for codification of Islamic Law. The chief legal systems devised later may have differed from it in their methods of deduction and in their results, but they were all inspired by and based on this model.

B. Abu Yusuf

In Abu Hanifah’s lifetime, the relations between the Hanafi School of Law and the ‘Abbasid rulers were strained, owing to his political creed and non-co-operation with the Government. The effect of this lasted for a long while after his death. The leaders of this school stuck to their policy of indifference towards authority. Thus, when after the death of Abu Hanifah, his great student Zufar bin Hadhail (d. 158/775) was asked to accept the post of a judge, he flatly refused it and fled to find safety in concealment.⁷¹ On the Government’s side, was also the tendency from the days of Mansur to the early years of Harun’s reign was to resist the influence of this school of thought.

Mansur and his successors earnestly desired that the gap in the legal system of the State, detailed in our previous discussion, should be filled by some other system of codification. Both Mansur and Mahdi in their respective reigns endeavoured to bring Malik to the fore.⁷² Harun also in 174/791, on the occasion of the pilgrimage, expressed his desire to make his book al-Muwatta' the law of the land.⁷³ At long last, a man of great strength and character belonging to the Hanafi School of Thought rose to bring this state of affairs to an end. With his great ability and personal influence he delivered the Empire from a continued state of legal chaos. The Hanafi code was made the law of the land which gave the whole Empire a uniform system of law. This man was Abu Yusuf, the ablest of the disciples of Abu Hanifah.

Brief Life Sketch

Abu Yusuf's (b. 113/731) personal name was Ya'qub. His father came from an Arab tribe of Bajilah, his mother of the Ansars of Medina with whom his father was also connected by ties of alliance; hence his family was known as Ansar. He chose to specialize in law after completing his elementary education and took his lessons from 'Abd al-Rahman bin Abi Laila.

Then he joined the school of Abu Hanifah and became permanently attached to him. His parents were extremely poor and did not want their son to continue his education. When Abu Hanifah came to know of it, he undertook to defray all the expenses not of the boy alone, but of the whole family. He himself said that Abu Hanifah never gave him occasion to express his want before him. On and off, he would send so much money to his family as would relieve him of worry on that account.⁷⁴

From the beginning, Abu Hanifah was very optimistic about his ward. When his father wanted to withdraw him from the school, the Imam told him not to do so, for, if it pleased God, the lad promised to turn out to be a great man.⁷⁵

Apart from Abu Hanifah, Abu Yusuf learned a good deal from other famous scholars of the day and made himself well acquainted with Tradition, Qur'anic commentary, biography of the Prophet, history, language, literature, and scholastic theology. Particularly well versed in traditions, he knew them by heart, and men like Yahya bin Mu'in, Ahmad bin Hanbal, and 'Ali bin al-Madini declared him thiqah⁷⁶ (dependable - a particular term used for a person of known veracity on whom reliance is placed in the transmission of traditions). His contemporaries all agreed that he was the outstanding among the disciples of Abu Hanifah.

Talhah bin Mohammad says, he was the greatest jurist of his age, none excelled him.⁷⁷ Dawud bin Rashid thinks that it would have been enough source of pride for Abu Hanifah if he had produced only this one disciple.⁷⁸ Abu Hanifah himself had great respect for him. He used to say that all of all his students the most acquisitive and adorned with learning was Abu Yusuf.⁷⁹ Once he was very ill and little hope was left of his life. Abu Hanifah, when coming out of the house after inquiring after his health, deplored that if the youth died he (Abu Hanifah) would not leave behind him a scholar more learned than himself.⁸⁰

For ¹⁶ years after the death of Abu Hanifah, he, too, in keeping with traditions of his school, remained indifferent to the Government. Nevertheless, he continued the intellectual and educative work of his master, adding to it the compilation of several books on almost all branches of law, and recording the decisions of Abu Hanifah's times supplemented with his own opinions.⁸¹

When these books spread throughout the country, they not only influenced the intellectual circles, but also impressed the courts and high officials connected with various government departments in favour of the Hanafi School of Thought, since there existed no other classified code of law to satisfy their wants as these books did. Malik's al-Muwatta' had come into the field long before, but it was not sufficiently comprehensive and elaborately classified to meet the needs of a government.⁸² Thus, Abu Yusuf's intellectual and literary work took hold of the minds of people before he came to power. It lacked only formal political sanction to enforce it as the law of the land.

Had Abu Yusuf's position been economically sound, he might have followed in the footsteps of his master and lived in continued indifference towards the Government. But he was a poor man and Abu Hanifah's death had robbed him of his generous support. Reduced by poverty to live a miserable existence, he was obliged one day to sell off a girder of his wife's house, for which he was reproached by his mother-in-law in a manner he could not endure, and this forced him to look for employment. He made for Baghdad and arrived there in 166/782, saw the Caliph al-Mahdi who appointed him the judge of eastern Baghdad, an office he continued to hold until the end of al-Hadi's reign.

When Harun al-Rashid became Caliph Abu Yusuf steadily gained such influence that he at last appointed him Chief Justice of the whole 'Abbasid Empire. This was the first occasion that such a post was created in the Muslim State. None before Abu Yusuf had held the post of Chief Justice of the State in either the "Right-guided" Caliphate or the Umayyad and 'Abbasid rule.⁸³ His position was not only that of the head of the Supreme Court of the realm, as we may conceive from the practice of our modern institutions, it also invested him with the authority of the Minister of Law, that is to say, he did not merely have to judge cases and appoint judges for the lower courts, he had also to advise the Government on all legal matters, internal as external.

Abu Yusuf's appointment to this office bore three far-reaching results. In the first place, instead of a college where he lectured students, or a study from which he issued books, a vast field of work now engaged his attention - a field in which he dealt practically with the affairs of the biggest empire of the day. This provided him with opportunities of applying the Hanafi law to the actual affairs of life, thus making it, in fact, a practical system of law. Secondly, as the appointment and removal of judges was now entrusted to his charge, scholars connected with the Hanafi School were appointed judges in most of the places, and through them the Hanafi law automatically became the law of the realm. Thirdly, with the help of his great moral and intellectual influence he converted the Muslim State, which had assumed an

autocratic character since the time of the Umayyads and was going, in a way without a constitution, into a State guided to a large extent by the constitution. Nay, he actually wrote a book of constitution for it, which has luckily come down to us intact in the shape of Kitab al-Kharuj.

Before we speak of this work on constitution, it is necessary to remove a widespread misunderstanding. Abu Yusuf's biographers have described such stories about him as often present him as the reader as one given to flattery and skilled wresting the law to suit the desires of Kings. But if we make the events recorded in history relating to Abu Yusuf's attitude to the Caliphs and their ministers and generals, it becomes impossible for us to believe that a mere flatterer could dare have it. In Hadi's time, when he was the judge of eastern Baghdad, he decided a case against the Caliph himself.⁸⁴

In Harun's time an old Christian filed a suit for a garden against the Caliph. Abu Yusuf not only heard the case, both confronting each other, but also asked the Caliph to deny on oath that he refused to accept the claimant's title to it. Even after this he was sorry for the rest of his life why he did not make the Caliph stand side by side with the suitor.⁸⁵ He declared 'Ali bin 'Isa, Prime Minister of Harun al-Rashid, an unreliable witness because, he said, he had heard him call himself the Caliph's slave. "If he is a slave in fact," he contended, his witness cannot be accepted. If he is not and calls himself so for flatter, he is a liar and cannot be trusted."⁸⁶ The same punishment he gave to a general of Harun's forces.⁸⁷

'Abd Allah bin Mubarak states that he used to go to Harun's palace riding right up to the private enclosures (where even the Premier must go on foot) and the Caliph was always the first to greet him.⁸⁸ Harun was once asked why he had raised Abu Yusuf so high. He replied, "In whatever branch of knowledge I tried him I found him perfect. Besides, he is upright and a man of solid character. If there is another like him I would be please to see him."⁸⁹

When he died (182/798) Harun himself accompanied the funeral procession on foot, led the funeral prayer, buried him in his own family graveyard and said it was a bereavement on which all the believers should condole with one another.⁹⁰ But nothing bears out all that has been said above so well as his work Kitab al-Kharaj. A perusal of its introduction alone will tell that it is just beyond an adulator to say such things as he did while addressing a king.

Kitab al-Kharaj

In Harun al-Rashid, Abu Yusuf found a king of the most conflicting disposition and humours, at once a fierce soldier, a luxurious monarch, and a God-fearing man. Abu al-Faraj Asbahani describes him in a sentence, "He would most easily melt into tears in response to an exhortation or admonition, but would be most unrelentingly cruel in response to something that kindled his wrath."⁹¹

Abu Yusuf, prudently avoiding to touch upon the Caliph's failings, skilfully set to work on his religious sentiment bringing to bear his great moral and intellectual influence to the task, and pursued this steadily until the Caliph's heart was won and he proposed for him the assignment of

preparing a constitution for him according to which he should guide the affairs of the State. This was how Kitab al-Kharaj came to be written.

The name of the book misleads one into thinking that its scope is limited to matters of revenue only. As a matter of fact, it deals with almost all the affairs of the State. Leaving aside all other details, we shall here examine its contents with only a view to seeing its basic conception of the Islamic State and its constitutional character.

Reversion to the “Right-guided” Caliphate

The first thing that strikes the reader who follows Kitab al-Kharaj closely is that Abu Yusuf desires the Caliph to give the Byzantine and Iranian traditions followed by the Umayyad and ‘Abbasid kings and revert faithfully to the traditions of the “Right-guided Caliphs. Although he has not directly asked him to give up following his forefathers, yet he has never lapsed even into quoting the conduct or the decisions of the Caliph’s forefathers as precedents worth following, much less those of his Umayyad predecessors. In every matter he bases his argument, either directly on the Qur’an or the Sunnah or else quotes precedents from Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthman and ‘Ali.

If he has ever quoted a precedent from a later period it is not from Mansur’s or Mahdi’s but from that of the Umayyad Caliph ‘Umar bin Abd al-Aziz. In preparing this book, he completely ignored the conventions and precedents of the whole 132 years of Umayyad and ‘Abbasid reigns, except those of the two and half years of ‘Umar II’s reign. Abu Yusuf’s work may not have meant much, had it been done by some ingenious lawyer in his private capacity as a holy sermon for those who might like to follow it. But done as it was by the Chief Justice-cum-Law Minister of the State in his official capacity, at the express instance and request of the Caliph, it becomes something extra-ordinarily significant.

At the beginning of the book Abu Yusuf lays down the basic conception of the State before the Caliph in these words, “Oh Commander of Believers, God, the sole deserver of praise, has placed on you a heavy responsibility which carries with it a great reward and a great punishment. He has committed to your charge the affairs of this community, so that yours is the duty to work for a large number of people day and night. He has appointed you a guard over them, given you their trust, and tried you by them, for you are to conduct their affairs for them. An edifice founded on anything except fear of God does not take long to crumble. God shakes it to the foundation and makes it fall on its builders, and on them that helped in its construction... Kings will be called to account by God as a shepherd is called to account by the owner of the flock... Take not the crooked path, lest your flock should follow in your footsteps... Treat everybody alike in the Law of God, whether one is akin to you or not... Go not into the presence of God as one who has been committing excesses, for the Ruler of the Day of Retribution will judge men by their actions, and not by ranks. Guard against wasting the flock entrusted to your care, lest the owner of the flock take you to task for every little sheep of it.”⁹²

After this he continues to press it on the Caliph everywhere in the book that he is not the owner of his kingdom but the Owner’s Caliph (lit.

deputy),⁹³ and that if he proved a just ruler he would see the best imaginable end, but if he proved unjust he would meet the worst punishment.⁹⁴ At one place he puts before him the words of ‘Umar wherein he says, “None who enjoys the right of commanding obedience has risen so high as to ask anyone to obey him in disobedience of God.”⁹⁵

Spirit of Democracy

Abu Yusuf conceives the Caliph to be answerable not only to God but also to the public, and has quoted at several places from the sayings of the Prophet and the Companions to prove that the Muslims have an unquestionable right to criticize their rulers and that such criticism contributes to the good of the people and the State.⁹⁶ “Enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong is an inalienable right and a duty and its negligence in a community is equivalent to inviting the wrath of God upon its head.”⁹⁷ It is the duty of rulers to have forbearance for truth being spoken before them, as nothing is more hurtful in a ruler than this being short-tempered and intolerant of criticism,⁹⁸ and the Muslims have a right to call him to account in respect of their lawful rights on him and of their properties that have been entrusted to his care.⁹⁹

Duties of the Caliph

The following duties of the Caliph have been specifically mentioned: To establish the rights of God and enforce the limits prescribed by him, to determine correctly the rights of other right holders and ensure their enjoyment of their rights, to revive the conventions of virtuous rulers (that have been discarded by the wicked rulers of late),¹⁰⁰ to check injustice and redress the grievances of people after proper scrutiny,¹⁰¹ in pursuance of orders of God, to command people to obey Him and stay away from the commission of sin, to apply the Law of God on himself and others alike, without regard to who suffers by it,¹⁰² and to make only lawful exactions from people and expend them in lawful ways.¹⁰³

Duties of Muslim Citizens

As opposed to these, the duties of the Muslims toward their rulers, as described in this book, are the following: They have to obey them, not to commit acts of disobedience, not lift arms against them, nor reproach them (unnecessarily), nor deceive them. They have to put up with excesses, to be sincerely helpful to them, to try to check them from wrong things and to cooperate with them in all that is good.¹⁰⁴

The Exchequer

He calls the exchequer a trust of God and the people instead of its being the Caliph’s property. Off and on he reminds the Caliph of the words of ‘Umar wherein he compares the Caliph’s position in relation to the orphan’s property, and states that if he is well-to-do, he should not take anything from it, in deference to the advice of God, and manage it for Him without any consideration, and if he is needy, he may take from it an amount which everybody will recognize as just and proper.¹⁰⁵

He also draws his attention to ‘Umar’s example in spending from the exchequer more sparingly than one would from one’s private purse. He

illustrates his point by reference to another instance where ‘Umar, appointing a judge, a governor, and a revenue officer for Kufah, allowed them to take a goat everyday for the expense of their board, adding at the same time that a land from which the officers will pick up a goat everyday would soon be impoverished.¹⁰⁶ The Caliph is also asked to forbid his officials to spend public money for their private needs.¹⁰⁷

Principles of Taxation

Abu Yusuf prescribes the following principles of taxation: Only the surplus wealth of people should be taxed and the burden of taxes should fall upon the people with their consent. The tax should vary according to the capacity of the tax-payer. Nobody should be taxed more than they can pay. The tax should be collected from the wealthy and spent on the poor.¹⁰⁸ Rates of tax should not be fixed so as to suck the blood of the people, nor should the tax be realized by coercive methods.¹⁰⁹ Government should refrain from extorting taxes which are not warranted and also forbid its officers and landlords to make such exactions.¹¹⁰ Non-Muslims who accept Islam should not be charged poll-tax.¹¹¹

The practice of the “Right-guided” Caliphs is quoted as authority in this connection. He refers, for example, to the incident related to ‘Ali that while in public he advised his officials to realize every penny of revenue from the payers and not to be at all lenient to them in this matter, but calling them apart he instructed them to be careful not to beat anybody or make them stand in the sun or press them so hard that they should be obliged to sell their cattle or clothes or utensils to pay the tax.¹¹² Or the fact that ‘Umar used to examine thoroughly his revenue officers to satisfy himself that the farmers were not dealt with too harshly in the exaction of revenue, and when the collections actually came in, the representatives of the common people were summoned to bear witness that no Muslim or non-Muslim peasant was unjustly made to pay the tax.¹¹³

Rights of non-Muslim Subjects

With regard to the rights of non-Muslim subjects in the Islamic State, three principles are quoted again and again on the authority of ‘Umar:

1. Whatever agreement is made with them has to be faithfully observed.
2. The responsibility for the defence of the State does not lie on them, but on the Muslims alone.
3. They should not be burdened with excessive poll-tax and land revenue.¹¹⁴

Then it is said that the poor, the blind, the old, the recluse, workers at the houses of worship, women, and children are exempt from poll-tax, that there is no zakat (prescribed charity) chargeable on the wealth and cattle of non-Muslims, that none is allowed to resort to beating or inflicting other physical tortures on them for exacting the capitation, as the maximum punishment for its non-payment is only simple imprisonment. To realize more than the fixed amount from them is unlawful, and the poor and the cripple among them are to be supported from the State exchequer.¹¹⁵

Historical incidents are related to make the caliph see that it is for the good of the state to be kind and generous to the non-Muslim subjects. It

was, according to him, magnanimity of the Muslims that in the days of ‘Umar won for them the hearts of the Syrian Christians to such a degree that they loved them more than their co-religionists, the Romans.¹¹⁶

Land Settlement

Abu Yusuf disallows the feudal system that of settlement in which the government, in order to realize the revenue from the farmers appoints a person to over-lord them, allowing him to exact from them whatever he likes and as he likes so long as he guarantees the payment of government dues. He condemns it as a most tyrannous system that is bound to lead to the ruin of the country and vehemently advocates that it must be shunned at all costs.¹¹⁷

He also calls it unlawful for the government to appropriate somebody’s land and bestow it upon another. He says, “The Caliph is not authorized to dispossess any person, Muslim or non-Muslim, of anything that belongs to him unless a proved or valid right stands against him in law. To snatch from one to make over to another is like committing robbery for the sake of distributing alms.¹¹⁸ Gifts of land are allowed only if uncultivated, not owned, or not inherited pieces of land are distributed within reasonable measure for purposes of cultivation or as rewards for some real, useful social service. Such donations, too, are to be withdrawn if the donees fail to cultivate such land within three years.¹¹⁹

Redress of Wrong

After this he tells Harun al-Rashid that it is not lawful for him to appoint tyrants and corrupt people to office of State or to employ them as officers of departments or governors of districts. If he did so, he would surely share the retribution of the wrongs that they do.¹²⁰ He asks him again and again to employ honest, righteous, and God fearing people to state services.

He emphasizes that in addition to their efficiency the government should also satisfy itself with regard to the moral character of its servants, and constantly keep a watch on them through its intelligence department, and if they tend to be corrupt or fall into cruel or cunning ways the caliph should know of the conduct and call them to account.¹²¹

He also tells Harun that the Caliph should listen regularly to the grievances of the people himself, and that occurrence of injustice could be made to stop if he has open court even once a month, where every grieved person is allowed to put his grief before the caliph and the officers are made to realize that what they do may one day reach the Caliph’s ear.¹²²

The Judiciary

The judiciary, according to him is meant to dispense justice, pure and undiluted. To punish one who is not guilty or to let one who is guilty go unpunished are alike unpardonable. But not should be punished on doubt. To go wrong in forgiveness is better than going wrong in awarding punishment. There should be no interference in the course of justice, nor should anybody’s recommendation, position, or status count.¹²³

Personal Liberty

Abu Yusuf also maintains that nobody can be incarcerated on a mere accusation. The accused person must be given a regular trial, and witnesses examined. If he proves guilty, he may be imprisoned, otherwise, he should be set free. He advises the Caliph that the cases of those who lie in person should be examined and those that are found to have been put there without sufficient proof or witness should be released. For the future all the governors should be instructed not to imprison anybody on the basis of mere allegation or suspicion without giving him a fair trial.¹²⁴ He also holds that it is illegal to beat or flog an accused person. Every person's back is immune from punishment unless a court declares him worthy of the lash.¹²⁵

Jail Reforms

In the reforms that he has suggested for the improvement of prisons, he affirms that every prisoner has a right to receive his board and clothing from the Government Exchequer. He severely condemns the Umayyad and 'Abbasid practice of daily taking out the prisoners handcuffed and in chains to beg for their food and clothes. He requests the Caliph to put a stop to it and proposes that clothes suited to the season and sufficient food should be given to every prisoner by the Government.

The practice of burying the deceased heirless prisoners without wash and coffin, or without the funeral prayer, is also condemned in vigorous terms. "It is a matter of great shame for the Muslims," he says. The proper wrapping and burial of these prisoners should be a Government charge. He has also recommended that no prisoner except those guilty of murder should be kept in fetters inside the prison.¹²⁶

These are, in brief, the constitutional proposals which Abu Yusuf, as Law Minister and Chief Justice of the realm, placed before an autocrat 12 centuries ago. Placed beside the basic principles of an Islamic State and the traditions of the "Right-guided" caliphate, or compared with the teachings of his own master Abu Hanifah, they look far short of them indeed. There is no trace in them of the ideal way of choosing a Caliph. There is no mention of the advisory body, called the shura, guiding the administration of State affairs, nor of the idea that the wicked and the corrupt have no right to rule and if they come in, the public have a right to rise in revolt against them.

Not only that, many other important things also are missing and, judged from these and other such considerations, these proposals fall short of the true conception of an Islamic order. But this should not lead us to infer that Abu Yusuf's conception of the Islamic State was restricted to the limits of these proposals of Kitab al-Kharuj and that he did not want anything more than what he put down there.

On the contrary, what we find here describes what he, as a practical thinker, conceived as the maximum that was possible and worthy of achievement in the particular circumstances of that period of the 'Abbasid regime. In fact, the idea was not to present a theoretically perfect plan without regard to whether it was capable of being translated into practice or not. His intention was to draw up a constitutional plan which in addition to satisfying the minimum conditions required for the making of an Islamic State, should promise to be workable in the circumstances.

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Notes

1. Alp-Kardari, Manaqib al-Imam al-A'zam, Dairatul-Maarif, Hyderabad, 1321/1903, vol. I pp. 65, 66.

2. Al-Muwaffaq bin Ahmad al-Makki, Manaqib al-Imam al-A'zam Abi Hanifah, Dairatul-Maarif, Hyderabad, 1321/1903, Vol. I, p. 162

3. Ibid., pp. 57 - 58.

4. Ibid., pp. 55, 59.

5. Ibid, p. 59

6. Ibid, p. 96; Vol. II, pp. 132, 136

7. Al-Yaf'i, Mir'at al-Jinan wa 'Ibrat al-Yaqzan, Dairatul-Maarif, Hyderabad, 1337/1918, Vo. I. p. 310.

8. Al-Makki, op. cit., p. 220

9. Al-Tabari, Vol. 6, p 238; ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah w-al-Nihayah, Vol. 10, p. 97.

10. Al-Khatib, vol. 13, p. 358; Mulla 'Ali Qari, Dhail al-Jawahir al-Mudi'ah, Dairatul-Maarif, Hyderabad, 1332/1913, p. 488.

11. For an instance of this see al-Makki, op. cit., pp. 219 - 20.

12. Al-Dhahabi, Manaqib al-Imam Abu Hanifa wa Sahibaihi, Dar al-Kutub al-'Arabi, Egypt, 1366/1046, p. 115.

13. Al-Raghib al-Asbahani, p. 206

14. Al-Dhahbi, op. cit., p. 26

15. Al-Khatib, Vo. 13, p. 360; Al-Makki, Vol 1, p. 262

16. Ibn Khallikan, Vol 5, pp. 422 - 23; al-Makki, Vol 2, p. 212

17. Before gaining currency as a term of the scholastics, the term Fiqh covered beliefs, general principles, law - in fact, everything under it. The differentiation was made by calling beliefs and general principles Fiqh al-Akbar, the fundamental or the main Fiqh, and Abu Hanifah gave the name to his compendium.

Recently, some scholars have doubted the authenticity of some parts of this book; they believe them to have been included later. However, the authenticity of those parts which we discuss here is undoubted, as whatever other sources we tap to collect Abu Hanifah's opinions on these matters, we find these tallying with them.

For instance, Abu Hanifah's al-Wasiyyah, al-Fiqu al-Absat reported by Abu Muti' al-Balkhi, and 'Aqidah Tahawiyyah in which Tahawi (c. 229 - 321/843 - 933) has described the doctrines reported from Abu Hanifah and his students, Abu Yusuf and Mohammad bin Hassan al-Shaibani.

18. Mulla 'Ali Qari, Sharh al-Fiqh al-Akbar, Delhi, 1348/1929, pp. 74 - 87; al-Maghnisawi, Sharh al-Fiqh al-Akbar, Dairatul-Maarif, Hyderabad, 1321/1903, pp. 25, 26.

19. Ibn Abi al-'Izz al-Hanafi, Sharh al-Tahawiyyah, Dar al-Ma'arif, Egypt, 1373/1953, pp. 403 - 16.

20. Al-Kardari, Vol. 2, p. 72.

21. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Intiqa', al-Maktabat al-Qudsi, Cairo, 1370/1950, p. 163; al-Sarakhsi, Sharh al-Siyar al-Kabir, Vol. 1, Shirkah Musahmah Misriyyah, Egypt, 1957. The same was Malik's and Yahya bin Sa'id al Qattan's opinion. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Isti'ab, Vol. II, p. 467.

22. Mulla 'Ali Qari, p., 87; al-Maghnisawi, p. 26.

23. Ibn Abi al-'Izz, p. 398.

24. Al-Makki, Vol. 2, pp. 83, 84; al-Kardari, Vol. 2, pp. 71, 72. This, too, was not the opinion of Abu Hanifah alone. All the ahl al-sunnah had agreed upon this. Ibn Hajar, al-Isabah, Matban'ah Mustafa Mohammad, Egypt, 1939, Vol. 2. p. 502.

25. Mulla 'Ali Qari, p. 103; al-Maghnisawi, p. 33.

26. Mulla Husain, al-Jauharat al-Munifat fi Sharh Wasiyyat al-Imam Abu Hanifah, Dairatul-Maarif, Hyderabad, 1321/1903, pp. 3, 6, 7

27. Mulla 'Ali Qari, pp., 86 - 89; al-Maghnisawi, pp. 27 - 28.

28. Mulla Husain, p. 6

29. Ibn Abi al-'Izz, p. 265.

30. Al-Qur'an, 16:27; 5: 118; 26: 113 - 14.

31. Al-Makki, Vol. 1, pp. 124 - 25.

32. Mulla 'Ali al-Qari, p. 91; al-Maghnisawi, p. 28.

33. Ibn Abi al-'Izz, p. 322.

34. Ahkam al-Qur'an, Vol 1, pp. 80 - 81: al-Sarakhsi has also explained this in his al-Mabsut, Matba'at al-Sa'adah, Egypt, 1324/1906, p. 130.

35. Mulla 'Ali Qari, p. 92; al-Maghnisawi, pp. 28 - 29.

36. Mulla 'Ali Qari, p., 92; al-Maghnisawi, p. 29

37. Ibn Abi al-'Izz, pp. 312 - 13.

38. Al-Khatib, Vol. 13, p. 368; al-Makki, Vol 1, p. 89; al-Dhahabi, p. 20.

39. Al-Dhahabi, p. 21.

40. Al-Sha'rani, Kitab al-Mizan, Matba'at al-Azhariyyah, Egypt, 3rd ed., 1925, Vol. 1, p. 61.

41. Ibid., p. 62.

42. Al-Kardari, Vol. 2, pp., 15 - 16.

43. Al-Qur'an, 2:124

44. Al-Jassas, Vol. 1, p. 80

45. Al-Dhahabi, p. 17; al-Makki has also quoted this opinion of Abu Hanifah, Vol. 2, p. 100.

46. Al-Mas'udi, Vol. 2, p. 192.

47. Al-Shahrastani, Vol. 1, p. 106; 'Abd al-Qahir Baghdadi, p. 340.

48. Muqaddimah, pp. 195 - 96.

49. Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari, Vol. 13, pp. 93, 96, 97; Ahmad, Musnad, al-Matba'at al-Maimaniyyah, Egypt, 1306/1888, Vol. 3, pp. 129, 183; Vol. 4, p. 421; Abu Dawud al-Tayalisi, Musnad, Dairatul-Maarif, Hyderabad, 1321/1903, Tr. No. 926, 2133.

50. Al-Tabari, Vol. 3, p. 192.

51. Ibn Hajar, Vol. 13, p. 95.

52. Al-Sarakhsi, Sharh al-Siyar al-Kabir, vol. 1, p. 98.

53. Al-Makki, Vol. 2, p. 100

54. Ibid., pp. 21 - 24; ibn Khallikan, vol. 5, p. 41; ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Intiqa', p. 171.

55. Manaqib al-Imam, p. 30.

56. Al-Makki, Vol. 2 pp. 72, 173, 178.

57. Ibid., Vol 1. p. 215

58. Al-Makki, Vol. 2, pp. 173, 174, 182; ibn Khallikan, Vol. 5, p., 46; al-Yafi'i, vol. 1, p. 310
59. Ahkam al-Qur'an, Vol. 1, p. 81
60. Al-Kadari, Vol. 1, pp. 160, 165, 166; ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Intiqā', pp. 152, 153; al-Khatib, Vol. 13, p. 351
61. Al-Ash'ari, Vol. 2, p. 125
62. Al-Makki, Vol. 2, p. 246.
63. Ibid., p. 133.
64. Al-Kardari, Vol. 2, p. 108.
65. Al-Makki, Vol. 2, p. 54.
66. Al-Kardari, Vol. 2, p. 109
67. Al-Makki, Vol. 2, p. 136
68. People of the present day labour under the wrong impression that International Law is a thing of the modern times and its founder is Grotius of Holland (991 - 1055/1583 - 1645). But whoever has seen al-Siyar of Abu Hanifah's student Mohammad bin Hassan al-Shaibani (132 - 189/749 - 805) knows that the codification of this law was accomplished by Abu Hanifah 900 years before Grotius, and that if, on the one hand, his discussions hardly leave any aspect of it untouched; on the other, they encompass the finest and most vital issues., This has recently been acknowledged by a group of scholars and a Shaibani Society of International Law has been founded in Germany.
69. Al-Makki, vol. 2 p. 41
70. Ibid, pp. 157 - 58; al-Kardary, Vol. 2, pp. 106 - 07.
71. Al-Kardari, Vol. 2, p. 183; Tash Kubrazadah, Miftah al-Sa'adah, Vol. 2, p. 114.
72. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Intiqā, pp. 40 - 41.
73. Abu -Na'aim al-Asbahani, Hilat al-Auliya', al-Matba'at al-Sa'adah, Egypt, 1355/1936, Vol. 6, p. 332; Tash Kubrazadah, op. cit., Vol 2, p. 87.
74. Al-Makki, Vol. 2, p. 212
75. Ibid, p. 214
76. Ibn Khallikan, Vol. 5, p. 422; ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Intiqā', p. 172.
77. Ibn Khallikan, Vol. 5, p. 423.
78. Al-Makki, vol. 2, p. 232
79. Al-Kardari, Vol. 2, p. 126
80. Ibn Khallikan, vol 5, p. 424; al-Kardari, vol. 2, p. 126.
81. Ibn al-Nadim, al-Fihrist, al-Matba'at al-Rahmaniyyah, Egypt, 1348/1929. Ibn Khallikan (Vol. 5, p. 242) writes on the authority of Talhah bin Mohammad that Abu Yusuf was the first man to compile books on all fundamental branches of Law in accordance with the Hanafi creed, and thus spread Abu Hanifah's knowledge to all corners of the world.
82. It must be understood that the codification of Islamic law according to the Maliki principles enabling it to serve the needs of a government took place later on the model of Mohammad bin Hassan al-Shaibani's books.
83. Al-Makki, Vol. 2, pp. 211 - 39; ibn Khalikan, Vol. 5, p. 421.
84. Al-Kardari, Vol. 2, p. 128.
85. Al-Sarakhsi, Kitab al-Mabsut, Vol. 16, p. 61; al-Makki, Vol. 2, pp 243 - 44.
86. Al-Makki, Vol. 2, p. 226 - 27.
87. Ibid., p. 240.
88. Ibid.,; Mulla 'Ali Qari, Dhail al-Jawahir al-Mudhiyyah, p. 526.
89. Al-Makki, Vol 2, p. 232.
90. Al-Kardari, Vol. 2, p. 120.
91. Kitab al-Aghni, Vol. 3, p. 178.
92. Kitab al-Kharaj, pp. 3, 4, 5
93. Ibid., p. 5
94. Ibid., p. 8.
95. Ibid., p. 117
96. Ibid., p. 12
97. Ibid., p. 10 - 11
98. Ibid, p. 12
99. Ibid, p. 117.
100. Ibid., p. 5.

101. Ibid., p.6.
102. Ibid., p. 13.
103. Ibid., p. 108.
104. Ibid., pp. 9, 12.
105. Ibid., pp. 36, 117.
106. Ibid., p. 36.
107. Ibid., 186.
108. Ibid., p. 14.
109. Ibid., pp. 16, 37, 109, 114.
110. Ibid., pp. 109, 132.
111. Ibid., pp. 122, 131.
112. Ibid., pp. 15, 16.
113. Ibid., pp. 37, 114.
114. Ibid., pp. 14, 37, 125.
115. Ibid., pp. 122 - 26.
116. Ibid., p. 139.
117. Ibid. p. 105
118. Ibid., pp. 58, 60, 66
119. Ibid., pp. 59 - 66.
120. Ibid., p. 111.
121. Ibid., pp. 106, 107, 111, 132, 186.
122. Ibid., pp. 111, 112.
123. Ibid., pp. 152 - 53.
124. Ibid., 175 - 76.
125. Ibid, p. 151.
126. Ibid., pp. 149, 151.

Chapter 35: Al-Farabi

A. Society And Its Goal

An account of the life and philosophical thought of Abu Nasr Mohammad ibn Tarkhan al-Farabi (d. 339/950) has already been given in a previous chapter. The reader must have noted that, while recasting the philosophical views of Plato, Aristotle, and other Greek thinkers, al-Farabi always keeps in view the Islamic tenets which have formed the inner links of his writings. In his political philosophy, he has followed the same line. Under the influence of Plato and Aristotle he evolves his own system which markedly differs from the system of the Greeks, the Iranians, as well as the Indians.

This will be shown in these pages which have been prepared in the light of 1) Kitab Ara' Ahal al-Madinat al-Fadilah (Book on the Views of the People of the Excellent State), 2) Kitab al-Siyasat al-Madaniyyah (Book on Caution on the Path of Administration), 3) Kitab Tahsil al-Sa'adah (Book on the Achievement of Happiness), 4) Kitab al-Tanbih 'ala Sabil al-Sa'addah (Book on Caution on the path of Happiness), and 5) the Bodleian manuscript of his Fusul al-Madini (Chapters on the Civilian).

The City State

According to al-Farabi, the City State (Madinah) and the Family State are places that contain inhabitants, no matter whether their dwellings are constructed of wood, mud, wool or hair.¹

The house or family is limited to only four relationships: husband and wife, master and slave, father and son, and property and proprietor. He who makes them unite in co-operation and aims at providing for them an abode with the best facilities and maintenance, is called the master of the family. He is in the house what the administrator of the city is in the city.²

Necessity of Society

Men are naturally so constituted that they need many things for their best achievements. Hence, they need mutual help and co-operation - everyone doing his best for obtaining a particular kind of object. Thus, by uniting their individual efforts for different objects they organize different societies.³

The greater the society, the better are the facilities it achieves for its individuals. The grouping of men is not confined to a house. It extends to lanes, localities, villages, towns, and cities. Men work for the welfare of society and in the long run serve the State. The people living in a state are called a nation (Ummah). One nation can be distinguished from another by natural character, temperament, habits, and language.⁴

Human societies are either perfect or imperfect. The perfect society may be great, middling, or small. The great human society is the one consisting of several nations uniting themselves in one unity and helping one another. The middling one is the society of one nation in a part of the world, and the small is the society of the people of a city.⁵

The imperfect society is that of the people of a village, a locality, a lane, or a house, the last being the smallest.

Now, the highest good and perfection are primarily achieved through volition and will. Similarly, evil finds its scope by volition and will. The City-State can, therefore, develop by mutual help and efforts to attain some evil purpose or to attain happiness. The city in which the members of the society co-operate to attain happiness is in reality the ideal City-State (al-madinat al-fadilah), the society, the ideal society, and the nation.⁶ In this State the citizens help one another to achieve qualities of the greatest life perpetually.⁷ But if they help one another to obtain the bare necessities of life and its preservation, this City-State is evidently the necessary State.⁸

How to Achieve Happiness

Al-Farabi speaks of happiness both of this world and hereafter. He explains that when human factors or the four excellences - speculative virtues (al-jada'il al-nazariyyah), theoretical virtues (jada'il al-fikriyyah), the moral virtues (fada'il al-khuluqiyyah), and the practical arts (al-sana'at al-'amaliyyah) - form the qualities of a nation or of the people of a city, their worldly happiness in this life and the lasting happiness in the next are insured.

Speculative virtues (al-fuda'il al-nazariyyah) represent those sciences which aim at the highest object, knowledge of existing things including all their requirements. These sciences are either innate in man, or they are achieved by effort and learning.⁹

Now, the principal factors of existing bodies and accidents, as explained by al-Farabi, are of six kinds with six grades: The first cause in the first grade, the secondary causes in the second grade, active intellect in the third grade, soul in the fourth grade, form in the fifth grade, and matter in the sixth grade. The first grade is confined to one individual only; it cannot have more than one. But other grades can have more than one occupant. Out of this six, three, viz. the first cause, the secondary cause, and the active intellect, are neither bodies nor are they contained in bodies. The other three: soul, form and matter are not bodies, but exist in bodies.

As for bodies, they are of six types: the heavenly bodies, rational animals, irrational animals, plants, minerals and the four elements. All these six bodies as a whole form the universe. The first to be believed in is God, the Almighty, who is the immediate cause of the existence of the secondary causes and the active intellect. The secondary causes are the causes of the existence of heavenly bodies and their substance. The secondary causes should be called the spirits, the angels, and so on.

The function of the active intellect is to attend the rational animal, man, and to enable him to attain the highest perfection he can reach. The highest perfect of man consists in his highest happiness which he achieves when he raises himself to the stage of the active intellect by abstracting himself from bodies, matter, and accidents, and continues to enjoy this perfection perpetually. In essence, the active intellect is one but in gradation it includes all that is purified from the rational animal and attains to happiness. The active intellect should be called the Holy Spirit (al-ruh al-Amin or al-Ruh al-Qudus) or the like and its grades be called the spiritual realm (al-malakut) or the like.

Souls have three grades: souls of celestial bodies, souls of the rational animal, and souls of the irrational animals. The souls of the rational animal are the rational faculty, the appetitive faculty, the imaginative faculty, and the perceiving faculty. The rational faculty equips man with sciences and arts, and enables him to distinguish good from evil manners and actions. Through this faculty man inclines to do good and avoid evil and realizes the useful, the harmful, the pleasant and the unpleasant.¹⁰

1) The rational faculty is either speculative or practical; the first is that through which man obtains the knowledge of all that he is not at all supposed to know by his own effort, and the second is that through which he knows all that he can know if he wills it so. The second is again divided into that through which arts and crafts are obtained (mahaniyyah), and that through which imagination and insight concerning doing or not doing a thing are achieved (marwiyyah).

2) The appetitive faculty manifests the human inclination of wanting something or running away from something, of desiring or not desiring something, of giving preference to something or avoiding something. All psychological feelings - hatred, affection, love, friendship, enmity, fear, anger, passion, mercy, etc. - are expressed by this faculty.

3) The faculty of imagination retains the impression of the sensible objects after they have disappeared from sense-perception, unites some of them with some others, or separates some of them from some others both in wakefulness and sleep producing true or false propositions. This faculty also perceives the useful, harmful, pleasant, and unpleasant manners and action.

4) The faculty of sense-perception obviously perceives the sensible through the five sense-organs - the pleasant and the unpleasant, without discriminating between the harmful and the useful, and without distinguishing good from evil.

The three faculties other than the rational faculty are available to animals, imaginative faculty serving them as the rational faculty serves man. Some animals, however, possess only the sensible and the appetitive faculties.

The celestial souls are different from the animal souls in so far as the former are actual souls that understand the intelligible, whereas the latter are at first potential and then become actual.¹¹

Having explained the gradation of cosmos and the relation that the different grades have with the First, al-Farabi emphasizes the point that the whole cosmos depends for its existence on God, the First Necessary Being.

Man, however, understands and realizes happiness only through the speculative rational faculty. The imaginative and the sensitive faculties help the rational faculty in moving man towards those actions which lead to happiness. The good is characterized as "voluntary." But if the rational faculty feels happiness only by making an effort to perceive it, while other faculties do not perceive it, then sometimes man considers the pleasant and the useful to the ultimate ends of life.

Again, when one becomes indifferent or slow in accomplishing the sensitive rational part and does not feel happiness in doing so, one hastens to attain to it by exercising one's appetitive faculty in aiming at and making all effort to achieve things other than happiness, and in this effort one is

assisted also by the faculties of imagination and sense-perception, and produces what may be rightly called voluntary evil.

Similarly, he produces only evil who attains to happiness which he does not recognize as his aim, does not desire it, or desires it with the faint desire, and adopts something other than happiness at his end, and exerts all his faculties to achieve that end.¹²

Since man has been created to achieve happiness which is the highest perfection that remains perpetually, it is possible to obtain it through the active intellect which gives primarily the first intelligible or the first objects of knowledge. But men differ in their capacity to receive the primary intelligible.

B. Human Nature

Human nature is not the same in all individuals; it varies in accordance with the physical qualities of individuals. Some can easily grasp the first intelligible or the first known things, some do not receive them directly. Again, some of them do not receive anything from the first intelligible in a natural way at all, and some others receive them in a way different from theirs. There are still others who receive them in respect of their own selves.

Human beings in this third group are free from defect, their nature being homogeneous, prepared to receive intelligible which are common to them and through which they advance to the affairs and actions that are common to them. After this stage, they differ from one another, as some receive those intelligible which are peculiar to them, and are not common to others. Those belonging to this group endeavour towards a particular genus without allowing anything else to share it.

Similarly, human beings excel one another in the faculties through which they derive the objects of one genus, some having the ability of deriving all the individuals of a genus and others perceiving only a few individuals thereof. Again, sometimes it so happens that two individuals do not prove to be equal in their capacity of deriving the external objects, one being swift and the other slow, or one being swift in deriving the genus of the greatest excellence and the other in deriving the basest of the genus. It is also possible that both are equal in power, but one is able enough to teach what one has derived, and can offer guidance to others, but the other has no such power of teaching and guiding others. They also differ in performing corporeal deeds.

Natural dispositions do not oppose one another, nor do they insist on action, but they facilitate performance, and are not moved by anything external towards opposite actions. Even if they are moved in opposite directions they resist and offer hindrance.

All these natural dispositions require a suitable teacher. Hence, they are trained in matters that prepare them to be in their highest or nearly highest perfection. Some are trained in mean things which produce excellent actions from a mean genus.¹³

People have different calibres by nature, and they vary in ranks in accordance with the ranks in genus, arts, and sciences for which they have naturally been prepared. They also differ in the capacity of training and giving guidance. Some are stronger than others, and, hence, they differ in

receiving and training. For some can be trained for a part of the genus only. Now, he who is an expert in imparting training and guidance is called the chief.¹⁴

C. Education

Man has been created to attain to the highest happiness (sa'ddah). He should, therefore, know what happiness is and should make it the aim of his life. He, then, needs to know those factors and arts through which he can achieve happiness. He will have to exercise all those arts which will enable him to attain to it. But since it has been explained that human individuals differ in nature, it is not in the nature of every man to know happiness or those factors which enable him to reach it by himself. He, therefore, needs a teacher, a guide.

Some people require less guidance and teaching, and some need more. It is also not necessary that one should learn all that one is taught, or receive all the guidance one is given. Hence, some people require constant teaching and guidance to urge them to do what they have been taught to do.¹⁵

Teaching (ta'lim) means creating speculative excellences in nations and cities, while upbringing (tadib) is the method of creating and developing moral virtues and scientific arts in nations. Teaching is possible only by expressing; tadib or discipline is to make nations and citizens habituated to the deeds done through scientific habits. That is, their resolutions will move them to perform those actions, so much so that these resolutions will dominate their souls, and they will become devoted to those actions.

To exert one's resolution to do something is possible either by expression or by performance. While al-Farabi agrees with Plato in the system of education and in learning from childhood, he emphasizes that speculative sciences are learned either by kings and leaders (imams) or by those who preserve these sciences and teach kings and leaders in several ways. First of all, they should know the primary axioms, and the first known object in every genus of speculative sciences, and then they should know the various forms of premises and their arrangement through which they can lead to conclusions. After they have completed their education, and have accustomed themselves to logical methods, they will be made kings in each of the partial States, and will be promoted little by little until the stage of the great State is achieved.

Speculative sciences must be taught through convincing methods. Men very often understand these sciences by a process of thinking, because they understand them after realizing many known principles which are not corporeal. The common people can understand their images by the method of convincing only.

The teacher should also distinguish what should be imparted to a particular nation and how to make it common to all nations or to all the people of every city. He should also know what should be taught to the entire nation, or city, and what only to a particular group in the city. All these distinctions can be made by the imaginative virtue which enables one to achieve the speculative virtues.

As for practical virtues and practical arts, people must habituate themselves to practising them by two methods. First, the teacher should

train them by convincing and effective expressions to engender the values of these actions and habits perfectly in their hearts so that their convictions may move them to perform them submissively. Secondly, he should use the method of force which is employed for the disobedient and revolutionary citizens, and those who do not move to righteousness meekly on their own accord or by persuasion.¹⁶

The virtuous teachers and artists can be divided into two groups in respect of the above-mentioned two methods - one group teaching and training those who are obedient, the other group teaching the disobedient. In both respects, the king is the teacher of nations whom he trains to achieve virtues, and the master of the house is the teacher of the people of the house. Similar is the case with one who is in charge of children or the youth.¹⁷

The Imaginative Virtue

The imaginative virtue enables a man to think of an exceedingly useful purpose which is common to the comity of nations, to a nation, or to a city. This virtue is called the civil imaginative virtue. But if this virtue is common to a group of citizens or the members of a house only, then it is ascribed to that particular group and is called family imaginative virtue, or State imaginative virtue. Sometimes this virtue is further divided. Since it is derived from what is most useful and beautiful in respect of a particular art or profession for a limited time, it is divided into the various kinds of arts and professions. The most accomplished one in this virtue is the strongest one who succeeds in creating a great State.

The imaginative virtue confined to different aspects of the State - defence, finance, and so on - is followed by moral virtue which is related to the imaginative virtue as the imaginative virtue is related to different arts, professions, or families. This virtue is, first of all, needed for organizing and maintaining the army. The moral virtue alone impels the warriors to display their bravery, and the best kind of valour. It also urges citizens to earn the wealth of the State with honesty and legal means. In fact, it plays a major role in all departments of the State.¹⁸

D. The Chief

It is evident that every man cannot be the chief. People differ in their intellectual capacity, in physical strength, in the exercise of virtuous deeds, and in the acquisition of excellent habits of thinking, feeling, willing, and doing. In every department of life and arts the strongest person, of excellent manners, who also knows, acts, and directs, is the chief of that department, the rest being the subjects. The chief is either one of the first rank who is not sub-servient to anyone, or he is of the second rank, dominating some, and being dominated by some others. Such ranks develop in relation to the forms of art, e.g. cultivation, trade, medical profession, or in respect of all kinds of human beings.¹⁹

The first chief in general is he who needs no help from anyone. Sciences and arts are his property in actuality, and he needs no guidance from any person in any respect.²⁰

The first chief of the excellent (ideal) city is one who is chief in all respects. His profession must excel all the rest in attaining to perfection, and

in intending by all actions of the ideal state to achieve the highest happiness. This man is not sub-servient to any other. He is a man accomplished in all virtues, and, therefore, he is intellect and intelligible in actuality, having his imaginative faculty naturally so perfected as to be able to receive particulars from the active intellect either in themselves, or as images in sleep, or in wakeful state. His passive intellect receives the intelligible in complete perfection, so that nothing which has become an intellect in actuality is denied to him.

Whosoever invests his passive intellect with intelligibles becomes intellect and intelligible in actuality. His understanding of himself is more perfect, more separable from matter, nearer to the active intellect, and is called the derived intellect. This derived intellect has a rank between the passive and the active intellect. The passive intellect is, therefore, like matter and sub-stratum for the derived intellect which is like matter and sub-stratum for the active intellect.²¹

The rational faculty²² which is the natural form, supplies material sub-stratum for the passive intellect and makes it the actual intellect. The actual intellect is the first stage at which man is called man and being human becomes common to all human beings. When the passive intellect and the natural form become one in the same way as the composite of matter and form becomes one and the same thing, and man receives human form, the actual intellect is achieved; and when the natural form becomes the matter of the passive intellect which has thus becomes the actual intellect, it becomes the matter of the derived intellect, which in its turn becomes the matter of the active intellect, and all of these become like one thing, then man enjoys the presence of the active intellect in himself.

If the active intellect is present in both parts of the rational faculty - the speculative and the practical - then man receives revelation in his imaginative faculty. Allah, the Exalted and Sublime, sends revelation to him through the active intellect. If the active intellect extends what it receives from Allah to his passive intellect through his derived intellect and then to his imaginative faculty, then man, through what descends upon his passive intellect, becomes a wise philosopher and possessor of perfect understanding, and through what descends upon his imaginative faculty, a prophet, a warner against what is going to take place, and an informer of what particulars exist, as he understands them for God. This man is in the most perfect stage of humanity and in the highest place of blessing, his soul being perfect, united with the active intellect in the manner described. This the man who is aware of every action that would enable one to achieve grace and is the chief, the leader, who cannot be led by anybody else.

E. Characteristics Of The Chief Of The Ideal State

The Imam or the chief of the ideal State is the chief of the ideal nation, and for the matter of that, of the whole inhabited part of the earth. This position is only attained by a man who naturally possesses the following 12 characteristics as his second nature:

1. Sound health, and perfect organs, performing their functions with ease and facility and in harmony will faculties.

2. Intelligence and sagacity, so as to be able to grasp the intention of a speaker in his particular situations and circumstances.

3. Good memory, so as to retain in his mind all that he understands, sees, hears, and perceives.

4. Prudence and talent, to understand a problem from the perspective in which it has been presented to him.

5. Eloquence, so that his tongue may assist him in expressing in a perfect manner all that is in his mind.

6. Devotion to education and learning, and submission to receive knowledge with ease without feeling any annoyance.

7. No greed for food, drink and sex, avoidance of play, and dislike of pleasures caused by these.

8. Friendliness towards truth and truthful persons and condemnation of falsehood and those who are inclined to falsehood.

9. Bigness of heart, loving nobility, and natural magnanimity without any trace of meanness.

10. Indifference to dirham and dinar and other forms of wealth.

11. Devotion by nature to justice and just people, abhorrence of injustice and oppression and unjust and oppressive people, offering half of one's possessions and those of one's family to help the oppressed, and urging others to do the same, helping everything good and beautiful, and being easy to bend to justice but difficult to oppression and evil.

12. Strong resolution, courage, and promptitude without any sign of fear or psychological weakness.

If a person possessed of these qualities happens to live in an ideal State he is the chief.

It is, however, impossible to have all these qualities in one man. People are scarcely equipped with all of them. If no one having these qualities is found in the State, the laws promulgated by the former chief or his successors should be kept in force.

The second chief who succeeds the first should fulfil at least the following six requirements:

1. He should be wise and philosophical.

2. Learned and abreast with the laws, customs, rites and rituals adopted by his predecessor to discharge the function of the ideal State with all perfection.

3. He should be an expert in deriving principles in case he does not find any law.

4. He should be far-sighted, possessing an insight to frame rules and regulations in accordance with the conditions and circumstances he finds himself in, and capable of keeping up the reforms he introduces.

5. He should also be well experienced and eloquent in giving directions to urge the people to follow him in accordance with the Shari'ah.

6. In addition, he should be skilful in physical display of exercises needed in warfare, and in the use of arms, ammunition, and other equipments.

In other words, this ruler must have insight to derive inferences from the possessed records of the customs, rites, and rituals, and accurate opinion in

understanding the events that take place and may increase the prosperity of the State. He must have the power to convince others and struggle hard. This sovereign is called the king of the tradition, and the State is called al-mulk al-sunnah the country of traditions and customs.

If all the conditions described for the chief are not found in one man, and are available in two persons - one wise and the other possessing other qualities - then both will be the chiefs of the State. If, however, these conditions are scattered in a group of people agreeable to work together, then these members will be the ideal chiefs. But if wisdom does not form a part of the State while other conditions are fulfilled entirely, the city will be best without a sovereign, but it will be exposed to destruction. The State without a philosopher to whom it may be entrusted will perish in no time.²³

F. The Ideal State

The sovereigns of an ideal State who succeed one another are all like one soul, as if there were one king who continued all the time. Similar is the case with a group of people who administer the State together at a time in one or more than one city. The whole group is just like one sovereign, their souls being like one soul. Uniformity is found in every stage and in every part of the State, and people flourishing at different times look as they were one soul working at all times in the same way. If there is continuity and harmony at a particular stage, even different groups of people, whether of one or more than one State, would appear as one soul.²⁴

The people of the ideal State have something common to all of them in their learning and acting, but different groups of people belonging to different ranks and stages have some sciences and deeds peculiar to them. Through both of these, people achieve happiness, and by displaying these they obtain an ideal physical form. This form grows stronger and stronger and better and better by constant performance of those deeds. For example, the art of writing has some pre-requisite performances. The more they are executed by the expert, the greater is the excellence of his art. Not only that, the scribe enjoys his art by repeating his exercises, and grows in love for it.

The same is the case with happiness, which increases with the constant practice of deeds that lead to it. The soul grows in happiness to such a degree that it becomes free from matter. It does not perish with matter, for it is no longer required for its existence. At this stage, being separated from matter, the soul frees itself from all corporeal qualities so much so that even movement and rest cannot be ascribed to it. As this state is very unusual, it is very difficult to form an idea of it.

G. Arts And Blessings

As art has three grades, happiness or bliss is also divided into three grades in respect of species, quality, and quantity. There are such species of art as weaving, cloth-trading, perfumery, and sweeping, or as dancing, jurisprudence, philosophy, and rhetoric. Thus, arts excel one another in different species.

The artists of the same art excel one another in skill and efficiency. Two scribes, for example, differ in their skill, because, besides a good hand, their art requires some knowledge of lexicon, rhetoric, and arithmetic. Now, one

may be an expert in good hand and rhetoric, another in good hand, lexicon, and rhetoric, and yet another in all the four arts. Again, two scribes may differ in the quality of their art, for one of them maybe better than the other. Similarly, happiness excels in species, quantity, and quality.

The people of an imperfect State have but little virtue. They have evil psychical forms and their actions are not good. The greater their activity, the more does their profession display defect and imperfection. In consequence, they become ill inasmuch as they do not enjoy edibles, and become annoyed with beautiful and excellent things. Some of them even regard themselves as healthy and perfect, though they are actually not so, and do not pay any heed to the advice of the physician or the well-wisher.

H. Inhabitants Of The Ideal State

The excellent or the ideal State consists of five kinds of people: the excellent, the linguists, the secluded, the struggling, and the steady. The excellent people are the philosophers, the intellectuals, and “the People of Opinion” in great affairs. As for linguists, they are the orators, speakers, poets, musicians, writers, and the like. The secluded people are the mathematicians, statisticians, physicians, astronomers, and the like. The struggling people are the fighters, the defenders, and all those who take their place. The steady are those who earn money in the city, for example cultivators, traders, and those engaged in other pursuits.²⁵

I. Imperfect States

The excellent State as explained above is the State administered by the best and most talented who aim at prosperity and happiness for all and sundry. If its constitution fails to provide the people with prosperity, and the rulers do not possess the qualities of ideal rulers, then the State ceases to be excellent and is called the evil-doing State (al-madinat al-fasiqah), the ignorant state (al-madinat al-jahilah) or the astray going State (al-madinat al-dallah). People in the evil doing State are like weeds in a field. They are no better than savages and can have no organization worthy of a State.²⁶

As for the people of the ignorant State, they possess their own constitution and culture. But their civic organization varies. They look after the necessities of life in a necessary State; organize the society of the contemptible in the contemptible State, the society of the vile in the vile State, the society of the extravagant in the extravagant State, the society of the dominant in the dominant State, or the society of the free in the social State.

The necessary organization is the State which endeavours to earn what is evidently necessary for the constitution and the upkeep of the body.²⁷ The State of the contemptible is the one which tries to achieve wealth in abundance, and the money which they hoard due to the love of wealth and niggardliness is spent only for the needs of the body. The vile state broods over sensuous pleasures and achieves the best means for the sake of pleasure only. This State is the most coveted one.

The extravagant State is the organization of the profusely generous in which the individuals help one another to reach nobility in expression and action. The people of this State are called generous either by themselves or

by the people of other States.²⁸ This is the best State among all the States of the ignorant.

The state of the dominant people tries to over-power others in power and wealth; they shed blood, subjugate others, and indulge in all sorts of pleasures. The State of the dominant excels the State of the generous in showing power.²⁹ As for the social State, everybody is free in it to do whatever he likes, and believes that no man has any superiority over others by any means. But independence often leads to extremes, and, therefore, there arise in this State different rites and rituals, customs and manners, and people are misled by evil propensities. Thus, this State splits into different groups and parties.

In all these States there is always unrest prevailing among the people, as everybody tries to become the chief and, by virtue of his wits, to lead the State of prosperity and happiness.

The evil doing States differ from the States mentioned above in so far as the people of these States believe in the principles held and the forms of happiness conceived by the people of the excellent State, and also invite others to do the same, but they themselves do nothing to achieve their object, nor do they try by action to attain the happiness they believe in. On the contrary, they incline to their own whims and propensities, that is to say, they like to enjoy power, nobility, and domination, and direct their actions towards their achievement. In activities, these States are like the States of the ignorant. In manners, their peoples resemble the peoples of the said States. The peoples of these two States differ only in belief. None of these states ever achieve happiness and prosperity.

The astray going States are those whose people suffer from some delusion. They adopt such principles, actions, and deeds as appear to them to be those of the excellent State, but in fact are not. The same is true of their goal of happiness and prosperity which they conceive to be so but which actually is not so.

The offspring of societies which develop in these States are of various types and all of them aim at personal gain and victory and not at real happiness and true prosperity.³⁰

J. Conclusion

According to al-Farabi, the chief of the state should be physically free from all defects, and should have a sharp intellect, memory, and wit. He should be devoted to sciences, truth-loving, and not easily upset by difficulties, contented, without greed for things to eat, and disinclined towards sensuous pleasures. He should abhor falsehood and liars, be ambitious with lofty ideals, a lover of justice, without thought of wealth or worldly position, and should have strong resolution, boldness, and courage. Plato's philosopher king has also been described as truth loving, fond of the knowledge of existents, one who keeps away from vice, is free-thinking, intelligent, sagacious, witty, and ambitious. But the state of al-Farabi is international in character.

While the State of Plato is only a City-State, that of al-Farabi can be as vast as a World-State. Plato wants to entrust the affairs of the State to a group of philosophers and names the organization "aristocracy." Al-Farabi

not only calls the Head of State Imam but identifies him with prophet. It is in the absence of the Imam or the second chief who has the necessary qualities to follow the tradition of the Imam that he entrusts the affairs of the State of the chief. It is, therefore, not true to say that al-Farabi has based his theory entirely on the Republic of Plato, or that he is simply Aristotelian in his thought.

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Notes

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4. *Kitab al-Siyasat al-Madaniyyah*, p. 39.
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6. *Kitab Ar' Ahl-Madinat al-Fidilah*, p. 61.
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8. *Ibid.*
9. *Kitab Tahsil alp-Sa'adah*, p. 2
10. *Kitab al-Siyasah*, pp. 3, 4.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 43 - 44.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
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16. *Kitab tasil al-Sa'adah*, pp. 29 - 31.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
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Chapter 36: Al-Mawardi

A. Life And Works

Abu al-Hassan al-Mawardi was born in Basrah (c. 364/974) which was then one of the principal seats of learning and education in the Muslim world. He, therefore, got all his education here and rose in literary renown at an early age. He especially prepared himself for the judicial profession and obtained an appointment in the State service. As a judge he served at various places and was finally posted in Baghdad. In the year 429/1037, the Caliph, al-Qadir, summoned four jurists representing the four schools of Islamic Law to write a legal epitome. Al-Mawardi was chosen to represent the Shafi'ite school and he wrote *Kitab al-Iqna'*; al-Quduri produced his famous *al-Mukhtasar* for the Hanafites. The other two books were of no importance.

The Caliph, however, recognized al-Mawardi's work as the best and in appreciation of his merit appointed him as the *Aqda al-Qudat*. This designation was objected to by many leading jurists like Abu al-Tayyib, al-Tabari, and al-Simyari, who said that it did not become anyone except God. But al-Mawardi took no notice of these objections and retained the designation until his death in 450/1058, because the same jurists had previously approved the title of *Malik al-Muluk al-A'zam* for Jalal al-Daulah, the Buwaihidi chief.

Although al-Mawardi was a staunch Sunnite and Shafi'ite jurist, he had the good fortune of being equally favoured by both the Buwaihids and 'Abbasids. But the Shi'ite Buwaihids favoured him out of diplomacy, because he was often helpful in settling their everyday quarrels with the palace, for, writes Yaqut, "He was held in great esteem by the Buwaihidi Sultans who deputed him to negotiate between them and their opponents, and were pleased with his mediation, and affirmed his settlements."

Al-Mawardi was acclaimed as one of the ablest men of his age. He was not only a distinguished judge but also a distinguished author. He wrote mostly on law and politics. His well-known extant works are: *Kitab al-Hawi*, *al-Iqna'*, *Siyasat al-Mulk*, *Qawanin al-Wizarah*, *Adab al-Dunya w-al-Din*, and *al-Ahkum al-Sultaniyyah*. But it is this last work on which his fame chiefly rests. In Muslim history it is one of the first scientific treatises on political science and State administration. A detailed discussion of this will be taken up in the following pages.

Here, a note of explanation seems to be necessary. Ibn Khallikan quotes a report that none of al-Mawardi's writings were published in his life-time because the author had grave doubts as to whether he was really honest and correct in his speculations. This report cannot be accepted as true, particularly with reference to *al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah*, because there exists another book with the same title by Abu Ya'la al-Farra', who was a contemporary of al-Mawardi and who died in 458/1066.

Abu Ya'la's book is almost an exact replica of al-Mawardi's work so far as its pattern and subjects of discussion are concerned. Even the language and arguments are almost the same as in al-Mawardi in most places. It is, therefore, certain that Abu Ya'la had seen the published work of al-Mawardi while the latter was still alive, because the dates of their deaths are so

approximate to each other and because it is not proven that Abu Ya'la had personal relations with al-Mawardi. This conclusion is further strengthened by the fact that Yaqut, who died in 626/1229, does not mention this story, and the authority of ibn Khallikan, who died in 681/1282, cannot be accepted in this matter.

B. Political Theory

Al- Mawardi's main political thought is embodied in his al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah. Only a small portion of the work is, however, devoted to political theory, the rest of it discusses the details of public administration and rules of government. But his small portion is extremely important because it is the first attempt in Muslim history to evolve a comprehensive theory of the State and because it has left an enduring influence on the course of Muslim political thought up to our own day.

Further, although we know that al-Mawardi profited a good deal from previous sources in the elaboration of his theory, for he says that it is the epitome of the views of various schools of jurisprudence, we do not possess in our hands today any sources in the elaboration of his theory, for he says that it is the epitome of the views of various schools of jurisprudence, we do not possess in our hands today any source discussing comprehensively the problem of the Caliphate dating back beyond the fifth/11th century. The Usul al-Din of 'Abd al-Qahir al-Baghdadi gives theologically a more copious discussion of the Imamate than al-Mawardi's book, but al-Baghdadi (d. 429/1037) was a contemporary of al-Mawardi. Hence, the conclusion is that most of al-Mawardi's ideas are partly a heritage of the past and partly a clever manipulation of the opinions current in his time.

A closer examination of his work, however, discloses that he is not a mere recorder of facts handed down to him but a shrewd statesman and diplomat. There is enough historical data to sanction the view that on many fundamental questions al-Mawardi's opinions were dictated by the exigencies of his time and the special circumstances of his life. In the preface of his al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah he writes,

“Since these principles of royalty are mainly concerned with the conduct of rulers, and since the direct application of these principles to the entire business of government prevents the rulers from an inquiry into their true nature, and because these rulers are too engrossed in State affairs and diplomacy, I have brought out a separate book discussing all of them, in obedience to the behest of one whose allegiance is essential in order that he may be informed of the different schools of law and may know what the people owe to him so that he may demand its fulfillment, and what he owes to them so he may fulfill it. [And he has asked to be informed about these things] out of love for justice in his enactments and decisions and for the sake of equity in his imposts and rewards.”¹

The mention of authority in this passage refers to the Caliph, especially because al-Mawardi had been raised to the high office of Aqda al-Qudat,² and represented the Caliph in his negotiations with the Buwaihids.

Further, it is necessary to point out that the declining power of the Buwaihids in the beginning of the fifth/11th century because of internal conflicts and insurrections in the army and because of Mahmud of

Ghaznah's solicitations for the 'Abbasids, made the Caliph al-Qadir and his son al-Qa'im aspire to regain the lost glory of their fore-fathers. The first step in this direction was the legal definition and exposition of the powers and prerogatives of the Caliph which had well-nigh been forgotten and had fallen to oblivion.

The historical situation explains al-Mawardi's efforts to propound a theory of the caliphate in which everything depends on the authority of the Caliph, in an age in which the prestige of the Caliphate had fallen to its lowest ebb. Al-Mawardi's endeavours have been supposed to be directed to the theoretical discussion of an ideal State. This view is however, untenable on account of the fact that al-Mawardi is, truly speaking, not a philosopher, and is least interested in abstract thinking. He is a jurist and builds on the opinions of his forbears, gives a wider scope to these opinions, and uses his own wisdom to apply them intelligently to the special conditions of his own times.

His greatest merit, therefore, lies in the fact that he abstains from abstract speculation and correlates the opinions of the jurists to the historical perspective of his age. Similarly, as already remarked, he is not a mere compiler or interpreter and expresses views opposed to the views of earlier authorities, or gives out opinions altogether original.

Now, it will be useful to pick up the main points in al-Mawardi's theory and compare them with the contentions of the ancient jurists, on the one hand, and with the contemporary political conditions, on the other. This will give us a true estimate of al-Mawardi's achievements.

1. The institution of the Imamate is a necessary requirement of the Shari'ah and not of reason. The appointment of an imam by the consensus of the Muslim community is obligatory.³ There is a similar passage in al-Baghdadi,⁴ who remarks that this is al-Ash'ari's opinion is opposed to the Mu'tazilite view.

2. The Imamate is instituted by means of election. The Electoral College shall consist of persons with special qualifications.⁵ Also, the candidates for the Imamate must fulfil certain conditions.⁶ This elective principle of the Imamate is obviously opposed to the Shi'ite claim of bequeathal or divine nomination. Al-Mawardi, however, does not discuss the election of a licentious person as Imam. Al-Baghdadi says that his election will be void, even if it has taken place through a properly constituted Electoral College. Al-Mawardi's omission is deliberate, being a concession to the Buwaihids, who appointed the Caliphs to suit their selfish ends.

3. The right of franchise is enjoyed not only by the people living in the capital. The Caliph is, however, traditionally elected in the capital because the death of the previous Caliph is first known there, and political considerations require the immediate appointment of a new Caliph, and also because most people possessing the necessary qualifications for the Imamate generally reside there.⁷ This principle was hotly contended by the Khawarij who believed in complete democracy and universal franchise.

4. Among the seven conditions which according to al-Mawardi must be fulfilled by a candidate, the seventh one, that is, the Quraishite descent is very important. Al-Mawardi lays great stress on it and says that if anyone

objects to it on the ground that it excludes non-Quraishites from the Caliphate, such an objection would not be considered, because it was this Quraishite descent that was presented by Abu Bakr as an argument for preference in the election of Saqifah Bani Sa'idah.⁸

5. The Imam is appointed in one of two ways:⁹ (a) He may be elected by the Electoral College, or (b) he may be nominated by the ruling Imam.

In the first case some scholars say the Imam must be elected by all the members of the Electoral College in all the cities. Others oppose this view and say that Abu Bakr was elected only by the citizens of Madinah. Still others assert that only five persons are sufficient to elect the Imam, as happened in the case of Abu Bakr and 'Uthman. In al-Mawardi's opinion, even one person is enough to elect the Caliph.¹⁰ He cites the tradition of 'Abbas as evidence. 'Abbas said to 'Ali, "Stretch your hand, I will swear my allegiance to you, and when people come to know that the Prophet's uncle has sworn his allegiance to his nephew, nobody would object to your Imamate." This opinion has also been corroborated by al-Ash'ari.¹¹

6. The above extreme opinion has been advocated by al-Mawardi to advance another important opinion given in the next section, where he discusses the case of two candidates equally qualified for the Imamate. He says that the Electoral College may nominate anyone of the two as Imam without assigning any reason.¹²

7. The election of a less qualified person in the presence of a more qualified person is perfectly legal, provided the former fulfils all the conditions of the Imamate.¹³ It was this principle under which most of the worthless caliphs took refuge. It was also directed against the Shi'ahs, who believe that an inferior person cannot have precedence over a superior one. They coined this theory to assert that since 'Ali and his descendants in the Fatimid line were superior to the rest of mankind, anyone who assumed the Caliphate power was a mere usurper. The refutation of this dogma was essential to establish the above doctrine. But al-Mawardi is not alone in this respect, for this is the agreed opinion of Sunnite jurists and theologians.

8. If there is only one suitable candidate for the Imamate, he automatically becomes the Imam, and election is required.¹⁴ Al-Mawardi seems to be inclined to this view; the jurists and scholars, however, assert that election must be held even if there is only one candidate for it; otherwise the Imam cannot acquire legal status. This insistence on election is obviously directed against the Shi'ite theory of divine appointment.

9. The existence of two Imams contemporaneously is illegal.¹⁵ Al-Ash'ari opposes this view and says that two Imams at a time are possible if their territories are far-flung and widely separated by an ocean, which hinders easy communication between the two. But al-Mawardi insists in his view to rule out the Fatimids and the Umayyads of Spain.

C. Succession

1. The ruling Imam can nominate his successor. There is complete consensus on this point in the Muslim community.¹⁶ The Muslims accepted 'Umar as caliph not on the suggestion of Abu Bakr but in obedience to his order as Caliph.¹⁷ Similarly, when 'Umar appointed a limited council to

elect his successor it was an order from the Imam and there was no choice for the Muslims to do otherwise.¹⁸

2. The Imam can nominate any suitable person as his successor, provided he does not happen to be his father or son. The concurrence of the ahl al-hall w-al-'aqd is not necessary;¹⁹ but if he nominates his son, the concurrence must be obtained.²⁰ Also, he can nominate any other relation without requiring the concurrence.²¹

It was this theory of nomination that cut at the very root of democratic ideals in Islamic polity. It has been persistently resorted to by every Muslim ruler after the days of the pious Caliphate, to perpetuate dynastic and despotic rule among the Muslim peoples. Thus, apparently the structure of the Caliphate was maintained by the Umayyads, the 'Abbasids, the Fatimids, and the Turks, but the spirit of Islamic democracy was cast away with the shedding of the blood of 'Uthman, the third successor of the Prophet.

Al-Mawardi's contention that Abu Bakr's nomination of 'Umar could not be challenged by the Companions, for it was the valid enactment of a valid Imam, is nothing but historical fiction having no basis in historical fact. One of the earliest and most reliable authorities on that period, ibn Qutaibah, reports in his *al-Imamah w-al-Siyasah* that when symptoms of death approached Abu Bakr, he became very anxious as to who should succeed him to the Caliphal authority.

After much deliberation he decided to nominate 'Umar to succeed him. He called 'Uthman to his bedside and dictated to him the deed of succession. When the news spread, people flocked to him from every quarter and began to question his choice. Thereupon he said, "If God asked me about this matter, I would tell Him that I appointed over them one whom I considered to be the best of them."

After this he ordered a general assembly of the people, and when they gathered together, he addressed them and said, "If you so desire, you may sit together and elect a person whom you like, but if you wish that I should use my discretion in the matter on your behalf, then I assure you by One other than whom there is no God, I will spare no pains in doing you the best service." He then stopped and wept and the people wept with him and said, "You are the best and most informed amongst us, so you choose for us." And when the crowd dispersed he called for 'Umar and gave him the deed of succession and said, "Go to the people and inform them that his is my suggestion, and ask them if they hear it and obey it." 'Umar took that document and went to the people and addressed them. They all said, "We are all ears and obedience to it."²²

This testimony of ibn Qutaibah is most unequivocal and decisive. It completely abrogates al-Mawardi's theory of nomination. It is quite obvious that Abu Bakr did not deprive the people of their democratic right to elect the head of the State freely. He simply gave his personal opinion. The people could accept his opinion as well as reject it. There was no political bar in their way, no Caliphal decree to prevent the exercise of their right of franchise.²³

Al-Mawardi's second argument in support of his thesis that the limited college of electors prescribed by 'Umar had the sole right of nominating the

new Caliph,²⁴ is nothing but a deliberate effort to interpret ancient practice to justify later historical phenomena. In fact, ‘Umar did nominate the limited council at the suggestion of ‘A’ishah to prevent civil strife after his death.²⁵ He knew full well that the probable candidates for the Caliphate were the very people whom he had nominated for it. Not only that, he was perfectly sure that either ‘Uthman or ‘Ali would be elected.²⁶

Therefore, to facilitate the new election he fixed a procedure that was least pregnant with evil and the best guarantee against civil discord. The stern warnings which he gave to the dissentient members of the Electoral College and the strict directions which he issued about the conduct of the election were but the last symbols of his great over-riding authority over the hearts and minds of people, by means of which he so wonderfully ruled half the world for ¹² years. But he did not lay down a permanent principle of Islamic polity, for this he could not do, since there was no warrant for it in the Qur’an or the Sunnah.

Even Abu Bakr could not devise the theoretical foundations of the Caliphate, for during the last moments of his life he said that the one great regret he had was that he could not ask the Prophet to enlighten him on three problems. Regarding two of these, he said, “I should have asked who would succeed him in political power after him? If he nominated anyone, nobody could challenge his nominee on this issue. And I should have asked him whether the Ansars were entitled to any share in political power.”²⁷

Umar’s arrangement was, therefore, dictated by purely prudential considerations. A proof of this assertion is that he categorically declared that the Ansars were not entitled to any share in the sovereign power,²⁸ although Abu Bakr was doubtful on this issue, and although many of the later jurists did not accept ‘Umar’s ruling on this point. The truth is that ‘Umar took this extra-ordinary step for the defence of the State and not for the defence of a principle, for there was no clear principle before him. Hence, the construction of a political theory out of his ruling can be neither justified nor appreciated as an achievement in political thought.

But al-Mawardi was not very concerned about theory. He was a leading Sunnite legal doctor of the Shafi’ite school, and was intimately associated with the ‘Abbasids; hence, his chief interest lay in emancipating the Sunnite Caliphate from the Shi’ite tyranny of the Buwaihids. This explains why he gave the stamp of validity to the monarchical system of the ‘Abbasids. He had already before him the precedent of the Umayyads. Moreover, the jurists had, by the force of circumstances, reconciled themselves to the imperialistic order of the day, and given it to the form and sanction of religious authority.

Al-Mawardi, therefore, found no difficulty in taking his cue from the prevailing ideas of his time. His main contribution to Muslim political thought lies in the transformation of these ideas into a system, directly related to historical practice. He was not a visionary and idealist like the jurists or the scholastics, and like them did not sit to speculate a vacuum. He was a man of the world; he tried to solve its problems as best as he could.

3. The nomination of a person as heir apparent becomes effective only when he declares his consent to it. The Imam cannot withdraw the

nomination until there occurs in this heir apparent some important change which invalidates him legally. So, also, an Imam cannot be deposed until a similar change occurs in him.²⁹ Now, these are only logical deductions from the fundamentals of the Shari'ah for there are no historical precedents to vouch-safe them.

4. The Imam can appoint the Electoral College as well as the persons who may contest for the Imamate.³⁰ This opinion is based on the election of 'Uthman by means of a limited shura appointed by 'Umar, the derivation of a general principle out of it is certainly most dangerous to sound polity and to the stability of the State. The piety, honesty, intelligence, and statesmanship of 'Umar could well be relied upon. The same cannot be said of another personality after him in the Muslim history.

Notwithstanding this, historians have held that 'Umar was mistaken in taking this step.³¹ It is a well-known fact that most of the members of the shura, who came out unsuccessful in the contest, at once started plotting against 'Uthman and began to aspire for the Caliphate.³² Apart from this historical fact, if the right of nominating the electorate as well as the candidates is conceded to the Imam, it is bound to make him absolute and despotic. In truth, it was this theory that developed into divine right with 'Alids and the 'Abbasids. And it was this theory that throttled the growth of democracy in Islamic polity.

5. The Imam can nominate two or more heirs apparent to succeed him one after the other. The argument has been derived from the battle of Mubah, in which the prophet appointed Zaid bin Harithah as the Commander of the Muslim forces and said that if he fell in fighting he was to be succeeded in command by Ja'far bin Abi Talib who was to be succeeded by 'Abd Allah bin Rawabah. If ibn Rawabah also fell, then the Muslims could choose anyone from among themselves as their commander. Apparently, the citation of this incident in support of a fundamental issue, like that of the Caliphate, is but fake reasoning.³³

This practice of appointing two or more heirs apparent proved to be the greatest political evil in Muslim polity. It often engendered palace intrigues and gave rise to internecine wars and dynastic feuds.

D. Designation And Privileges

1. When a person is duly elected as Imam, the people should entrust all their affairs to him and must give him their unquestioning obedience. The Imam may not consult them in the affairs of the State, yet they must obey him.³⁴

2. The Imam may be addressed as the Khalifat Allah, but the majority of jurists say that this title is forbidden, for no human being can represent God on Earth, since man is mortal and imperfect. Hence the Imam may either be a mere Khalifah or Khalifat al-Rasul Allah.³⁵ Once when Abu Bakr was addressed as Khalifat Allah he exclaimed, "Do not address me as Khalifat Allah but as the Khalifat al-Rasul Allah."

E. Duties And Functions Of The Imam

The Imam has the following ten principle duties to perform:

1. The safeguard and defence of the established principles of religion as understood and propounded by the consensus of ancient authorities. If anyone innovates an opinion or becomes a sceptic, the Imam should convince him of the real truth, correct him with proper arguments, and make him obey the injunctions and prohibitions of the Shari'ah, so that the people at large may be saved from the evil effects of heresies.

This is undoubtedly the foremost duty of the Imam under the Shari'ah. But unfortunately it is under the cover of this pre-text that throughout the last 13 centuries, adventurers and self-seekers have striven to carve out political fortunes for themselves. The second civil war of Muslims was fought by the Umayyads, the Hashimites, and the Zubairites under the same pre-text.

When the 'Abbasids, the Fatimids, and the Safawids came to power they called themselves the Defenders of Faith, and crushed every political dissentient in the name of religion. Even today there can be evinced a great effervescence for religious revival in all the Muslim lands, but everywhere the undertone is political, not religious.

Al-Mawardi's enumeration of these duties, however, was very effective and timely, since it came out as a stern warning to the Buwaihids, who had over-powered the Caliph in Baghdad, and who professed a heretical faith.

2. The dispensation of justice and disposal of all litigations in accordance with the Shari-ah. The Imam should curb the strong from riding over the weak and encourage the weak to take their due in face of the strong.

3. The maintenance of law and order in the country to make it possible for the people to lead a peaceful life, proceed in their economic activities freely, and travel in the land without fear.

4. The enforcement of the criminal code of the Qur'an to ensure that the people do not outrage the prohibitions of God, and that the fundamental rights of men are not violated.

5. The defence of the frontiers against foreign invasions to guarantee the security of life and property of Muslims and non-Muslims alike in the Islamic State.

6. The organization and prosecution of religious war against those who oppose Islam or refuse to enter the protection of the Islamic State as non-Muslim subjects. The Imam is bound to be the covenant of God to establish the supremacy of Islam over all other religions and faith.

7. The collection of kharaj and zakat taxes in accordance with the laws of the Shari'ah and the interpretation of the jurists, without resorting to extortion by pressure.

8. The apportionment of allowances and stipends from the State treasury (Bait al-Mal) to those who are entitled to them. This money should not be expended with extravagance or stinginess, and must not be either pre-paid or delayed.

9. The appointment of honest and sincere men to the principal offices of State and to the treasure to secure sound and effective administration and to safe-guard the finances of the State.

10. The Imam should personally look into and apprise himself of the affairs of his dominions so that he may himself direct the national policy

and protect the interests of the people. He should not entrust his responsibility to others and engross himself in luxury or religious devotion.

And when the Imam has carried all these duties efficiently, the people must offer him two things, obedience and help.

This enumeration of the ten-fold functions of the Imam is arbitrary. Number ten has been chosen particularly because it is an auspicious and mystical number. The notable fact here is that, while his predecessors and successors lay great emphasis on the first two points, viz, the safe-guard of religious principles and the dispensation of justice, as the principal duties of the Imam, al-Mawardi lays the main stress on the administrative responsibility for the carrying out of justice but also the greatest social organization to help promote the corporate life of men.

In other words, the management of the State machinery is of basic importance to him. This explains why he devotes only one-tenth of his book to the exposition of the theory of the Caliphate and uses the rest of his work to elaborate the detailed apparatus of government which hinges on the central authority of the Caliph.

The nebulous nature of the dispersion of State power had led to the dreadful tussle between the Buwaihids and the 'Abbasids. The Buwaihids, who had no legal claim to sovereignty, and who had not clarified their position, had long been intriguing to over-throw the Caliphate outright. Al-Mawardi's attempt, therefore, at defining in detail the responsibility and scope of Caliphal powers in relation to normal administration, was most plausible and a direct hit at the Buwaihids.

Further, he made his treatise an inviolable document by reinforcing it with the argument of earlier historical practice, dating back to the time of the Prophet, and by basing it on the opinions of the leading jurists of Islam. It is significant to note that al-Mawardi hardly quotes anywhere any of these jurists, but since he was the greatest judge of Baghdad, his declaration in the preface was taken as sufficient guarantee of his veracity. There is no ground to question his bona fides, yet it would have been more commendable if he had given the actual authorities.

F. Deposition Of The Imam

Al-Mawardi has given detailed consideration to the subject of an Imam's deposition. In the first place, arguing on the basis of legal deduction from the fundamentals of the Shari'ah he says that once a person is elected as Imam, he cannot be removed from that office until there has occurred some definite change in him.³⁶ Then after discussing the duties of the imam, he reverts to the subject and dilates on it at length. He says that the Imam loses his title and authority on account of one of the following reasons:

1. If there occurs a change in his moral status, technically known as 'adalah (sense of justice). The moral change is of two kinds:

(a) The one connected with the body, that is, if he becomes a slave to his inordinate desires and flouts openly the prohibitions of the Shari'ah. In such an event, a person can neither be elected as Imam nor continue as such.³⁷ Abu Ya'la rejects this opinion and holds the opposite view.³⁸

(b) The one connected with his faith, that is, if a person holds opinions contrary to the established principles of religion, or holds such twisted

opinion as amount to an abrogation of the accepted principles, he can neither be initiated as Imam nor continue to hold that office.³⁹ In this there is a clear denunciation of the stand of Buwaihids and of the Shi'ite and Fatimid claims to the Caliphate.

2. If there occurs a change in the person of the Imam. It is of three kinds: loss of physical senses, loss of bodily organs, and loss of ability to supervise and direct the affairs of the State.

(a) Among the defects which occur in the physical senses, the two most important ones which preclude a person from election to the Imamate or make unfit to continue in office are the loss of mental faculty and the loss of eyesight. The first case is obvious and needs no comment. But the second has had a profound bearing on the course of Muslim history. The practice of putting out the eyes with hot iron to prevent a person from wearing the imperial purple was undoubtedly borrowed from the Byzantine Empire; the opinion of the Muslim jurists on the issue, however, gave it an added importance as an instrument of tyranny in Oriental lands.

The dreadful effect of this foul practice can be gauged from the fact that about two dozen 'Abbasid Caliphs were thus blinded to be dethroned from the Caliphal seat. The juridical opinion referred to above is that a blind person is unqualified to give witness or sit as a judge in a court of law; he is, therefore, much more unqualified to serve as the Head of the State.⁴⁰

(b) Loss of bodily organs. It is of various kinds. If it does not hinder the performance of normal duties, and does not disfigure the features or the external beauty of the body, it will be of no account.⁴¹

In certain cases when the loss of organs renders a person helpless and makes him incapable of doing anything, he can neither be elected as Imam nor can he continue in that office. Such is the loss of the two hands or of the two feet.

Al-Mawardi discusses the details of other losses too, but they are not pertinent to our purpose here.

(c) The loss of personal ability to supervise and direct is of two kinds:

(i) If the Imam is over-powered by one of his counsellors and assistants, who appropriates all authority to himself, but does not openly defy the Imam, the Imam will continue in his office, provided the usurper rules in accordance with the injunctions of the Shari'ah, and in deference to the accepted norms of justice. This is to ensure that the functions of the Imamate should continue to be performed, and that the people do not fall prey to the ways of evil on account of the non-enforcement of the laws of the Shari'ah.⁴² But if his conduct is opposed to the principles of religion and justice, he will not be tolerated in that status, and the Imam shall have to seek the help of a person who can oust the usurper and restore supreme authority to the Caliph.⁴³

This principle has been elaborated by al-Mawardi with great care and legal acumen. In the next chapter he takes it up again and discusses it in full detail.⁴⁴ This principle which had no sanction in ancient authority or in the opinions of the jurists, was dictated by the force of circumstances in which the 'Abbasid Caliphate had been placed during the two centuries preceding the death of al-Mawardi.

The Buwaihid usurpation in Baghdad and falling of the Caliphal power into insignificance necessitated the evolution of a formula which suited the exigencies of the times and covered the de facto relation that existed between the Buwaihids and the 'Abbasids. This was a clear departure from the principle of the Caliphate enunciated by al-Mawardi in the earlier part of his book. But he devised a via media to remove this glaring contradiction.

If the absolute governor or the usurper (Amir bi al-Istila') declares his allegiance to the Caliph and promises to maintain the unity of the Caliphate, enforces the laws of the Shari'ah which cannot be let go by default, and because of the unavoidable condition created by the act of usurpation.⁴⁵

In this theory there is, on the one hand, an overt recognition of the situation prevailing in Baghdad and, on the other an unconcealed warning to the Buwaihids that if they transgressed their limits they could be brought to book with the help of the Ghaznawid power which was an open ally of the 'Abbasid caliphate. In a passage, al-Mawardi says that in case the usurper shows an uncompromising and rebellious attitude, the Caliph can call in the help of one who can relieve him of the straits. The person referred to is none but Mahmud of Ghaznah.

There is little doubt that al-Mawardi was influenced by the circumstances of his environment in the enunciation of this theory, but the deviation from the original principle completely nullified the true conception of the Imamate as demonstrated in the days of the Caliph 'Umar. Nay, it contributed directly to a political theory which encouraged adventurous and ambitious men to impose them on the will of the people with brute force and sheer might. Further, if it served as one of the main incentives for the dismemberment of the 'Abbasid Empire, it also greatly influenced the suppression of democratic thought and practice in the Muslim world. Al-Mawardi may have been well-intentioned but the legacy he left completely changed the concept of Muslim polity in the centuries that followed. And the charge that occurred was simply un-Islamic, undemocratic and vicious.

(ii) If the Imam falls a prisoner to the hands of an enemy it will be the duty of the entire Muslim people to endeavour to emancipate him,⁴⁶ and as long as there is any hope of his deliverance he will continue as Imam and another person may be elected to officiate in his absence. But if all hope is lost, he will be deemed to have relinquished his office, and a new election shall take place.

If the Imam is captured by a Muslim rebel army, and the rebels have not appointed an Imam of their own, the captured Imam shall continue to command the loyalty of the people, and an acting Imam shall be appointed by him, if possible, or by the Electoral College. But if the rebels have appointed an Imam of their own, the existing Imam shall forfeit his claim to the Imamate, and the responsible men (ahl al-hall w-al-'aqd) shall elect a new Imam according to their discretion.⁴⁷ Al-Mawardi's wording in this passage is full of meaning. He means to say that a victorious rebel leader does not automatically become the Imam.

G. Conclusion

Al-Mawardi's great contribution to political thought was that he gave a detailed account of the administrative machinery of the Government of his

time and in formulating his political theory he took full cognizance of historical facts and, unlike the jurists and the scholastics, did not indulge in empty speculation, but with all the good things that can be said about al-Mawardi, he had one short-coming - he could not evolve a philosophic conception of the State. He did not discuss the meaning, scope, jurisdiction, and obligations of the State, gave no conception of sovereignty, and were completely ignorant of the idea of a constitutional democracy. Lack of constitutional theory not only reduced the value of his work, but also adversely affected the later development of Muslim Political thought.

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Notes

1. Al-Mawardi, al-Akham al-Sultaniyyah, p.1.
2. Literally "the greatest Judge," but paradoxically enough the office was sub-ordinate to that of the Qadi al-Qudat, the Chief Justice (Yaqut, Vol. 5, p. 407).
3. Al-Mawardi, op. cit., p. 3.
4. Al-Baghdadi, Usul al-Din, p. 272.
5. These qualifications are three: justice with all the conditions pertaining to it, knowledge of religion and the interests and policy of the nation, and wisdom (al-Mawardi, op. cit., p. 4).
6. These conditions are: justice, learning, integrity of physical senses, wisdom, bravery, and Quraishite descent (ibid., p. 5).
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., p. 7.
11. Al-Baghdadi, op. cit., pp. 275 - 77.
12. Al-Mawardi, op. cit., p. 9.
13. Ibid., p. 10.
14. Ibid, pp. 10 - 11
15. Ibid., 11.
16. Ibid., p. 13.
17. Ibid., p. 14.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., p. 15.
21. Ibid.
22. Al-Imamah w-al-Siyasah, pp. 19 - 23.
23. In one of his pilgrimage to Mecca 'Umar heard a report that a person was saying, "By God, if 'Umar died I would declare my allegiance to so and so, and by God, Abu Bakr's election was certainly defective, but it was made effective later on." 'Umar became enraged at this report, and wanted to take immediate action, but at the advice of 'Abd al-

Rahman bin ‘Auf, returned to Medina and ordered all the judges, governors, and chiefs of the army to proceed to the capital. When all had come, a public assembly was held where the Caliph delivered one of the most important addresses of his life.

After saying many important things on this occasion, he said, “Let not anyone be deceived to say that the election of Abu Bakr was defective and that it became effective later. And among you there is none like Abu Bakr towards whom the people may look with love and reverence, therefore, if anyone of you swears allegiance to a person without consulting the general body of Muslims, such a person shall not be deemed as elected, and the likelihood is that both these persons may be beheaded.” (Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirat al-Nabawiyah*, Vol. 4, pp. 308 - 09).

24. Al-Mawardi, *op. cit.*, pp. 13 - 14.
25. Ibn Qutaibah, *Kitab al-Ma‘arif*, p. 23.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
28. *Ibid.*, p.24.
29. Al-Mawardi, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
31. Rafiq Bek, *Ashhar Mashahir al-Islam*, Vol. 1.
32. Ibn Qutaibah, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
33. Al-Mawardi, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 27 - 28.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
38. Abu Ya‘la, p. 4.
39. Al-Mawardi, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 67 - 70.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

Chapter 37: Political Theory Of The Shiites

The death of the Prophet of Islam ushered an era which is known as the period of the Orthodox Caliphate (11 - 41/632 - 661).

The supporters of 'Ali the fourth Caliph in the chronological order 35 - 41/646 - 661), were known as the Shi'ah which literally means a faction, a supporting group in the sense that they supported 'Ali's claim to succession after the death of the Prophet, both as a temporal ruler and a religious leader.

It may be stated authoritatively that 'Ali's claim to the Caliphate was not regarded by his supporters and adherents as a political ambition. On the contrary, it was considered that he had been ordained by Providence to succeed the Prophet and the Prophet himself had placed the question of succession beyond any doubt by his testament, as it were, at Ghadir al-Khumm.¹

During the Caliphate of 'Uthman, ibn Saba' of Yemen, who had settled ultimately in Egypt, openly preached that the first three Caliphs were usurpers as distinguished from 'Ali who was divinely ordained to succeed the Prophet as his executor or plenipotentiary (wasi). The extreme Shi'ites (Ghulah) believed that the Prophet himself was reincarnated in the form of 'Ali and "that the divine spirit which dwells in every prophet was transferred at Mohammad's death to 'Ali and from 'Ali to his descendants who succeeded him in the Imamate."

It would be pointless, so far as we are concerned, to access and evaluate the truth of the claim made by the Shi'ites that 'Ali had been designated as the Prophet's successor by the Prophet himself in accordance with the command of God, but it is necessary to point out that the Shi'ites, whether holding moderate or extreme views, refused, as it were, from the beginning to concede with the ijma' has any authority to confer any person the right to govern a Muslim State. They maintained that at all times a living descendant of 'Ali, whether concealed (mastur) or unconcealed, demands and receives allegiance from the Muslims and is in point of fact the only rightful Caliph (temporal ruler) and Imam (religious leader) of the Islamic peoples.

It may perhaps be added that the term Shi'ah was invested with all its dogmatic connotations after the coming into power of the 'Abbasids. In the Beginning the word only meant a group of people which were in favour of the succession of 'Ali to the Caliphate.

With the rise of the Umayyads the pure Arabs found greater favour with the rulers than the clients of the subject races. This policy which, most probably, had been initiated by the third Caliph, no doubt, for justifiable reasons, would not have proved disastrous in itself if Yazid had not perpetrated the horrible deeds which are known as the tragedy of Karbala. The old rivalry of the Umayyads and the Hashimites, which had remained subdued during the life-time of the Prophet, now manifested itself in many ways.

All these factors led to what is known as the 'Abbasids propaganda carried on in collaboration with the Shi'ites in the name of Hashim who was acceptable both to the supporters of 'Ali and the descendants of 'Abbas as against the Umayyads who had taken possession of the State and were

living in luxury, while their more celebrated Quraish brethren were forced to act merely as spectators of the splendour of the rival branch.

The relationship of the Hashimites and the 'Alids with the Umayyads would appear from the following genealogical tables.

The 'Abbasid propaganda ultimately bore fruit and the House of 'Abbas, mainly with the help of the Iranians who had flocked to Abu Muslim, an Iranian leader of great courage and patriotic fervour, succeeded in their machinations. The Umayyads were over-thrown; Marwan, the last Caliph was slain on the 15th Dh. H. 132/August 5, 750, followed by a general massacre of the members of the Royal House of the Umayyads, and Saffah ascended the throne 132/750.

After the revolution had become an accomplished fact, the Shi'ites who disillusioned and sadly disappointed, were under the impression that a member of the House of 'Ali would be enthroned. The treacherous murder of Abu Muslim (138/755) further convinced the Shi'ites, if such conviction was needed, that their 'Abbasid cousins were no less hostile to them and their claim than the Umayyads and it was during this period of bitter frustration, disappointment, and stark disillusionment that the term "Shi'ah" was invested with its basic political and religious connotations.

The Shi'ites claimed that the House of 'Abbas had usurped the Caliphate as the Umayyads and the three Orthodox Caliphs had done. They contended that, although de facto sovereignty vested in the 'Abbasids, legal sovereignty remained with the descendants of 'Ali who were divinely ordained to be the temporal and religious leaders of the Islamic peoples.

The Orthodox Shi'ites (Ithna 'Ashariyyah), as contra-distinguished from other sects who were either extremists in their beliefs or had made a drastic departure from the tenets of their orthodox brethren, believed that the Imamate had descended from Mohammad, the Prophet, to 'Ali and his descendants according to the table given below.

According to the Shi'ite traditions, the 12th Imam, namely, Mehdi (the expected one), was born in Samarra in 255 or 256/ 868 or 869. At the time of the death of his father, he would have been only four or five years of age. He was designated as Imam a few days before the death of his father and very soon after his death he disappeared or went into concealment which consists of two periods, short (sughra) and long (kubra). For a period of 70 years he was represented by four wakils (agents or advocates), namely, 'Uthman ibn Sa'id, Abu Ja'far, Abu al-Qasima and Abu al-Hassan.

The last named refused to nominate an agent on his behalf and died saying, "Now the matter is with God." Accordingly, the period when the hidden Imam was represented by the wakils is known as the lesser concealment and this period extended to 329/940. Since that time the Shi'ite Mehdi or the hidden Imam has been in "the great concealment" and he is expected to return near the end of time.

The political theories of the Orthodox Shi'ites depend on three fundamental precepts, namely, (1) the divine right of the descendants of 'Ali to succeed to the Imamate, (2) the sinlessness of all the imams, and (3) the return of Mehdi, the 12th Imam.

The first precept means that democratic election, i.e., consent of the people or any other method of choosing a successor to Prophet Mohammad is manifestly and palpably wrong and, as a matter of fact, sinful. Sovereignty, with all responsibilities that it entails for its holder as a temporal ruler and duties that it entails for him as a religious chief, is a gift from God which is conferred only on those who have descended from Mohammad through 'Ali and Fatima. (The descendants of 'Ali not born of Fatima has no right to the Caliphate or the Imamate.) The Shi'ite theologians obviously contend that the divine right of the Imam to become the Commander of the Faithful depends on the word of God as conveyed by the Prophet to 'Ali and by 'Ali to his descendants.

It has been conjectured, however, that the theory of the divine right of the Imams, which was analogous to the theory of the divine right of kings, was evolved and developed by the Persian supporters of the House of 'Ali who had witnessed the rise and fall of great empires wherein the emperors more often than not laid claims to Godhead.

In all great Eastern empires of the remote past, the kings at some time or another claimed to be gods or semi-gods at least, perhaps in order to stabilize the State and to keep the subject races unified through the worship of the sovereign. When we consider that the Shi'ite theologians and historians have accepted it as a fact that a daughter of the last Sassanian King of Persia was married to Hussain (all Imams being descendants from her), it becomes easy enough to appreciate the position of the Persian adherents of 'Ali in relation to the Caliphate and the Imamate. The fact that many of the Shi'ah sects believed in the Godhead of 'Ali further lends support to the theory that the concept of the divine right of the Imams to succeed the Prophet and infiltrated into Arabia through Persian channels.

Once we accept that the Imams are divinely ordained to rule the Faithful, we must accept the fact that the State as envisaged by the Shi'ite theologians is a theocracy in the most rigid sense of the word, in which the ruler - temporal head as well as a religious chief - cannot be deposed even if he palpably commits sins and crimes of a most serious nature.

This is the logical conclusion of the acceptance of the theory of divine right because the supporters of this theory would contend that "what our limited knowledge visualizes as a crime or as a sin is really virtue." We, with our limited knowledge and understanding, cannot appreciate or assess the significance of an act of the Imam. This logical conclusion was accepted by the Isma'ilites specifically and categorically, although the Orthodox Shi'ites contented themselves with saying that it is not possible for the Imam to commit a sin or a crime.

The concept of sinlessness is a logical corollary of the acceptance of the first precept.

It would follow, therefore, that in theocracy as envisaged by the Shi'ites, the Caliph who is also the Imam can neither be deposed nor interfered with in any matter of administrative or religious nature. From the purely political point of view, this theocratic State has elements of stability and strength which are peculiarly its own, but it may not appeal to those who believe that sovereignty vests really in the people ultimately and that the negation of the

right to depose, irrespective of the fact whether the ruler is just or unjust and cruel, is contrary to all principles of equity and justice inherent in all constitution-making.

The Shi'ite theologians may reply that the Imam, being divinely ordained, is capable of committing a sin or crime and will exercise his authority in a benevolent manner, and although he will be sovereign in every sense of the word, he will be bound by the restrictions imposed upon him by the Qur'an, the traditions of the Prophet as narrated by the Imams and the examples of the Imams' lives.

The belief that the 12th Imam, Mehdi, is bound to return is most significant in the sense that the Shi'ite theologians are in a position to encourage their adherents whenever they are passing through dangerous or chaotic periods and ask them to stand fast since the advent of the Mehdi will be the end of all tyranny, despotism, suffering, misery, wretchedness, and sinfulness and the beginning of a new era of prosperity, bliss, happiness, and ecstasy never experienced before by humanity.

It is obvious that temporal and religious problems are to be solved during the concealment of the 12th Imam. The ideal theocratic Shi'ite State envisages the existence of righteous, erudite, competent, learned, and virtuous persons who administer the Law and solve all theological problems and juristic questions by *ijtihad* (effort). These competent persons are known as *mujtahids* and are supposed to derive their wisdom and acumen from the representatives of the hidden Imam who is in contact with them.

The *mujtahids* have always exercised very great influence in the Shi'ite States and have been considered to be the Caliphs of the Imam. It is of course possible to visualize periods when wide powers are misused and unlimited authority is converted into tyranny. Human nature is frail and whenever human beings are vested with unlimited powers, they are apt to misuse them at some time or other.

It may be stated therefore, that Shi'ite envisaged their ideal State as a rigidly theocratic one, with the concealed Imam as the arbiter of the destinies of the Faithful working out a pattern of society through the *mujtahids*, who derived their power to adjudicate from the Imam himself or his representatives with whom they are in contact. All persons, sovereigns, rulers and pontiffs, wherever they may be are usurpers if they do not derive their right to rule from the commands of the Imam or from his representatives.

The chaotic conditions which prevail will be set right by the advent or emergence of the Mehdi who will establish this ideal theocratic State, holding away over the whole world and laying the law for all creatures who inhabit it.

Political Theory Of The Ismailites

The sixth Imam of the Shi'ites, namely, Imam Ja'far Sadiq (the Truthful) is justly considered to be one of the greatest authorities on Law and tradition. He is regarded as one of the most celebrated of the jurists. He instructed some of the greatest traditionists known to the Muslim peoples and also known as the originator or, at least, the greatest exponent of the occult science known as *jafar*.

Curiously enough, it was during his life-time that the Shi'ite world was torn asunder and there emerged upon the scene a new group or sect of the Shi'ites, known by many names, for example, the Isma'ilites, as the latest research has established beyond any doubt. It is the term "Isma'ilites" which is indicative of the true origin of the sect, other appellations being either misleading or based on hostility to this sect in general and to Orthodox Shi'ites in particular.

Form the tangle of conflicting evidence, contradictory claims and inconsistent theories, the basic facts relating to the origin of this sect appear as follows:

It is admitted by all concerned that Imam Ja'far died in 148/765. Before his death he had designated his son Isma'il to his successor and the rightful Imam. Now this Isma'il died sometime between the year 136/753 and 146/763. It is clear that he could not have died before 136/754 - the year that the 'Abbasid Caliph, Mansur, ascended the throne, because we find it stated on unimpeachable authority that the fact of his death was reported to the Caliph, who, obviously, watched the movements of the Shi'ite Imams carefully and sometimes with great anxiety, because almost all the movements which aimed at the over-throw of the 'Abbasid Caliphate used the name of the reigning Shi'ite Imam as a cloak.

The 'Abbasid Caliphs, therefore, even when convinced that the Imam themselves were not in any way associated with the movement in question, very carefully kept them under State observation. According to the Shi'ites, they were, for all practical purposes, prisoners of the State and their movements were restricted by "political expediency," the seriousness or the significance of which was determined by the corresponding seriousness of the revolt or the movement which gave birth to it.

Again, this is admitted by all concerned that before the death of Isma'il, Imam Ja'far had revoked the authority of succession of the case of Isma'il and had in his place Imam Musa Kazim as the rightful successor and Imam of the Shi'ites.

The reasons, which led the Imam to take this step which caused the Shi'ite community to be torn asunder and divided into hostile groups, cannot be determined at this stage. The Orthodox Shi'ites - and Sunni authorities are not lacking in support thereof - assert that Imam Isma'il was, one unfortunate day, found drinking wine and thus committing an action which is admittedly a sin. Imam Ja'far - so the story goes - thereupon repudiated Isma'il and designated his brother as his successor.

This repudiation of sanction or authority, technically known as nass was not and could not be accepted by some of the Shi'ites because it opposed and falsified the fundamental postulates of the Shi'ites in general.

Those who would not accept this repudiation and revocation argue as follows:

The sinlessness of the Imam is an established fact. Isma'il was declared to be the Imam-Designate by Ja'far. He, therefore, was incapable of committing any sin or perpetrating any crime. The allegation that he was found drinking wine was either incorrect or related to one of those mysterious acts of the Imam-Designate the significance of which is known

to him only. Since he was incapable of committing a sin, his drinking must have been a cloak for some other activity. In other words, drinking was an appearance (zahir), the reality (batin) of which was known only to the Imam or to those in whom he confided.

The supporters of Isma‘il also contend that he was appointed Imam-Designate by Imam Ja‘far in accordance with divine command. God is infallible. It is impossible to conceive that God was not aware that Isma‘il one day would be found drinking. If, therefore, he allowed Isma‘il to be declared as the successor of Imam Ja‘far, the story that Isma‘il was found drinking wine must either be untrue or must be considered and treated as an act innocent in itself, the significance of which is known only to God, the Imam, and his successor.

They contend that it was quite possible that the wine drinking of Isma‘il may have been considered expedient by God and since all actions of the Imam flow from God, no action of Isma‘il, however sinful it may have appeared, can be considered to be unjustified and condemned, since it is in fact an act performed as ordained by Providence.

During the lifetime of Imam Ja‘far, the controversy and the ferment consequent upon the revocation of authority remained subdued, but as soon as he died the supporters of Isma‘il came forward and contested the succession of Imam Musa Kazim. Since Isma‘il had died during the lifetime of his father, it was contended that the nass (sanction, authority) had been transferred from Isma‘il to his son Mohammad who had from then on become the rightful Imam, the spiritual and temporal leader of the Shi‘ites and the rightful ruler of all territorial possessions.

There are some who believed that Isma‘il had not really died and was the last rightful Imam, but they were in a minority. Slowly but steadily the supporters of Mohammad, the son of Isma‘il gained ascendance and laid the foundation of the Isma‘ili sect which culminated in the establishment of one of the greatest Muslim empires of the East - the Empire of the Fatimids of Egypt.

DeGoeje and Dozy have it “that a certain ‘Abd Allah b. Maimun, an oculist (qaddah) by profession and a Persian,” was inspired by religious fervour, political ambition, and inveterate hatred against the “Arabs and Islam,” to “bind together in one association the conquered and the conquerors, to combine in one secret society, wherein there should be several grades of indication, the free thinkers who saw in religion only a curb for the common people and the bigots of all sects, to make use of the believers to bring about the reign of the unbelievers and of the conquerors to overthrow the empire which they had themselves founded, to form for himself, in short, a party, numerous, compact, and schooled to obedience, which, when the moment was come, would give the throne, if not to himself, at least to his descendants. Such was the dominant idea of ‘Abd Allah b. Maimun, an idea which, grotesque and audacious though it was, he realized with astonishing tact, incomparable skill, and a profound knowledge of the human heart.”

There is a very significant old adage that if you fling sufficient mud some is bound to stick. This is exactly what happened in the case of Maimun and

his son 'Abd Allah. The Orientalists - nay even such an erudite Iranian scholar as Mohammad Qazwini, the editor of Tarikh-i Jahan-Gusha by 'Ata Malik Juwaini - were misled by the voluminous 'Abbasid propaganda, hostile commentary of the Orthodox Shi'ites, and the specious argument of those opposed to the Isma'ilites, into thinking that Maimun and his son 'Abd Allah were opposed to the tenets of Islam or were inspired by the hatred for the Arabs. As a matter of fact, as the latest research has established beyond any doubt, Maimun was the name adopted by Imam Mohammad when he went into concealment (ghaibah). In other words, during the period of concealment those who were in his confidence knew Imam Mohammad to be Maimun.

No doubt, this is a daring postulate but, once we accept it, all conflicts are resolved, all inconsistencies removed, and all confusions laid to rest. It is quite evident that when the Orthodox Shi'ites assert that Maimun was a narrator of traditions under Imam Baqir and Imam Ja'far, they are speaking the literal truth. So are the Isma'ilites when they say that Maimun and his 'Abd Allah were the staunchest supporters of the Isma'ilite cause.

It is clear that the Orthodox Shi'ites were not taken into confidence by the supporters of Imam Mohammad when he was in concealment and were, therefore, unable to appreciate that Maimun and Mohammad are one and the same person. By accepting this postulate we are also in a position to appreciate and understand the attitude adopted by the 'Abbasid Caliphs in relation of both Maimun and his son 'Abd Allah. It is quite likely that some of the spies of the 'Abbasids might have brought to the notice of the Caliph that Maimun was the concealed Imam, and political expediency might have forbidden the broadcasting of this highly significant and equally dangerous information.

The stream of invectives poured upon the head of Maimun and his son 'Abd Allah by the 'Abbasid caliphs, the Orthodox Shi'ites, and the Sunni historians in general, is in itself significant and tends to support the theory that both these persons were not only supporters of the Isma'ilites' cause but were the pivots and props thereof.

After the death of Ja'far, Mohammad went into concealment adopting the name of Maimun. He spent some time at Kufah and Rayy. The 'Abbasid Caliph being informed that Mohammad was laying the foundation of a powerful organization even in concealment and sending out preachers to different parts of Persia made some efforts to seize, but it would appear that either these efforts were half-hearted or they failed.

Ultimately, 'Abd Allah al-Mehdi in direct line of descent from Mohammad, the son of Isma'il succeeded in laying the foundation of an enviable empire in Egypt, the rulers of which are known to history as the Fatimids or the descendants of Fatima though 'Ali.

At this juncture it is perhaps expedient to state in the most explicit terms that the Carmathians were not associated with the Isma'ilites, nor were they identical with them as it is sometimes wrongly supposed.

Hollister has ascertained their position as follows. "We find the word Carmathian used, (1) as an equivalent for Isma'ilis in general, (2) for the dissident groups of Isma'ilites who joined in the invasion of Syria and came

very close to capturing Damascus and establishing there a Fatimid Kingdom somewhat earlier than that established in North Africa, (3) for the followers of Hamdan Qarmat and ‘Abdan, his brother-in-law, who seceded from the Isma‘ilites, and (4) for the Qarmatians of Bahrain. The more recent studies, support by Isma‘ilite authorities, have made it clear that only this last group is really entitled to the name Qarmatian (Carmathian).”

The Fatimid Caliphs (297 - 567/909 - 1171), broadly speaking, tried to establish a theocratic State and were, on the whole, just rulers and efficient administrators. One of them, al-Hakam, however, claimed divinity for himself. In other words, he not only claimed to be the Imam, but further contended that the divine light had entered his body so that he had become identical with the Creator. His claim was laughed out of Egypt, but the Druze of Lebanon up to this day believe in his divinity and look forward to the return confident that he merely disappeared as an Imam often does, and would reappear in due course as the herald of a new era of prosperity, righteousness, and godliness on Earth.

Amazingly enough, the Isma‘ilites were destined to be split again into two powerful groups. Al-Mustansir died in 428/1036 and the Imamate should have been transferred to his eldest son Nizar who, his supporters claimed, had been properly designated as Imam. However, he was not in Cairo when his father died, and before he could take effective steps, his brother al-Musta‘li, ascended the throne and Nizar was faced with a fait accompli.

Nizar never succeeded to the throne, but he found a very staunch supporter in Hassan Sabbah who had come to Persia during the reign of al-Mustansir. This Hassan Sabbah was really an amazing person, learned, erudite, ambitious, outwardly pious, wily, and blessed with administrative ability and infinite capacity to work.

In order to further his own ends, he supported the cause of Nizar as the rightful Imam and the ruler of the Islamic world, and in his name took possession of many fortresses in Persia, including the famous Alamut (the Eagle’s Nest), which, in due course of time became the centre of Hassan’s activities.

The movement initiated by Hassan is known as Da‘wat-i Jadid or New Propaganda. The Nizaari Imams of Alamut, beginning with Hassan Sabbah, held sway in certain parts of Persia until the last Imam Khurshah was killed by the Mongols in the seventh/13th century. The Nizari branch of the Isma‘ilites recognizes the Agha Khan as its head and their members are known in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent as Khojas. The adherents of Must‘li are known as Bohras.

According to the Isma‘ilites as to the Orthodox Shi‘ites, the only rightful State is a theocratic one which has as its Head the Imam who, as we have already emphasized, is divinely ordained to hold his office.

The Imam of the Head of State never becomes *functus officio* in the sense that when he is concealed his representatives become operative and spread the light. As a matter of fact, both sects, the 12ers and the Isma‘ilites, believe in the continuity of the office of the Imam. There can be no vacuum so far as the performance of the functions pertaining to the Imamate is

concerned. There may be and sometimes a long period between the death of one prophet and the birth of another, but during this period the Imam continues to perform his functions in the light of revelation.

It is believed that every Prophet had an Imam to whom he revealed the truth. Technically, the Prophet is called natiq and the Imam as sumit.

It is admitted that, although revelation is only vouchsafed to the prophet, it is interpreted and enforced by the Imam, since the esoteric meanings of the revelation are known to him alone. During the Fatimid period, 'Ali, the fourth Caliph, was given the place of asas or the foundation of the Imamate and was, thus, raised to a position above all other Imams.

In the theocratic State envisaged by the Isma'ilites every Imam has a chief minister who is termed Bab (the door, the gate). He is the intermediary between the Imam and the inner circle of preachers. All information sought to be conveyed to the Imam is conveyed through the Bab and all orders passed by the Imam are communicated to the persons concerned by the same Bab. It is on record that Hassan Sabbah claimed that he had been refused permission to see the Imam on account of the fact that Badr, the Bab, and the minister of Mustansir would not allow him to do so.

The Isma'elite creed emphasizes the importance of cycles. Obviously, one source of revelation is not sufficient to lead humanity to the true path. Therefore, there have been cycles of revelations, each introduced by a prophet or natiq succeeded by six Imams. The seventh initiates a new cycle and really ranks as a prophet.

This is the reason why Isma'il is held in such reverence by the Isma'ilites: he completes the cycle which began with Prophet Mohammad and introduces a new one.

Salvation of mankind depends upon recognizing the basic principle that must identify the Imam and take the oath of allegiance (bai'ah) to him. Those who do not recognize the Imam remain in a state of sin.

It has been mentioned that the Shi'ites believe in the doctrine of the sinlessness of the Imam. It has also been stated that Isma'ilites, more than any other Shi'ite sect, accept unflinchingly the conclusions which are attendant upon this belief. In other words, if it be proved beyond any shadow of doubt by unimpeachable evidence that Isma'il was observed drinking wine, the Isma'ilites would argue that since the Imam is incapable of committing a sin his wine-drinking must be considered to be an act which is capable of an esoteric interpretation (ta'wil).

As a matter of fact, the basis of the Isma'elite creed, as it crystallized under Fatimids of Egypt, is the belief that there are two aspects of knowledge, namely, the apparent or manifest (zahir) and the esoteric or inner (batin). The zahir of the Qur'an is tanzil while the batin is the ta'wil. The exoteric meaning is known to the Prophet who imparts knowledge to his Imam. The Imam then spreads the light through his representatives, "Every person who wishes to belong to the Da'wat enters into covenant with him (the Imam), on behalf of God. This is called bai'ah. Man and woman must both take a like oath in a ceremony known as mithaq. They must quite justly oppose everything that is unlawful...and keep secret those things and the religious knowledge which are entrusted to them. Obedience

to all the dictates of religion is the most important duty of the Faithful. Salvation can be attained only through obedience completed in word, action, desire and thought.”

Whereas the Sunnis and the 12ers (Ithna ‘Ashariyyah) have commentaries relating to the meaning of the Qur’an, the Isma‘ilites do not and cannot possess any such works.

Ivanow has it that in Isma‘ilism there is no such thing as a work of Tafsir (commentary on the Qur’an). It would appear that the passages which seem obscure or ambiguous can only be referred to the Imam and whoever has the good fortune to learn the esoteric meaning from the Imam or his representatives is bound to keep such information confidential and secret on account of the oath of allegiance taken by him.

All subjects of a theocratic State, as envisaged by the Isma‘ilites, therefore, are initiated in the mysteries of religion in accordance with their intelligence, capacity, integrity, and loyalty. It is needless to add that if a subject of this theocratic State breaks the oath of allegiance and becomes a convert to any other religion, he is severely punished (provided he is captured).

Until the Fatimid regime came into power the Isma‘ilites, like other Shi‘ite sects, were anxiously waiting for the advent of the Mehdi who would bring peace and prosperity to the world. After the establishment of the Fatimids, the conception of a personal Mehdi as al-qa‘im was changed. Every Caliph of the Fatimid dynasty was named al-qa‘im and thus “the idea of Mehdi became merged, so to speak, in the Imamate, in the dynasty whose mission comes to include the objects which Mehdi was to effect, if not under an Imam, then under one of his successors.”

The theocratic state of the Isma‘ilites enjoins upon all the subjects to wage a holy war (jihad) against the people “who turn away from religion.” The duty to wage war is obligatory, but it is restricted by an important condition: it can be justified only under the guidance either of the Imam or of his accredited representative.

All subjects of this theocratic State believed in the expediency of dissimulation (taqiyyah) although its necessity was reduced almost to nothingness during the regime of the Fatimids. Still taqiyyah is an accepted fact and whenever the Imam is in concealment, his disciples are obliged to practise it so that they may come to no harm. Before the Fatimid regime, even the Imams themselves, practiced taqiyyah, according to authentic evidence endorsed by the Isma‘ilites.

It has been mentioned that the sect of the 12 as well as the Isma‘ilites believe that the only rightful ruler of all territorial possessions of the world is the Imam. Since at a given moment a theocratic Isma‘ilite State may or may not exist, it is the duty of all Isma‘ilites to encourage the preaching of their creed.

The Fatimids paid great attention to the intellectual equipment of a preacher (da‘i). The da‘i was supposed to answer any question that a student or an opponent might ask. He was, therefore, made to study jurisprudence, all branches of Tradition, the philosophical interpretation of the Qur’an, ta‘wil or allegorical meanings, and the art of controversy and dialectics.

The theocratic State of the Isma'īlites established under the Fatimids encouraged the acquisition of knowledge. In a way, it aimed at rationalization of the precepts of religion. It was by arousing the curiosity of the people that the Isma'īli preachers ultimately succeeded in winning them over. It is paradoxical, indeed, that the Isma'īlites, who believed that mere knowledge is not sufficient for the achievement of salvation and that one has to recognize an Imam and follow unstinted in all matters, established seats of learning, schools and universities where the students were encouraged to think for themselves. The Azhar University of Cairo was built by the Fatimids and has continued since then to be regarded as the outstanding educational institution in the entire Muslim world.

The Fatimids also established observatories and libraries and these institutions were accessible to all peoples and classes irrespective of religion or creed. Public gatherings were addressed by learned men in robes which may be regarded as forerunners of the academic gowns worn by professors today. All costs pertaining to these institutions were borne by the Government and for the teaching of different sciences; learned professors were imported from Spain and from the farthest parts of Asia.

It may be said, therefore, that a theocratic State, rigid in its framework and immutable in its convictions, gave birth to rational movements aimed at the correlation of religious precepts with scientific and philosophic truths as known at the time. It became the harbinger of rational thinking, and by encouraging the pursuit of knowledge it gave to learning and letters a new impetus. If we believe Nasir Khusrau, and we have no reason to disbelieve him, the State which was established by the Fatimids had become the centre of all learning and knowledge and from it radiated waves and movements towards different parts of the Muslim world encouraging others to pursue knowledge, to think for themselves, and to ponder over religious matters in the light reason.

It is an amazing co-incidence of history that a theocratic State should give birth to rational thought and should encourage the study of philosophy even collective mental state which is opposed to the rigidity of a truly theocratic State. The Fatimids deserve all honour, therefore, for advancing the cause of their own State and sealing their own doom.

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Note

1. "A spring between Mecca and al-Medina where the Shi'ite tradition asserts the Prophet declared, 'Whomsoever I am lord of, his lord is 'Ali also.'" Ibn Sa'ad, Vol. 5, p 235; Mas'udi, Tanbit, pp. 225 - 56; Philip K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 471, note 1.

Chapter 38: Nizam Al-Mulk Tusi

Nizam al-Mulk Tusi was born in 408/1018¹ and died in 485/1092. He was not only a minister of the Saljuqs for the last 30 years of his life, a scholar,² and a patron of arts and sciences, but also the founder³ of the famous university styled after his name the Nizamiyyah.

He lived in an age which witnessed the lowest degradation of the caliphate, following its transformation during a period of three centuries,⁴ from a democracy into an autocracy and from autocracy into a mere puppetry in the hands of powerful masters. That period also saw the fall of the Ghaznawid Empire and the Buwaihid Kingdom, and the rise of the Saljuqs after their victory over the Ghaznawids in 431/1040, when their nomadic life changed into the life of a gigantic empire, extending from the Oxus and Jaxartos to the Bosphorus. It was an age of change and fusion of social and political ideas and institutions, especially in that part of the Muslim world in which Nizam al-Mulk lived and worked.

The rise of the Persian element in political power in the early period of the ‘Abbasids was followed by a gradual revival of the Persian political institutions under the patronage of the Samanids, the Ghaznawids, and then of the Saljuqs. These institutions in their turn, together with their theoretical foundations, came to be assimilated by Muslim thought. For this assimilation, no battle of ideas was ever fought, it came as a process of cultural development in which Nizam al-Mulk stood as one of the representatives of Persian culture, with a bias towards Islamic thought.

Nizam al-Mulk was not really his name. It was a title of honour conferred upon him by his Saljuq master, Alp Arslan, after his appointment as a minister. His name was Abu ‘Ali Hassan, and his father’s name was Abu al-Hassan ‘Ali, who belonged to a family of landowners (dihqans)⁵ of Radhkan,⁶ a small town in the suburb of Tus where Nizam al-Mulk was born. In the days of the Ghaznawids his father was appointed a tax-collector of Tus by Abu al-Fadl Suri, who was the Governor of Khurasan.⁷

His early education started with the study of Tradition (Hadith) and jurisprudence (Fiqh), and as his father wanted him to take up the legal profession for his future career; he was put under the care of ‘Abd al-Samad Funduraji,⁸ who was a profound scholar of Law.⁹

In the famous “Tale of the Three School Fellows,” it is related of him that in his school days in Nishapur, where he was sent to attend the lectures of Imam Muwaffaq, he made friends with two boys, who later became eminent personalities. One was ‘Umar Khayyam, the great poet and astronomer, and the other Hassan b. Sabbab, the founder of the Batiniyyah sect of the Assassins. Research by the late Sayyid Sulaiman Nadawi makes it unnecessary to discuss this controversial point¹⁰ of Nizam al-Mulk’s life. This tale, he proves, is a fabrication.

From what the author of Tarikh-i Baihaqi relates about Nizam’s family on the reliable authority of his grandfather Shaikh al-Islam Amirak, who had seen Nizam al-Mulk in his boyhood, it may be concluded that it was after he had reached the age of maturity and not in his early years, and after his father had been relieved of financial worries¹¹ that he was able to attend Imam Muwaffaq’s lectures in order to complete his higher studies.

His studies over, he travelled to Bukhara and Merv, and to a number of towns¹² in Transoxiana, most probably in search of a post, and after 441/1049¹³ he went to Ghaznah, where he sought service with the Gaznawids, thus getting an opportunity to acquaint himself with their administration. When Sultan ‘Abd al-Rashid was murdered in 444/1052 and the political affairs were upset, he escaped to Balkh and entered the service of ‘Ali b. Shadhan,¹⁴ who was then the governor of that province on behalf of the Saljuq ruler Chaghari Beg Dawud. Annoyed with the habits of this man, who extorted heavy sums from him every year,¹⁵ he fled to Merv.

Once there, Chaghari Beg appointed him the mushir (counsellor) and the katib (secretary)¹⁶ of his son, Alp Arslan. It was on the advice of ‘Ali b. Shadhan¹⁷ that Alp Arslan, after his accession to the throne in 455/1062, raised him to the position of a Joint Minister with ‘Amid al-Mulk Kunduri. But Kunduri was soon deposed and then put to death, it is said,¹⁸ on the advice of Nizam al-Mulk, who had then become the full-fledged Prime Minister of the Saljuq Empire.

He became the real master of the whole realm with the succession of Malik-shah to his father’s throne in 465/1072, which he owed entirely to Nizam al-Mulk’s efforts.¹⁹ From the capital of the Saljuqs, his influence spread to the capital of the ‘Abbasid Caliph, who is said to have dignified him with the title of Radi-u Amir al-Mu’minin, never before conferred on a vizier.²⁰ He had done much to stabilize the power of the Saljuqs, and to improve their administration, and, therefore, when Malik shah once threatened him with dismissal he dare to reply that the kingship was linked with his vizierate.²¹

In his last days, he came into collision with the Isma‘iliyyah movement of Hassan b. Sabbah, in whose activities he saw danger to the Saljuq Empire. He had actually once deputed Abu Muslim Radi to arrest Hassan,²² but Abu Muslim was himself assassinated by one of the fida’is (the Assassins) in 485/1092.

It will be in place here to refer to the two Persian works of Nizam al-Mulk, which are the chief sources for the study of his political ideas: the *Siyasat Nameh* (The Book on State-craft) and the *Dastur al-Wuzara’* (The Conduct of Ministers) or, as it is more generally known, the *Wasaya-i Khuwaja Nizam al-Mulk* (The Precepts of Khuwaja Nizam al-Mulk). He is said to have written yet another work entitled as *Safar Nameh* (The Book of Travels) which is now extinct.²³

Certain changes and additions may have been made to the original text in a later period, but the *Siyasat Nameh* has generally been recognized as the genuine composition of Nizam al-Mulk himself. There has been some controversy among scholars about the authenticity of the *Wasaya* on account of the doubtful “Tale of the Three School Fellows,” which has been set out in detail in the preface of the treatise. There is no need to revive this half a century old controversy²⁴ as it has nothing to do with the study of his political thought.

The *Wasaya* is not claimed to be the composition of Nizam al-Mulk himself in the sense in which the *Siyasat Nameh* is considered to be his work. It was compiled in the ninth/15th²⁵ century by an anonymous person

whose family, as he claims in the preface, descended from Nizam al-Mulk. He compiled it partly from the books and partly from the oral traditions handed down in his own family.²⁶ Therefore, the anecdotes cited in it begin invariably with the phrase, "So says Khuwaja Nizam al-Mulk."

The preface, which is one of the reliable sources of Nizam al-Mulk's life, is evidently from the pen of the compiler. But the other two chapters, which form the main part of the work and contain much valuable material on the political ideas of this famous vizier, are composed from his own authentic writings and utterances. It has been justly remarked²⁷ that there is no internal evidence in the main part of the work to show that it does not owe its contents to his pen. A large part of the *Wasaya* may be regarded as the actual utterances of Nizam al-Mulk.²⁸

We are fortunate in having these two important works of Nizam al-Mulk representing his thoughts about kingship and vizierate, which were the two political institutions of primary importance in his days. The *Siyasat Nameh*, which is the exposition of his theory of kingship, was originally written to serve as a "monarch's primer."²⁹ It is said that in 484/1091³⁰ Sultan Malikshah (r. 465 - 1072/485/1092) instructed some of his dignitaries to think over the state of affairs in his realm and write down the principles of conduct that were followed by monarchs in the past, and were required to be observed by himself.³¹

The treatise of Nizam al-Mulk among the works presented to the Sultan was the only one which he approved of and adopted as a guide (imam).³² But it must not be treated as a mere handbook of day-to-day administration, nor must it be regarded as containing simply practical suggestions for the improvement of an administrative system. It is more than that. It is, in fact, the expression of a realistic political theory which emerges out of an actual political situation, and, therefore, helps us to understand the stage in the development of Muslim polity reached in the fifth/11th century.

The *Wasaya* is the exposition of his theory of vizierate. It consists of the counsels which he is said to have addressed in the "last days of his life,"³³ to his eldest son, Fakhr al-Mulk, who also held the office of vizier under the Saljuq Sultans Barkiyaruq and Sanjuar, and was assassinated, like his father, by a Batini³⁴ in 500/1106.

It is fairly easy to present Nizam al-Mulk as one who largely differs from the past writers of political treatises and from his contemporaries, both in his selection of the political institutions which form the subject matter of his writings, and in his approach to those institutions. The method adopted by him in explaining the principles of State administration throws light on his outlook and about the political situation in his days. His approach and outlook regarding the political problems are, indeed, inter-related.

A modern scholar, author of a pioneer work on Muslim political thought, regards his method as "historical." "If it is possible," he writes, "to label the Khuwaja's method with any particular epithet, it is that his method is, to a large extent, historical."³⁵ He considers it historical because "in nearly every case he proves the truth of a principle which he chooses to propound, on the touchstone of tradition or historical facts, though some of the facts he relates are not chronologically correct."³⁶

But it is in a limited sense that his approach can be regarded as historical. It is true that he makes reiterated references to history. But this is not all that makes the historical method what it really is. This method does not consist exclusively in citing historical instances. That is only a preliminary. The historical method consists basically in drawing conclusions objectively from the study of historical facts. The political maxims which Nizam al-Mulk lays down as the guiding principles for the successful administration of the State, are, in fact, the inductive generalizations from the study of history.

They are, indeed, empirical conclusions drawn from his personal experience of practical politics and from his observation of existing conditions. "No event," he believes, "ever happens to take place in the world which might not have occurred already several times. As one might have read, or known, or heard about the circumstances a particular event had brought in, one can surmise the consequences that would follow it in case it happens to occur again."³⁷

In effect he is arguing that history repeats itself, but instead of proceeding from the past to the present he follows a reverse course when he first draws conclusions from the observation of the conditions around him and then turns them back upon the past. History, for him, is not the solution of problems, but the endorser of pre-conceived solutions. The essence of his approach to the political issue lies in the blood of the historical method and the method of observation. Though not very successful in following the historical method, he may be regarded as the most historically-minded writer on political topics both among his predecessors and his contemporaries.

This treatment of history squares well with the object with which he proceeds to formulate a particular political theory. He is concerned with theorizing those institutions and their principles and problems which had developed into an actual political constitution, resting mainly on the Sultanate (kingship) and the vizierate, and to bring them to their possible perfection by suggesting practical reforms. He makes ample use of the past and contemporary history to give his personal ideas the appearance of historical facts.

The political institutions of which he speaks had real roots in the political life of the peoples who inhabited a large part of the eastern lands of the 'Abbasid Caliphate, mostly non-Arab races. Most of those institutions had existed there long before the Great Saljuqs came to adopt them, and still much earlier than they could find their theoretical exposition in the writings of Nizam al-Mulk. The absolute monarchy, for instance, the office of vizierate, the monarchical form of administration of justice, the feudal system, the order of courtiers, the system of espionage, etc., were the institutions handed down by ancient Persia to the successive generations.

Though modified in some respects under the influence of the new Muslim political theory, those political institutions had, nevertheless, succeeded in preserving much of their original Persian character, and exerting, in their turn, a good deal of influence both on the political thought of the indigenous people even after their conversion to Islam as well as on the political system, largely of Persian origin, that Nizam al-Mulk seeks to

set out. This makes us look upon his writings as the earliest exposition of what may be called the Persian political theory.

Side by side with this political theory, but with different notions and with a different approach to political problems, there existed the constitutional theory of the Arab jurists of whom Mawardi³⁸ (c. 364/974 - 450/1058), the author of the *Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah*, was the most eminent. Among this small group of jurists mention must be made of Abu Ya'la (380/990 - 450/1066), a contemporary of Mawardi, and author of another *Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah*,³⁹ and of Imam al-Haramain al-Juwaini (419/1028 - 478/1085), an intimate friend⁴⁰ of Nizam al-Mulk, whose treatise *Ghiyath al-Umam*⁴¹ has not yet seen the light of day. (As political thinkers, the two have not yet been properly studied by students of the history of Muslim constitutional theory.⁴²)

While the Persian political theory attempts to throw light on the sovereign powers of the king, by analysing the institutions characteristic of this royal office, the constitutional theory puts forward the doctrine of Caliphate. It will be in place here to look into the general nature of the juristic approach to the political problems, and more especially to the institution of kingship, which Nizam al-Mulk also treats, with even greater interest. This will help us to appreciate the realistic element in his thought and approach.

In the first instance, these two sets of contemporary theories, one of the jurists and the other of an administrator, differ in their subject matter. A comparison of the contents of the two treatises of Nizam al-Mulk with those, for example, of the *Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah* of Mawardi, would hardly make one regard the two writers as dealing with the problem and institutions of the same political community living in the same age.

Of the office of the Khalifah, his powers and qualifications, the method of his election, the division of vizierate between the unlimited vizierate (*wizarat tanfidh*), the legal difference between their powers, the economic institutions of *jizyah* (poll tax), *zakat* (tax on the accumulated property), *fai'* (goods taken from non-believers), *kharaj* (land tax), and of so many other institutions of religio-political character, which from the chapter heads of the *Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah*, the author of the *Siyasat Nameh* and the *Wasaya* makes no mention at all, and, likewise, most of the topics discussed by Nizam al-Mulk have been avoided by Mawardi and other jurists, except the offices of the Sultan and vizier, which they treat on a different plane of thought. In their constitutional theory, the Sultan occupies a position which is quite different from what he actually enjoyed in the political set-up of those days.

To treat the Sultan as a governor by usurpation (*amir bi al-istila*) is to bring him down to the position of the other provincial governors appointed by the Caliph. This amounts to arguing, as they seem to do, that the Sultan did actually derive his powers from the "Imperial" authority of the Caliph. They leave actual facts out of account by putting the main emphasis on the formal legitimization of the Sultan's authority by the Khalifah, which was but an insignificant aspect of their mutual relations. In doing so, they are apt

to lose sight of his sovereign powers, which he enjoyed independently of the Caliph's assent.

This limitation of the juristic approach to contemporary politics was bound to arise from the fact that its exponents were building their argument on the foundations of the political order of the Caliphate, which had ceased to exist as a real force for about 200 years. Deprived of any real power to shape the political life of Muslims, the Caliphate, as a political system, continued to exist in theory, which found its elaborate exposition in the writings of the juristic school of the fifth/11th century.

But by interpreting the political fiction of the Caliphate in terms of political realities of their times, these jurists, regardless of the actual facts, were indoctrinating the people with the belief that the caliph was still the real source of all authority.

They were, thus, unable to appreciate the fact that it was the autocratic rule of the independent prince, and not that of the 'Abbasid Caliph, under which the people had actually been living, and they failed to see that by legitimizing the authority of the Sultan, the Caliph only recognized his de facto sovereignty, and that this in practice did not render him sub-ordinate to the Caliph. Their juristic theory could not take into full account the growth of absolute monarchy in the Muslim polity upon which a formidable political structure had come to rest.

It is this monarchical system of government developing under the aristocratic rule of the prince, as against the constitutional structure of the Caliphate, which Nizam al-Mulk attempts to study. His political theory represents a particular phase of the development of the Muslim polity which was characterized by kingship. As such, it is an essential part of his contribution to Muslim political thought.

The first thing remarkable about his exposition of the institution of kingship is that he is careful to make no reference to the Khalifah as the head of the Muslim community, and to say nothing about the constitutional relations of the Saljuq ruler with the 'Abbasid Caliph. He rarely uses the title of Sultan for the Saljuq King,⁴³ and as for the term *amir muslauli* (governor by usurpation), it does not occur at all through his writings, both being the terms of the constitutional law employed by the jurists to denote the legal superiority of the caliph over the prince. Instead, he generally calls his ruler *padshah* - a Persian term for the king. All this may reasonably be taken as a conscious effort on the part of Nizam al-Mulk to avoid any discussion or even a phrase which might involve any reference to the legal relations of the Caliph and the prince, for his object in studying the monarchical constitution of the Saljuq Empire is to represent his royal master in his full independent position.

To this political objective his *Siyasat Nameh* was expressly dedicated, for it was composed at the instance of the great Saljuq ruler, Malik-shah, as the *Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah*, the earliest treatise on the constitutional theory of the Caliphate had been written by Mawardi only 40 years before at the instance of an 'Abbasid Caliph⁴⁴ to vindicate his claim to sovereign authority. This indicates the existence of a theoretical conflict between the

powers of the Caliph and the king, which of course has been prompted by the historical events which preceded it.

Conscious of the growing weakness of the Buwaihid dynasty in the beginning of the fifth/11th century, the 'Abbasid Caliph Qadir (381/991 - 422/1031) and his successor Qa'im (422/1031 - 407/1075), during whose rules the juristic theory of the Caliphate was formulated, attempted to achieve independence from the tutelage of the Buwaihids.⁴⁵ On the other hand, the Saljuqs, too, who had succeeded both the Buwaihids and the Ghaznawids after over-throwing their power, were no less keen to assert the authority they had established at the point of the sword.

In spite of acknowledging the nominal authority of the Khalifah,⁴⁶ who, in turn, had legitimized their rule and conferred upon them titles of honour,⁴⁷ the Saljuqs did not hesitate to inflict humiliation upon him whenever it was demanded by the political situation. Kunduri, the vizier of Tughril Beg (d. 455/1062), is said to have with-held the pension of the Caliph on his refusal to marry his daughter to the Suljuq prince.⁴⁸ On another occasion, Malik shah is said to have intended to banish the Caliph al-Muqtadi from Baghdad.⁴⁹

Under this situation it was not possible for Nizam al-Mulk to make any mention of the Khalifah without recognizing him as the supreme authority over his Saljuq prince. This would have been inconsistent with the objective he had in mind in writing his treatise.

His effort to avoid any discussion of the legal or political relations of the Caliph and the king is significant. He is seeking to defend his prince against the theoretical encroachment on his independent position by the advocates of the Caliph's authority.

From the outset Nizam al-Mulk seems to have taken it for granted that the real source from which the king derives his authority, in theory or in practice, is not the institution of the Caliphate. That point has been removed from the plan of discussion. The reason is not far to seek. As it was inconsistent with his political ends to recognize the Caliph as the supreme authority, so an explicit refutation of his claims in this respect would have made Nizam al-Mulk unnecessarily provoke a controversy about the powers of the two offices. To this dilemma he finds a solution in what may be called in modern language the theory of divine right - the theory that the king enjoys the right to rule over his subjects by virtue of divine appointment.

This becomes obvious from the study of the first chapters in the *Siyasat Nameh*, which mainly explain the divine nature of this institution, and its functions ordained by God. He puts it in very clear words when he says, "In every age God selects one from amongst mankind and adorns him with princely skills, and entrusts him with the affairs of the world and the comfort of the subjects."⁵⁰ This is the remarkably simplified hypothesis of his theory of kingship; he does not argue to prove it, but simply states it as a self-evident truth.

This proposition, as advanced by Nizam al-Mulk, suffers theological weakness common to all the expositions of the divine right theory which set out this hypothesis as a *fait accompli*, to be simply accepted rather than to

be argued. It is indeed a dogmatic belief rather than a rational proposition. It is, however, important for our purpose, because it serves to explain how Nizam al-Mulk comes to expound a political theory which is out and out a vindication of autocracy, and how he is led from the outset to reject the democratic principles and enunciated by the advocates of the Caliphate.

After explaining the nature of the king's appointment, Nizam al-Mulk discusses the purposes of kingship in a political community. He argues the *raison d'être* of this institution, and throws more light on its divine nature. The essential function which the king has to fulfil in human society is to bring order of chaos, and to maintain peace and justice. This is what he means when he says, "If the people show any sign of disobedience or contempt towards the Shari'ah (the Canon-Law), or if they fail to obey God and to comply with His commands, then he intends to inflict punishment on them for their conduct...Due to their sin they bring this wrath upon themselves.

Benevolent kinds disappear from amongst them. Swords are drawn and blood-shed follows, and whosoever is powerful does as he pleases, until the sinners to one of the people whom God by His grace blesses with success according to his worth, and endows with wisdom and knowledge.⁵¹

Then Nizam al-Mulk goes on to say that the ultimate object to which the king should direct his efforts is to create and maintain wholesome conditions so "that the people may live with comfort under the shadow of his justice."⁵²

It amounts to a sort of "mystical" interpretation of historical changes, bringing about the rise and fall of rulers. The king has been represented here as an instrument of God's will, fulfilling a divine function in political upheavals. It is the punishment for their disobedience that people are first deprived by the Almighty of the benevolent king. Then His wrath takes the shape of calamities and upheavals. And it is again by His mercy that a man rises to the position of a sovereign and brings about peace and order. Thus, in this divine order of political society all things proceed from God's will, and it is from His supreme authority that the king derives his powers.

While speaking of the monarch who succeeds in establishing his rule by subduing the warring elements and in executing God's will by bringing peace and tranquility to the people, Nizam al-Mulk is not unmindful of the victorious career of the Saljuq dynasty, which had risen to sovereign position by its own strength and successfully established an orderly government. This becomes clear when he says that it is by divine providence that his Saljuq master has been destined to rule his subjects.⁵³

This implies that the king's authority rests, in the first place, on direct authorization from God and, in the second place, on his own ability to gain political power in which he is helped by God the Almighty. He is equally emphatic on the principle of hereditary kingship, which is always an essential part of the divine right doctrine. According to him, the kingly office is essentially of divine origin as well as hereditary, and should pass, like the kingship in ancient Persia, from father to son.⁵⁴ And it is according to this principle that his Saljuq prince, he claims, has inherited this dignified office from his great ancestors.⁵⁵

Nizam al-Mulk's vindication of the claims of the king to sovereign powers is based on a three-fold justification, namely, the divine sanction, the conquest of power, and the hereditary succession. He later states this more clearly in an anecdote in which Nushirwan, the Persian King, has been shown as asserting his eligibility to the throne in a royal speech addressed to his feudatories, "First, this kingship has been bestowed upon me by God the Almighty, secondly, I have inherited it from my father, thirdly,...I have recaptured the kingdom by the sword."⁵⁶

It is obvious now that in explaining the nature of the supreme authority in the political community, he takes the position of a legitimist" who believes not in human choice, but in divine appointment and hereditary succession.

This exposition of kingship is significant from yet another point of view. There is more in it than the mere explanation of the divine origin of the king's powers. It may be regarded as an effort of Nizam al-Mulk to seek moral justification for the passive obedience which the monarch has the right to demand from his subjects, and also for his unlimited authority to control the administration and political life of the people. The two are correlative to each other and follow as corollaries from this legitimist doctrine. This helps us to understand the relation between ruler and subjects as envisaged in his political theory.

He lays great emphasis on obedience as the most essential duty of the people towards the ruler, since he brings to them peace and prosperity after they have been deprived of it as a punishment for their disobedience to God. This has been stated more explicitly in another work, the *Wasaya*, in which he discusses the question of obedience to royal authority. "No doubt," he says, "it is but obligatory to worship the Almighty, and to obey the king. The common people generally, and the royal favourites and courtiers particularly are under the obligation of such obedience, and more especially one who has been entrusted with authority in the matters of administration and finance."⁵⁷

The king is entitled to receive obedience from his subjects as a divinely appointed authority. Nizam al-Mulk asserts that the very fact that the king succeeds in establishing his rule is sufficient to make us regard his authority as resting on the divine sanction. Without the aid of God Almighty," he argues, "an individual can never become a ruler, nor can he bring the world into the bondage of subjugation. Though there might be several causes of his rise to political power, they all refer undoubtedly to the same divine help."⁵⁸

The gist of this remarkably simplified contention is that it is the duty of the people to obey the prince without questioning the validity of his authority: it is valid as *de facto*. A *de facto* ruler may be unjust and may put the country into disorder, but Nizam al-Mulk, like a true legitimist, is careful to avoid this question as it ultimately involves the right of the people to resist a ruler who is doing wrong to them. If confusion and disorder ever take place in a political society, he attempts to interpret it as resulting not from the misrule of the monarch but from the sinful acts of the people themselves.

It is, therefore, by remaining obedient to the king that they can enjoy peace and prosperity which is restored to them under his rule. The king can rightly inflict punishment upon those who, “not realizing the value of security and comfort,” might revolt against his authority.⁵⁹ There is no doubt that Nizam al-Mulk believes in the principle of passive and unconditional obedience on the part of the people, and leaves them without any moral right to resist the royal authority.

A political theory like this, with the belief in the divine appointment of the king, coupled with the principle of passive obedience by the people, can result only in the advocacy of absolute monarchy. The prince of whom Nizam al-Mulk is speaking here is surely an absolute monarch in that his powers are unrestricted by any human power. The only authority which could claim, at least in theory, a certain amount of legal right to impose any obligations on a Muslim prince as the ‘Abbasid Caliph, to whom, we have seen Nizam al-Mulk avoids making any reference in this respect.

It is obvious from his attempt to explain the administrative system with constant reference to the royal office that the monarch is the sovereign authority in his realm, and, as such, is the source of all political power, all are sub-ordinate to him, and are endowed by him with powers and privileges according to their capability. In spite of representing the king as directly responsible for the welfare of the whole country, Nizam al-Mulk does not regard him as accountable to the people for his political conduct. On the question of the kings’ responsibility in public affairs he seems to take again the position of the people, but before God. That, however, has not been laid down expressly, and has to be concluded only indirectly from the statements in which, for example, he says that on the Day of Judgment the king will be summoned before God to answer for his conduct towards his subjects,⁶⁰ and that the government officials are accountable to the king, and the king in his turn is responsible to the Almighty.⁶¹

What Nizam al-Mulk is attempting to set out here is indeed the concept of absolute monarchy. At this point he comes much nearer to the Persian idea of kingship and the Shi’ite doctrine of imamah (the leadership of political community), both founded on the divine right of the Head of the State, than to the constitutional theory of the Sunni Arab jurists, which was based on democratic principles. An absolute monarch claiming direct authorization from God to manage the affairs of a political society was an idea quite foreign to Arab thinkers. The Khalifah had always been regarded by them, at least in theory, as an elected functionary⁶² to whom powers were delegated, not directly by God, but by the electors. They, therefore, held that the Khalifah was subject to certain legal restrictions. This democratic idea of Caliphate is in striking contrast with the Persian notion of absolute monarchy revived in Nizam al-Mulk’s political theory.

It would not be wrong to suppose that this concept of a divinely appointed ruler came to him mainly from the political system of ancient Persia, and not from the contemporary Shi’ite doctrine,⁶³ which, as systematically evolved under the Fatimid rule in Egypt, was definitely a much later development in comparison with the Persian concept. This is obvious from his repeated references to the political principle on which the

monarchical constitution in ancient Persia was based, but he makes no such references to the political ideas of the Shi'ites, of whose political activities in the form of Batini movement he is, on the contrary, vehemently critical.⁶⁴ But it must be admitted at the same time that his exposition of divine right is lacking both in philosophical depth and systematic treatment with which this doctrine was set out in the Fatimid dogmatics.

The reason for imitating the Persian model of kingship is to be sought in his contemporary historical conditions. On the one hand, he is expressing, as pointed out before, the popular idea of kingship prevailing in the territories conquered by the Saljuqs, and, on the other hand, he is seeking to replace the Turkish concept of tribal leadership by the Persian ideal of absolute monarchy.

The peculiar conditions under which he had to work out his political theory, made the adoption of autocratic rule inevitable. The institution of Khanat, that is, the tribal leadership among the Saljuqs, had largely become inconsistent with the stage of political power under tribal customs, their Khan was far from having any territorial basis for his authority, with the result that their tribal system of government was found inadequate to cope with the problems of the large territorial empire which they had come to rule. The Empire they had inherited from the Ghaznawids and the Buwaihids was far vaster than the territory hitherto known to them, and more advanced in political principles as compared with their own tribal customs. Despite the large powers that were conferred upon the Khan by the tribal system, he was regarded much more the leader of a large tribe, than as a sovereign in the proper sense.

There were other "minor leaders" of small groups of families who, at least in the early stage of their political career, could lay claim to political power derived not from the "major" tribal leader but from the tribal customary law. It was not until the reign of Malik shah, the third ruler of the great Saljuq dynasty, that the Saljuq prince could become a real autocratic mind⁶⁵ in all State affairs throughout the reign of Alp Arslan and Malik shah, who was mainly responsible for altering their nomadic tribal political organization to harmonize with the requirements of a territorial empire. He converted their power into a centralized autocratic authority essential for successful government in his time.

What he is attempting now in his writings by theorizing about kingship and its institutional organization is to provide the Saljuq monarchy with a theoretical basis. He is seeking, moreover, to shape it on the model of Persian kingship about which he had read in the "works of the ancients" (kutub-i pishinagan),⁶⁶ and had seen revived in the monarchical constitution of the Ghaznawids. To him this Persian monarchy, with its autocratic principles, was more adaptable to the new circumstances than any other type of institution which was founded on democratic principles.

Only an absolute monarchy, he thinks, can vigorously deal with the nomad Turkumans and the petit leaders of the Ghuzz tribes in subduing their power to a centralized authority. Therefore, he advises his prince that "God Almighty has created the king most powerful of all people, and all are sub-ordinate to him. It is from that they take their subsistence money and

their position. He should treat them in such a way that they always realize their position, and may not throw off the bondage of allegiance, and, moreover, they should not be allowed to do whatever they like; they should do only what they have been ordered to do.”⁶⁷ His aim in stressing the absolute superiority of the king is to introduce a central authority with autocratic powers in the political system of the Saljuqs, the majority of whom were not yet fully accustomed to this principle of government and administration.

To imitate the Persian absolute monarchy was also useful in tackling the problems of the growing “feudal system” in the Saljuq Empire. The Persian institution of kingship had a record of feudal traditions, and could furnish the Saljuqs with the laws applicable in many respects to their relation with the feudatories and the subjects.

The system of land assignment - what Nizam al-Mulk calls the *iqta‘ dari*⁶⁸ - may be regarded undoubtedly as the Eastern form of feudalism as against the feudalism of medieval Europe. To a great extent, Nizam al-Mulk may be considered responsible for developing, if not for introducing, it on systematic lines within the political structure of the Saljuq Empire. It was due to the military organization of the Saljuqs, on which their political structure ultimately came to rest, together with the problems of revenue administration, that the practice of assigning fiefs (*iqta‘ s*) to the military chiefs, soldiers, and to other private persons was adopted. There were also the *dihqans*, the old Persian land-owners, who continued to exercise proprietary rights as before. This system, in brief, was designed as a means of paying the soldiers and of collecting revenues.

The principles on which Nizam al-Mulk suggests that the *iqta‘ dari* should be based develop it into a feudal system very different from the Western feudalism, both in character and in social and political consequences. It is basically different in the tenure of the feudatories, in their legal rights over the land and the *ra‘iyyah* (vassals) as well as in the relation of the king as the over-lord with the *muqta‘ s* (feudatories), on the one hand, and with the subjects, on the other, and with the subjects, strictly hereditary as a general rule. There is nothing in his writing to suggest that he is in favour of assigning lands to an individual with a specified legal right to transmit it by inheritance.

On the other hand, in his system the feudatories come to occupy a position more akin to that of the tax-collectors with large administrative powers than that of the “feudal lords,” in the medieval sense. In their relations with the vassals they are like the *shihnahs* (guards, and in case a feudatory fails to treat them well, “the fief, it is suggested, must be withdrawn from him.”⁶⁹ Besides, “the officials and the feudatories must be changed every two to three years so that they may not get strong enough in their fortifications.”⁷⁰

It appears that side by side with developing the *iqta‘* system, Nizam al-Mulk attempts to enlarge the powers of the king as a means of checking the centrifugal tendencies which tend to appear in feudalism. This leads him to put forward a theory of land ownership which goes well with his idea of absolute monarchy. He holds that “the feudatories who hold the fiefs must

know that civility and courtesy the lawful amount which has been assigned to them, i.e., to the feudatories, and when that has been taken, the subjects shall be secure in their persons, property, wives, and children, and in their goods and estates....They must know that the land and the subjects all belong to the king, and the feudatories and the governors (walis), set over their head, are like the guards to the subjects, as the king is to others.”⁷¹

In entertaining such a view regarding land ownership, Nizam al-Mulk departs from what may be regarded as the Islamic theory, which attributes the absolute ownership of land, not to the Head of the State, but to the State itself, as entrusted to by God. It is also a clear departure from the traditional concept of the Ghuzz tribes, who looked upon the land that they would come to occupy as the common property of their families. It was this tribal concept of land ownership of Nizam al-Mulk was seeking to modify basically, as it was out of tune with the administrative principle of a centralized empire which had now passed into their hands. To him it was essential to bring both the land and the subjects under the central authority of the king.

A good deal of his theory, it appears, has come to him from the old feudal Persia. This is evident from his attempt to explain this principle by an anecdote from Persian history in which the famous vizier Buzurjmihr has been represented as advising Nushirwan that “the kingdom (wilayah) belongs to the king (malik), and the king has entrusted the dominion, and not the subjects, to the military. When the military is not well wishing unto the kingdom, and kind to the people...and takes the power to arrest and imprison...and to appoint and dismiss, what difference then remains between the king and the military, for that power really belongs to the king, and not to the military.”⁷² On another occasion Nushirwan exhorts his feudatories to treat the people well, and only to take from them what is due and just, and he stresses the fact that the dominion belongs to him, and it is by him that the estates have been assigned to them.⁷³

Nizam al-Mulk’s feudal theory takes away much of the powers from the hands of feudal lords which they enjoyed, for instance, in Western feudalism. It leaves them with limited power to collect the revenues, and to have only “a fixed amount in their hands.”⁷⁴ Moreover, it removes them from the position of being the sole intermediaries between the king and the subjects, preventing the latter from getting into direct contact with him.⁷⁵ In his system, the direct responsibility for the well-being of the subjects rests not with the feudatories, but with the king, and, therefore, he suggests that the king should send spies (jasusan) and special confidants (khwās)⁷⁶ to inquire secretly about administration in the fiefs in order to get reliable information about the condition of the subjects, and urges him to dismiss a feudatory who forbids subjects to represent their cases to the king in order to seek redress for grievances.⁷⁷

All this results in the concentration of all the political administrative powers, as sought by Nizam al-Mulk, in the central authority of the king which was once enjoyed by the Persian autocrat.

Though his idea of kingship is in essence of Persian origin, it differs in certain respects from the Old Persian prototype, and has been refashioned in

other respects under the influence of Muslim political theory and practice. It is, on the whole, an attempt to readjust the Persian model with the contemporary social and political structure.

The most important point of difference is that Nizam al-Mulk is not an incarnationist. Unlike the ancients who could look upon their Persian monarch as the incarnation of Divinity,⁷⁸ he treats his ruler as a simple human being. In spite of once calling the prince the “shadow of God on earth” (zill Allah fi al-ard) in the Wasaya⁷⁹ - a phrase which does not occur at all in the Siyasat Nameh - he does not go the extent of clothing him with divine attributes so as to make him appear an embodiment of Divinity. The phrase is devoid here of any mystical meanings, and has been used in the ordinary sense of a metaphor, to mean that the exalted office of the king is like a shadow provided by God on earth under which mankind may find peace and security. No doubt, he speaks of this monarch as “adorned with the virtues and excellences which were lacking by kings all over the world,”⁸⁰ yet there is in him no tendency to regard the king as a super-human being in any metaphysical sense. Among those excellent virtues with which his prince is adorned, he counts, for example, good appearance, justice, courage, generosity, etc.⁸¹ but they are all divinely gifted qualities, not divine attributes. Therefore, his prince is by no means an incarnation of God.

Far from attaching any “mystical” or metaphysical sense to the concept of kingship, he believes that “the king is endowed by God with wisdom and knowledge so that he can treat each of his subjects according to his worth and can give each a position according to his value,”⁸² and, again, “His (i.e. the king’s) wisdom is just like a lamp that gives off abundant light. People can find their way in its light and can come out of darkness,⁸³ and he does not need himself to be guided by others.” We can see his prince bearing a small resemblance both to the philosopher-king⁸⁴ and to the Shi‘ite teacher-Imam,⁸⁵ but suffering from an innate inability to become the true image of either. This seems mainly due to the fact that Nizam al-Mulk is by temperament much more a matter-of-fact exponent of popular ideas than a real philosopher, unable to develop his thoughts into philosophical concepts. He may be taken as possibly expressing a general belief about kingship prevailing in his days, in which the old Persian idea of the divinely-appointed monarch in its moderate form - and not the concept of divine monarch - was superficially inter-mingled with the Neo-Platonic interpretation of the philosopher-king as an embodiment of perfect wisdom. His concept of the king is that of a statesman who is primarily concerned with general beliefs rather than with philosophical generalizations.

His Persian ideal is modified also in another respect, obviously under the direct influence of Muslim thought. Though he treats his prince as a divinely-appointed ruler, invested with unlimited powers, he does not regard him by any means as a law-giver. A human authority with absolute legislative powers has never existed in Muslim polity, because legislation in the proper sense of the term has never been recognized as a human function in the Muslim legal theory. According to this theory, there does already exist a divine Law (Shari‘ah) supreme, eternal, and perfect, which is

theoretically as binding on the ruler himself, however autocratic he may be in practice, as on his subjects. This is what seems to have prevented Nizam al-Mulk from attributing any legislative power to his prince. His king, on the other hand, is subject to the supreme Law of God, and, is, moreover, an instrument for enforcing that law, and for making people abide by it. He emphasizes that it is obligatory for the king to seek knowledge of religion matters and to comply with, and make arrangements to carry out the commands of God and the traditions of the Prophet, and to pay respect to religious scholars.”⁸⁶ Therefore, it is the duty of the ruler to appoint judges (qadis) to execute the Shari‘ah as his deputies (na‘ibin).

This discussion of the ruler’s responsibility in enforcing the Shari‘ah, apart from explaining a principle of Muslim policy, is also interesting for its historical significance in respect of the Saljuqs. This shows Nizam al-Mulk’s attempt to teach the Saljuqs the principles of the Muslim legal system and to familiarize them with the law of the more civilized people of whom they had become the rulers. But his royal masters were altogether strangers to all culture,⁸⁷ and there is no reliable information to prove that they could even read and write. Therefore, books, as the direct source of knowledge of religious Law, were out of their reach. This seems to be the reason why Nizam al-Mulk advises his prince to get himself acquainted with the teachings of religion through the debates of the scholars (‘ulama’) which he should caused to be held occasionally in his presence, once or twice a week. “Thus, one day he will become conversant with most of the laws of the Shari‘ah, the commentary of the Qur’an and the traditions of the Prophet and, thus, the methods of dealing with temporal and religious affairs would become easy for him.”⁸⁸

This discussion leads us at this point to another important question, namely, the place that religion must have, according to Nizam al-Mulk, both in the conduct of a ruler and in the political life of a people, where we can see again that his concept of kingship is modified by the influence of Muslim thought. In spite of his love for the political principles for pre-Islamic Persia, he is essentially a religious-minded man who can believe only in the religious values of social life and enunciated by Islam, and can look upon a political community as dedicated out and out to religious ends. His political theory is made up of reconciliation between the Old Persian ideals and the Muslim political ideology.

To him, in the first place, religion and politics are inseparably joined together and, as such are complementary to each other. “The State (and kingship) and religion,” he believes, “are like two brothers.”⁸⁹ And throughout his writings, the two have been treated in the same spirit. In dealing with them, he closely follows the spirit of Muslim polity which is largely based on the concept of the indivisible unity of religion and politics.

The principles of conduct which he lays down for his king under the influence of this religious trend are in striking contrast with those prescribed by Machiavelli for his prince. Unlike the Machiavellian prince who is advised to handle religion merely as a useful instrument for achieving political ends, and who is taught to appear rather than become religious,⁹⁰ Nizam al-Mulk’s prince is taught to believe sincerely in religious truths, and

to exercise political power as an essential means of attaining them. According to him, both the State and religion are dependent upon each other for their existence; therefore, the king must treat them both alike. “Whenever there is any disorder in the state,” says Nizam al-Mulk, “there is confusion in the religion of its people also, and the heretics and mischief-makers make their appearance. And whenever religious affairs are disturbed, the State is thrown into disorder, the mischief makers grow strong, and heresy makes itself manifest.”⁹¹ He believes that “the most virtuous thing for the king is to uphold the right faith.”⁹² To him a wise and just ruler is one who follows the tenets of religion faithfully, and eradicates heresy from his realm.⁹³

It is obvious that the concern of his prince with religion is not mere politics; it is rather a matter of genuine faith in the religious values of social life. It is an instrument to preserve the State as well as a means of salvation in the life to come.⁹⁴ “The ruler who strives to uphold the faith successfully is entrusted by God with temporal and religious affairs, and his wishes are granted in both worlds.”⁹⁵

This shows how Nizam al-Mulk is at pains to make his prince a religious as well as mundane authority. It is, however, no artificiality with him to blend the religious and temporal powers in one and the same office. With a religious man like him, looking to faith for guidance in the spiritual as well as in the worldly affairs, it is more natural to combine them than to treat them as separate. Besides his own outlook about the relation of religion and politics, which led him to attribute religious function to kingship, there arose a historical situation in which the king came to be regarded not only as a temporal authority but also as a religious functionary. The age of the Caliph, when he was the undisputed leader of the Muslim community, had practically come to a close by this time, giving rise to the power of the independent autocratic monarch to whom the people now looked for leadership, there arose a historical situation in which the king came to be regarded not only as a temporal authority but also as a religious functionary.

The age of the Caliph, when he was the undisputed leader of the Muslim community, had practically come to a close by this time, giving rise to the power of the independent autocratic monarch to whom the people now looked for leadership in all temporal and religious affairs. It will not help much towards appreciating the role this autocrat came to play in the social life of the Muslim people, to suppose about this historical change that, “politically, the Khalifah gave place to the Sultan, that is, a religious executive was replaced by and explicitly independent mundane power.”⁹⁶ It must be admitted that the Muslim world, far from thinking in terms of the separation of State and religion, was definitely at a stage of political development in which, as we have seen, it could still easily believe in their ultimate oneness. The Caliph, therefore, was not held to be simply a religious executive; he was a temporal authority as well, and both functions were intricately inter-woven in his office.

The autocratic prince, who came to fill the void left by the Caliph in the Muslim life with the latter’s downfall, was his heir in both capacities. He was a replica of the Caliph, in almost every respect, save that, like the

Caliph, he was not an elected functionary, and therefore, unlike him, he was in practice an absolute sovereign with no constitutional limitations on his authority, and under no constitutional obligation even in fulfilling his religious functions. Had he been regarded as simply a mundane power, the Muslims living under his rule would have been left without a leader to organize their religious life, especially after the Caliph had practically been removed as a real force from the scene of their spiritual and political life.

It is this practical necessity that has led Nizam al-Mulk to insist on the essentially religious character of the king's authority. This special emphasis on the religious character is also important on account of the fact that it tones down the autocratic temper of his monarch. The moral obligations he sets on the absolute authority of the king prevent it from growing into an oppressive despotism. His is basically the idea of a paternalistic State in which the king is held responsible for the security and well-being of all subjects. The first and foremost moral obligation of the king towards his subjects is to do justice. He believes it to be a religious duty, for it has been ordained by God.

Justice, as a principle of good government, occupies a pre-dominant place in his concept of kingship, and time and again he lays emphasis on its importance for State and society. But, in spite of all its significance, he does not attempt to formulate any systematic theory of justice, nor does he make any effort to define it exactly. This much, however, can be concluded from his statement that, like almost all his ideas, justice, too, is a practical maxim or a social rule rather than a social philosophy. Everyone should be given what is due to him, or what has been legally recognized as his right in a given social order. To him justice is a moral principle which is also usable as an effective means to preserve a political society and to promote peace and prosperity among the people. "The kings should strive," he says, "to seek the favour of God, which can be attained through the kindness with which they treat the people and through justice which they administer to them. When the people pray to the welfare of the king, his State grows stable and prospers ever day."⁹⁷

To stress its significance for the prosperity of the State he quotes the saying that "a State can continue to exist notwithstanding impiety, but it cannot exist with tyranny."⁹⁸ Therefore, he believes that an auspicious age is one in which a prince comes to rule.⁹⁹ He quotes several anecdotes from history to demonstrate the material advantages of justice, and to show that justice is the outstanding moral virtue of a king. He lays equal emphasis on its moral and material aspects as inseparably joined together, and stresses the point that as justice brings prosperity and good reputation in this world, it helps a ruler "to attain salvation in the next world."¹⁰⁰

In his notion of justice he is influenced again both by Islam and by Persia. It is under the Islamic influence that he comes to realize the religious and moral significance of justice, and goes to the extent of linking its worldly aspect with the deliverance of the soul and eternity. To illustrate this point he quotes from the Holy Qur'an,¹⁰¹ the Tradition¹⁰² of the Prophet, and statements about the practice of the pious Muslim rulers, and says that the worthiest prince is one "whose heart is the seat of justice."¹⁰³

From ancient Persia he learns the methods of the administration of justice and principle of direct responsibility of the king in matters relating to it. He is so impressed by the Persian standard of justice that he believes that “the Sassanian kings, especially Nushirwan the Just, have surpassed all other monarchs in justice, generosity, and courage.”¹⁰⁴ He says that the Persian kings used to strive so honestly to live up to the principle of impartiality in justice that they could even allow themselves to appear as respondents before the Chief Justice who heard complaints against their royal person.¹⁰⁵ They held it as their personal duty to see that the others also treated the people with the same impartiality and justice, and, in order to hear the complaints personally, they used to hold public audience twice a year, to which everyone was allowed free access, and whoever prevented anyone from going to the king to obtain redress for grievances was sentenced to death.”¹⁰⁶

Besides justice, which is essential for good government, there are some other moral duties, which, as Nizam al-Mulk says a ruler has to perform for the well-being of his subjects. His idea of benevolent despotism involves the notion that a good monarch must rule, not for his own good, but for the good of the whole country. He is responsible for the welfare of his subjects and is personally accountable to God, not only for his own conduct, but also for the conduct of his officials towards the people.¹⁰⁷ It is therefore, an essential part of his duty that he should appoint as government officers only those who are God-fearing, learned, pious, and righteous,¹⁰⁸ and should instruct them to treat the people well,¹⁰⁹ because as justice brings prosperity, oppression leads to the devastation of a country.

This autocratic but benevolent sovereign, depicted for the first time in the writings of Nizam al-Mulk, is a typical Muslim prince who came into existence with the downfall of the Caliphate and continued to live for centuries in the Muslim polity. Equally typical is his vizier, who stands next to him in rank and power in the political hierarch of the kingdom.¹¹⁰ Like the king, he is also of Persian origin; he is, in fact, the Muslim heir of the pre-Islamic Persian grand vizier, called the wazurg-farmdhar, who made his way into the constitutional system of the Caliphate¹¹¹ “when the ‘Abbasids came to copy the administration of Sassanian Empire.”¹¹² This grand vizier was next to the king, and what he was in his relation to the Persian king, the Muslim vizier was to the Caliph.¹¹³

For Nizam al-Mulk, himself a Persian and Grand Vizier, it is quite natural to aspire to model this institution as closely as possible on the traditional line of the Persian vizierate, which had once worked so successfully under the Sassanian rule. But he is not the first writer to speak of this institution, for Mawardi and others had already discussed it in some detail. There is, however, a sharp distinction between the theory, for example, of Mawardi and that of Nizam al-Mulk. What Mawardi speaks of is, in fact, the constitutional position of the vizier in his relation to the caliph, and, therefore, it is what may be called the constitutional theory of vizierate.

With this aspect of the vizierate, Nizam al-Mulk is less concerned, and he seldom refers to it. What really interests him more, or rather exclusively, is

the political and moral aspect of this institution. There is yet another difference: unlike Mawardi, who is primarily concerned with discussing the question what the vizier's functions are in a constitutional set-up, Nizam al-Mulk attempts to show what he ought to be in order to attain perfection in ministerial ethics. He deals with the vizierate on a plane of thought which is nearer to that of the Qabas Nameh of Amir Kaika'us (412/1021 - 475/1082).¹¹⁴ Indeed, his field of study is the art of minister ship, but, compared with Amir Kaiks'us, he treats it on a wider scale and with a touch of personal experience which obviously could not be claimed by the Amir.

To Nizam al-Mulk the vizierate is the most important and the most exalted office, next only to the Sultanate.¹¹⁵ Though this glorification of the ministerial office is not without a tinge of exaggeration, it serves to give an idea of the importance the vizier once had in the Eastern monarchical States, including the Saljuq Empire, in which he played a significant part in politics, and actually shared a good deal of power with the king. In most of the achievements which were attributed to the royal person he had a real hand. Therefore, there is a certain basis of truth in regarding the vizierate as "an institution on which depends the State and the people, the religion and the kingdom."¹¹⁶ This indicates Nizam al-Mulk's belief about the vizierate as an indispensable part in the machinery of a monarchical government. He is also conscious of the historical role it played in bringing so much credit to the kingship in the long course of its career. "All the kings," he says, "who have left their good names on the pages of time, owe it to the felicity of the righteous vizier,"¹¹⁷ and again, "...a good minister brings to the king a good name and leads him to adopt a good conduct. All the princes who had been great, and whose name shall be held in honour until the Day of Judgment, where those who had good ministers."¹¹⁸ Throughout his arguments about the importance of minister ship, he is insistent on the point that the welfare of both the king and the kingdom depends upon the sagacity of the vizier, and that a bad vizier always leads them to destruction.¹¹⁹

What Nizam al-Mulk is attempting here by stressing the importance of the vizierate is not to represent the vizier as a mere intermediary between the king and his subjects, but to show them as the representative of the king and actually responsible to him for the whole administration. That is to say, the vizier, as conceived by him, is in a sense a share in the king's real powers. This was actually the position which Nizam al-Mulk had himself enjoyed in his own life-time as the vizier of the Saljuqs. That in elevating this office to such an exalted position he is mainly encouraged by the Persian tradition, is evident from statement in which he asserts that since the origin of the State up to the days of Yazdigird all administrative affairs had been exclusively in the hands of the viziers. The vizier was the counter-part and deputy of the king.¹²⁰ He is influenced again by the Persian forerunners, the Barmakids, were the first exponents in Islam. To him it seems most desirable that both the kingship and the vizierate should be hereditary, as was the regular practice in ancient Persia from the days of Ardashir, the son of Babekan, to the reign of Yazdigird.¹²¹ He regrets that "when the kingship came to an end in Persia the vizierate also departed from the house of the viziers."¹²²

Nizam al-Mulk presents a picture of the typical minister serving at the Court of an Oriental monarch, when he comes to enumerate the dangers with which this important office was fraught, and the noble qualities which were supposed to be the pre-requisites of the vizierate. He gives a detailed account of them, supported by his personal experiences, or by illustrations taken from contemporary history. It gives an idea of the state of politics and administration in the medieval Orient in which a vizier had to discharge his duties with so many powers to conduct the government, and, at the same time, with so many risks of being suddenly overthrown from office for any mistake.

The dangers in accepting his office, as he enumerates are:

- a) The minister may do injustice to the people as he has to issue numerous orders every day,¹²³
- b) may please one man and displease thousands of others, high and low, rich and poor,¹²⁴
- c) he may displease the princes of the royal household by his acts and may consequently incur the displeasure of the king,¹²⁵
- d) he has to always deal with the nobles and grandees of the empire whose hostility and hate might turn the king against him,¹²⁶ and
- e) there is a large number of officials of high and low ranks upon whom he has to depend in discharging his duties, and their displeasure and conspiracy may undermine his reputation and career.¹²⁷

All this renders the office of the vizier a difficult one, requiring a man of sharp intellect and outstanding abilities. Nizam al-Mulk attempts to lay down at length the essential conditions of this office which were regarded in his days as the qualities of an ideal vizier. The duties of the vizier, he says,¹²⁸ are determined by his four-fold relations: First, he is under the obligation of obedience to God, secondly, he owes allegiance to the royal master, thirdly, he has to care for the favourites of the king, and fourthly, he is concerned with the common people.

One cannot fail to note that his whole discussion of the institution of vizierate, like that of the office of kingship, is pervaded again by a religious and moral outlook, arising out of his sincere regard for religion. In the office of vizierate, as he treats it, diplomacy and morality have been blended together, but emphasis is altogether on its moral ends. To acquire merely worldly pomp and power, he says, should not be the ultimate end of the vizier, what really befits this exalted office is to seek real prestige and a good name in religious and worldly matters.¹²⁹ This can be achieved through upholding the right faith and following the dictates of God faithfully.¹³⁰ It is the duty of the minister that he should strive hard to revive and propagate the faith of Islam and try to attain the excellent moral virtues without which divine favour is impossible. He comes to preach to the vizier a sort of Sufi-like attitude towards political life when he says that he should believe in the divine providence, and should regard his success not as the fruit of his own efforts but as the result of the divine will.¹³¹

Then comes the king who is, according to Nizam al-Mulk, a divinely-appointed authority. He is at pains to make him a point of focus for the loyal sentiments of the whole political society and especially of the official

community among whom the vizier has a greater obligation to pay homage to the king than anyone else.¹³² In order to prove himself a truly obedient servant of his master, he says, the vizier must refrain from seeking any sort of worldly pleasure, because the greatest pleasure for a minister really consists, not in satisfying his own desires, but in pleasing his royal master.¹³³ Therefore, he should direct all his efforts towards reforming the affairs of the kingdom¹³⁴ and increasing the wealth of the State,¹³⁵ which is the only way to please the king.

Finally, he advises the minister to have special regard for the companions, courtiers, and other favourites of the king and the nobles and high officials of the kingdom.¹³⁶ They are always influential figures in a feudal society headed by an absolute monarchy, and have an important role in its politics. As their friendliness has great advantages for the vizier, their antagonism may turn all against him;¹³⁷ therefore, he advises the vizier to be careful in handling them. It is, however, remarkable about Nizam al-Mulk that, in spite of dealing with the problems of an office of a diplomatic nature within the framework of feudalism, which is always tainted with conspiracies, he does not induce the vizier to follow cunning methods. Instead, he believes in the moral standards of political conduct and insists that the vizier “should steadily follow the path of truth and righteousness in State affairs,” and this would serve to protect him from the enmity of his foes and would ultimately convince them of his integrity.¹³⁸

Nizam al-Mulk’s importance as a political thinker must rest, not on the practical suggestions he offered to improve the conditions of a particular State, but on his theories of monarchy and minister ship. He was the first to discover the moral and political principles of kingship and vizierate and wherever the two institutions came into existence in the Muslim world, his ideas served as their theoretical foundations. It is evident from the references to his works in the writings of the succeeding generations, that he was generally studied. Even the contents of *Wasaya* ‘were known far and wide,’¹³⁹ long before they came to be compiled in the form of a treatise in the ninth/15th century. The vast literature on political ethics produced in later days, especially the treatises written for the guidance of Muslim princes, contain a good deal of the political principles which are enunciated for the first time by Nizam al-Mulk. This may be considered to be his direct influence on the later development of Muslim political thought.

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Notes

1. According to ibn Funduq 'Ali b. Zaid al-Baihaqi, he was born in 470/1019 - 20; see Tarikh'i Baihaqi, ed. Ahmad Bahman-Yar, Chap Khanah-i Qanun, Teheran, 1317/1938, p. 76.
2. Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, Bulaq, 1290/1874, vol. 10, p. 77.
3. Bundari, Zubdat al-Nusrah w-al-Nukhbat al-'Usrah, ed. M. Th. Houtsma, Leiden, 1889, p. 33.
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Chapter 39: Al-Ghazali

The structures of political authority in Islam are by no means as simple as it seems at first glance. In the legalistic theory of the caliphate expounded by the Sunni jurists the Shari'ah is quite obviously the source of all authority, including political authority as well. As a body of more or less concrete law, the Shari'ah itself must be authorized from some source, which is presumably qualified to judge right from wrong.

Theoretically, the Shari'ah is changeable from time to time, i.e. from prophet to prophet, but the Shari'ah of a prophet is the best law for the time for which it is laid down. It is claimed that the Islamic law is laid down for all times to come. It is elastic only in the sense that some parts of one of its sources (the Qur'an) are given in such general terms as are capable of different interpretations at different times, and the validity of some parts of another source (Hadith) depends upon historical authenticity. Human beings may not change the laws laid down by the Shari'ah but they may know them or not know them, interpret them or not interpret them, obey them or disobey them. The pre-requisite for the knowledge of the Shari'ah is acknowledgement of the established sources of the Shari'ah, i.e. usul al-din. The pre-requisite for obedience is belief.

The ultimate source of authority is God. It is only the good that God commands and only the evil that He forbids. The principal difference between the Sunni and later Shi'ite persuasions is the Sunni doctrine that the last and definitive revelation is the Qur'an, and Mohammad is the last human being to be endorsed with revealed knowledge of right and wrong. The successors of Mohammad may only know the Shari'ah by reference to the Qur'an, to the behaviour of Mohammad, and, wherever these sources are not explicit, to the consensus of Muslims - or indeed by reference to analogical judgment. Thus, the proximate sources of authority are the Qur'an, the Sunnah, Ijma' and qiyas.

The immediate source of authority is somewhat more difficult to ascertain. Learning, or 'ilm, is necessary for the discovery of what the Shari'ah is, and this qualification is the source of the title 'ulama'. The Sunni 'ulama' are distinguished from others by their acknowledgement of the "canonical" sources of the Shari'ah. However, since there is no priesthood in Islam, the 'ulama' form an undefined and unwieldy body. The business of discovering the law is at times very much like legislation, but the non-officialised body of the 'ulama' tend to convert their function to that of a huge, unwieldy board of judicial review.

Obviously such action as might be undertaken by such a group must come after the political fact, and because of the nature of the institution the time-lapse between deed and decision might be generations. It would be wrong to deny the 'ulama' any authority at all, for the 'Abbasid dynasty went to great lengths to secure the support of the 'ulama' and to display respect for their judgments. The pattern of political behaviour thus was carried on by subsequent Islamic rulers. Nevertheless, it was characteristic of the Caliphs to claim the more remote authority for their government.

In a sense the Muslim community, because of its intimate connection with the principle of ijma', may be reckoned a source of authority.

However, since ijma' is a source of the Shari'ah, and since it is a process rather than an institution, it cannot satisfy the requirement of an immediate source of authority. As a source of the Shari'ah it is theoretically anterior to it, and, thus, a more remote source of authority. In any case, it is still subject to "discovery" and interpretation by the 'ulama'. As a process, its legislative efficacy is similar to that of custom in Roman and Canon Law, so the time-lapse is necessarily great.

The Muslim community is not only the Islamic Church, but it is also the personal sphere of validity of Islamic government. Membership in the community is the result of belief, and belief is the basis of obedience to the Shari'ah. The purpose of Islamic government is to see to it that the Shari'ah is obeyed. In other words, the part the community plays in political affairs is primarily passive, although Islamic government is clearly established for the benefit of the Muslims.

Regardless of the degree and kind of authority attributed to the 'ulama' and the community, neither group ever wielded real political power to transform their political function to that of an institution authorizing the day-to-day acts of government. Theoretically, the Muslim system all but disregards the question of power, practically, it is another question. Ibn Khaldun is the most outstanding Islamic theorist of those few who dealt with the problem of power. He asserts that power and authority were joined in the Orthodox Caliphate.¹ Ideally, of course, power should reside with the immediate source of authority in the community.

The relation of the caliphate to the Shari'ah is more difficult to define than that of the 'ulama' or the community. During the whole of the Umayyad and the early part of the 'Abbasid Caliphate, the Caliph is much more the exponent of power than of authority. In the last centuries of the 'Abbasid Caliphate the Caliph could hardly be considered the exponent of power either. Was he then the most immediate representative of authority?

With the exception of the Qur'anic Law, the caliphate and the Shari'ah developed pari passu. The Sunnah of the Prophet did not become constitutive until treated as such by the successors of the Prophet. Ijma' and qiyas are certainly later accretions. This historical fact has tended to complicate the relationship of the Caliph and the Shari'ah. In the main, the Caliph is the executive of the Shari'ah, the commander-in-chief of the Muslim army, and the leader in formal religious observances prescribed by the Shari'ah.

Above all, the Caliph is the head of the religious institution in Islam, only of the formalized part of it. Since religion was an all-inclusive concept, he was also the political institution. The sub-ordination of the Caliph to the Shari'ah was most clearly expressed as a by-product of early political controversy in the attacks on the piety and personal behaviour of the Umayyad Caliphs.² That the political behaviour of the caliph must be in accordance with the Shari'ah, was implicit in 'Abbasid religious policy. The theoretical implications of this policy were limited only to the function of the Caliph once appointed and as a consequence fail to define the authority for the appointment of a particular Caliph, or the authority for the institution itself.

The circumstantial authority arising out of the contention that the Caliphs were properly executing the function of the Caliphate did not exhaust the 'Abbasid theory. Their personal claim to the office itself was based both on agnate descent from the Prophet and the action of divine Providence. This theory of constitutive authority was never denied by Sunni theorists, but it was certainly omitted in the heavy casuistical overlay which attempted to camouflage the fact of dynastic succession.

In time the Sunni theory of the constitutional process came to be a composite of the actual circumstances of the historical appointment of various Caliphs. These various circumstances were codified in detail, and with some juridical expansion by al-Mawardi,³ but the Shari'ah nature of the constitutional process had already been established.

Thus, the Shari'ah was recognized as authority for the acts of the caliph and for the manner of appointment of a particular Caliph, but there remains the problem of the authority for the institution itself. Al-Baghdadi's answer that the Caliphate is required because there are certain explicit Shar'i duties incumbent upon the Caliph merely begs the question.⁴ We must be satisfied then with the conclusion that the authority of the Caliph is primarily circumstantial, i.e. he has authority for what he does rather than for what he is.

What the Caliph is depends rather upon historical events, and this is not surprising since the institution developed along with the Shari'ah. History has a legislative character in Sunni Islam, and the Caliphate is the prime example of the legislative efficacy of history. On the other hand, the effect of historical legislation is primarily retrospective. As a result, we are told what the Caliph was and what he should not be. Clearly, Sunni theories of the Caliphate are not slavish descriptions of the obtaining conditions, but in so far as they deviate from the merely descriptive, they also concentrate on the function rather than the institution of the Caliphate.

So long as sufficient measure of power was attached to the Caliphate, this question did not agitate Muslim theorists. We might say the institution of the Caliphate was almost taken for granted. However, when the Caliphs lost control of affairs, circumstantial authority had no longer applied to the Caliphate. Al-Mawardi was very much aware of this problem, but his treatment of it was entirely inadequate. He insists on the legitimacy of the Caliph who is constrained by one of his military sides, even though he expressly states that the "obligatory" character of the Caliphate is derived from the Caliph's duties as executor of the Shari'ah.⁵ Nevertheless, al-Mawardi has not necessarily contradicted himself - he has simply failed to state explicitly the source of Caliphal authority.

It was this omission which permitted theorists of the post-'Abbasid period to apply the criteria of circumstantial authority to the actual but "unconstitutional" holders of power. The inevitable corollary was the establishment of power as the constitutive authority of the Caliph. Regarding the theory of al-Mawardi, our inference is that he considered the constrained Caliph legitimate because of the validity of the constitutional process by which he was appointed. The resulting situation is pure anomaly, the authority of the Caliph is his "constitutionality," while the authority of

his constrainer is circumstantial (derived from his ruling in accordance with the Shari‘ah), and the sum total is legitimate government.

Al-Ghazālī’s attempt to solve this problem is much more serious than that of the preceding theorists. In many important respects his theory departs from the well-established pattern of Sunni theory. On the other hand, these divergences are carefully couched in terms calculated to maintain the essentials of traditional Sunni theory. While remembering that the classification of authority as functional, constitutional, and institutional is only an analytical construction, which finds no place in Islamic theory, we may find his classification helpful in analyzing al-Ghazālī’s theory.⁶

In referring to Islamic government al-Ghazālī uses the same term as his predecessors. However, it is almost immediately clear that he has something else in mind, and not the traditional Caliphate of even al-Mawardi. He follows the prejudice in favour of a one-man government, but his implication is clearly that of a multi-lateral rather a unitary government. Most important of all is his association of the Caliph with the Sultan. We shall return to this problem, but it is necessary to realize that he assumes the co-operation of the Caliph and the actual holder of power in his discussion of the obligatory character of the Caliphate.

In keeping with the then traditional treatment of the question of the obligatory character of the Caliphate, al-Ghazālī first directs his argument against those who deny the Caliphate, and then against those who deny its obligations altogether.⁷ The first argument is a positive one, and concerns the institutional authority for the Caliphate. The second is a negative argument, and sheds light on the nature of the Caliphate and the duties attached thereto. After dealing with these two arguments we shall discuss his treatment of the constitutive process with special reference to the qualifications of the Caliph and the constituent power.

The Mu‘tazilah asserted that the obligatory character of the Caliphate was based on “reason” and not upon the Shari‘ah. The Sunni jurists insisted upon the Shari‘ah as the basis of the Caliphate. Al-Ghazālī follows the accepted Sunni line, but he develops his argument in a more logical fashion, adding new elements. First, he states that the Caliphate does indeed have utility, but he traces the proof of the Shar‘i obligation of appointing an Imam first to ijma‘ and, second and more importantly, to the deduced will of the Prophet. He contends that the will of the Prophet was the source of the consensus of the community. His argument is that the prophet’s purpose was the formal establishment of the religion of Islam. To secure this end both life and livelihood must be protected. The appointment of an imam is, therefore, obligatory. He also indicates that only through the performance of formal religious observances may the bliss of the hereafter be achieved.

We have found the usual Sunni insistence upon the Shar‘i character of the Caliphate inadequate for the definition of the institutional authority of that office. In supporting this view, the Sunni theorists point to no specific provisions of the Shari‘ah. Instead, they reason from the prescribed duties, deducing the executive institution.⁸ The weakness of their argument is manifest, for as we have seen, the Caliphate existed in fact before any of its duties were defined. By the addition of new elements to this argument, al-

Ghazālī goes much further towards a definition of the institutional authority of the Caliphate. The most important innovation is his reference to the consensus of the community, which is no less than the historical practice of the community. Evidently, this is historically legislation.

Technically, the consensus by which the community has authorized the institution of the Caliphate has reference to the consent of the Companions of the Prophet to the establishment of the Orthodox Caliphate. The phrase “consensus of the community” is sufficiently vague to include the consensus of other generations as well. However, the consensus of the community is not actually a legislative process, but merely evidence of the fact that what has been approved by the community is actually provided for in the Shari‘ah. Despite this legal detail, we must conclude that the authority for the institution of the Caliphate is derived from the community of the Muslims.

By the time al-Ghazālī wrote, the consensus of the community had become a source of the Shari‘ah in its own right. The community at large has been endowed by the grace of God with a special character, summed up in the words of the Prophet, “My community will never agree in error.” The important thing to note is the consensus implies unanimity, or very nearly that. The community as a source of authority is then considered collectively. Ijma‘ is, as has been said, primarily a conservative principle, tending to approve and perpetuate existing phenomena. But it is correlatively a dynamic principle, expressing in a way the historical continuity of the Islamic community. The institution of the Caliphate is intimately bound up with the collective unity of the community, as well as with its historical continuity.

Al-Ghazālī’s logical bent of mind will not allow to be satisfied with the mere evidential fact of ijma‘. Clearly, ijma‘ itself contains no logic, while al-Ghazālī’s intention is to frame the requirements of the Shari‘ah in a manner best calculated to convince the protagonists of reason. Therefore, he goes back to the source of the ijma‘ which is, he says, the intention of the Prophet to organize the establishment of Islam.⁹ Primarily, he is referring to the establishment of external observances of the religion such as prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage, the execution of the hudud punishments for such transgressions as drinking and adultery, the maintenance of the Shari‘ah Law in such matters as marriage and inheritance, and the administration of Islamic justice by means of the Qadis.

Under these headings come the collection of taxes and the government administration, for these are included either directly or indirectly in the Shar‘i requirements concerning them. The Prophet may have desired to accomplish other, less concrete things as well, but here the main point is his purpose of organizing the administration of the (Sunni) religion. Although it is here presented in slightly different terms, this is the same old argument leading to the functional or circumstantial authority of the Caliphate. Al-Ghazālī’s argument goes on to show that the requirements of the Shari‘ah imply the requirement of an institution of some sort to execute them. That institution, the form of which has been authorized by the consensus of the community, is the Caliphate.

Though al-Ghazālī rejected the argument of the Mu‘tazilah that the obligatory character of the Caliphate is based upon reason, he agrees with them that it does have utility. Utility is a concept with a minimum of religious connotation. We have seen that the Shari‘ah contains very many material provisions, but none of these could be classified by a Muslim as merely utilitarian. Obviously, al-Ghazālī is referring to governmental functions common to all centralized coercive orders, such as the maintenance of order and the security of life and property. This utility can only exist where power is present.

The subject of utilitarian power comes into al-Ghazālī’s argument again when he attempts to prove that the Imamate is necessary for the realization of the Prophet’s goal. It enters when he says that material security is a prerequisite for the carrying out of the Shari‘ah.¹⁰ The concrete character of so many of the Shari‘ah provisions necessitates, in the establishment of the Shari‘ah in the setting of a civic religious institution.

Obviously, this implies the existence of a favourable disposed political power. This is provided by the Sultanate. His conclusion is that the Caliphate (execution of the Shari‘ah because of its relationship with the Sultanate (coercive power) is required as a result of the objective of the Prophet (the establishment and institutionalization of the Shari‘ah). In the progress of this argument the Sultanate is brought in without any explanation of the relationship of the bearer of power to the Caliph; we only know that the function of the Sultanate is an essential element of the authorized Caliphate.

In a later argument al-Ghazālī opposes those who deny the obligatory character of the Caliphate altogether. Here we get into some confusion of terms. The contention of al-Ghazālī’s opponents is that the Caliphate has lapsed because there is no qualified person to serve in that capacity.¹¹ The implication of their statement is that the Caliphate is not, therefore, a rigid requirement of the Shari‘ah. At least this is in some measure the way in which al-Ghazālī chooses to understand their argument. In his own approach al-Ghazālī definitely confuses the terms obligatory (moral) and necessary (natural).

The argument is simple: there ought to be a Caliph, therefore, there must be a Caliph, therefore, there is a Caliph. From this we are probably justified in deducing that the opposing argument runs, there is no Caliph, therefore, there need not be a Caliph, and therefore there is no obligation to appoint a Caliph.

Al-Ghazālī’s final argument on this question is his asking what would become of all those religious, social, economic, and political phenomena which are regulated by the Shari‘ah if there were no Caliph.¹² He contends that without the existence of the Caliphate no judgment of a Qadi, no contract, no testament would be valid. In other words, the power of all Qadis and government officials is derived from the Caliph. In theory, Islamic government is perfectly centralized. The authority which any individual Qadi has is completely derived from the Caliph, and not from the task he performs, as is the case of the Caliph’s own authority. It is inconsistent, but there is no circumstantial authority for sub-ordinate

officials, their authority is only constitutive (derived from the manner in which they were appointed). Thus, the absence of the Caliphate would turn every normal human relationship into sin, and lead to disorder and strife. He does not say what effect such social disintegration might have on the chances of the individual Muslim for salvation, but from other indications we may conclude that they would be considerably reduced.

We are not much clearer on the nature of the Caliphate in al-Ghazālī's theory: (a) The Caliphate comprehends the necessary power to accomplish the maintenance of order. (b) It represents or symbolizes the collective unity of the Muslim community and its historical continuity. (c) Deriving its functional and institutional authority from the Shari'ah in the community as well as the symbol of the divine guidance of the Sunni community by virtue of its obedience to the Shari'ah. It is not coincidental that these three aspects of the Caliphate correspond to al-Ghazālī's three sources for the obligatory character of the Caliphate: (a) utility, (b) ijma', and (c) the objective of the Prophet.

So much for the Caliphate, what about the Caliph himself? Al-Ghazālī joins the earlier theorists in giving a long list of qualifications required of for the office. Ideally, al-Ghazālī's qualifications are the same as those of al-Mawardi's. The Caliph must be without physical as well as mental defects. He must be honourable, courageous, wise, and so on. It must not be thought that these qualifications are mere words. They do not represent abstract qualities, but rather their concrete equivalents. Thus, he must be able to defend the Muslims against their enemies and maintain internal order. He must be able to make judgments in accordance with the Shari'ah. He must be able to administer the affairs of the State. Finally, he must be of Quraishite descent. Al-Ghazālī adds that he must be an 'Abbasid.¹³

These requirements are very great, and it is not surprising that they were, in reality, never completely fulfilled. The only stipulation which had been fulfilled was that the Quraishite lineage, and for 300 and more years before al-Ghazālī, the Quraishite Caliph, had been an 'Abbasid. This fact, more than anything else, represented the unity and historical continuity of the Sunni community.

The inconsistency in al-Mawardi's theory stems from the fact that he insisted upon these qualifications in the Caliph, while permitting the Caliph to be inactive. On the Caliph's inactivity he clearly contradicts his own words. At one point, al-Mawardi insists on the personal activity of the Caliph, while at another he validates his being constrained by one of his military sides. The reasons which might have justified al-Mawardi's equivocation were no longer effective in al-Ghazālī's time. We find al-Ghazālī facing the problem of the inactivity of the Caliph, and the related problem of his qualifications.¹⁴

To understand al-Ghazālī's treatment of this problem we must bear in mind his insistence upon the obligatory, even necessary, character of the Imamate. We are not concerned with "an irresistible force" and an "immovable object." Al-Ghazālī tells us frankly that the necessity of having an Imam is so great that it compels the alteration of the qualifications when there is no other way out.¹⁵ The licence of duress had, indeed, been applied

previously by al-Mawardi to validate the rule of “Amirs by Conquest,”¹⁶ but he does not seem to have been able to bring himself to do the same for the constrainer of the Caliph.

At any rate, al-Mawardi did not permit, even in a case of duress, the lowering of the qualifications of the Imamate. Perhaps al-Mustazhir was obviously unqualified, or it might be that al-Ghazālī was more honest than al-Mawardi; anyway al-Ghazālī is willing to concede many of the qualifications in order to maintain the Caliphate. About the only concrete thing that he insists upon is that the Caliph be of Quraishite lineage. As a result, the personal qualifications of the Caliph are hardly applicable to the nature of the Caliphate. On the other hand, the symbolic character of the Caliph could not be more sharply drawn. In other words, the Caliph himself represents only one of the three major aspects of the Caliphate.

The qualifications of the Caliph are probably the well-developed part of the constitutive process in the hands of Islamic theorists. But they are very vague in their description of the constituent power. Al-Ghazālī says there are three ways in which one of those who is qualified for the Caliphate may be chosen: by designation of the Prophet, by designation of the ruling Caliph or by designation of the holder of actual power. Al-Ghazālī tells us that only the last alternative applies to his time.¹⁷ Designation alone is not sufficient for appointment, for there must be the bai‘ah as well. The bai‘ah must be performed by the great man and the people of “loosening and binding” (ahl al-hall w-al-‘aqd).¹⁸

It is not easy to ascertain who these people are, but we take the great men to be those with some measure of power; and the people of loosening and binding to be the ‘ulama’; in concrete terms, this means that the most powerful Saljuq leader appoints the Caliph, then the appointee is recognized by the less Saljuqs, local princes, and the chiefs of the bureaucracy, and finally the appointment receives the consent of the ‘ulama’. There is probably a fourth stage in which the appointment is announced in the mosques, and the people accept the decision handed down from above. In view of al-Ghazālī’s statement to the effect we must look upon the holder of power, or the Sultan, as the constituent power. The whole of the constitutive process beyond the bare fact of appointment by the Sultan is a formality.

Al-Ghazālī’s treatment of the constitutive process by no means contravenes the accepted requirements of the Shari‘ah in this matter. It is true that al-Mawardi sets up special qualifications for those who choose the Caliph, as Mawardi sets up special qualifications for those who choose the Caliph, as well as for the Caliph himself. But, generally speaking, the Sunni theorists are sufficiently vague about the question of selectors to allow al-Ghazālī’s theory to meet their standards, particularly since some of them at least insist that their need not be more than one selector.

On the other hand, it is quite possible that he belittles the importance of the bai‘ah of the ‘ulama’ too much. His reason for this is probably that the important question for him was whether or not the Sultan would choose anyone at all. But, of course, the Sultan’s primary concern was that his choice should be acceptable to the ‘ulama’ and the people. Were he not concerned with the attitude of these groups, and perhaps his own salvation,

the Sultan might dispense with choosing a Caliph altogether. Having chosen a Caliph, he has gone so far towards preserving law and order and the “establishment of Islam” that al-Ghazālī cannot conceive the repudiation of his choice by the ‘uluma’ or the people.

The constitutive process is, then, loosely speaking, a Shar‘i process, but the constituent power is the Sultan. The limitations upon the Sultan’s choice are real, as is the importance of the general bai‘ih , but since these have much greater reference to the functional and institutional authority of the Caliphate, we shall do no more than make a mental note of them here. Our conclusion is that the constituent authority for the appointment of the Caliph is the Sultan.

There is no contradiction between this conclusion and our previous statement that the source of all authority in Islam is the Shari‘ah, for the Shari‘ah has a tendency to recognize existing power in the constitutive process. Besides, as long as the Caliph had no power to do anything, the most important aspect of Shari‘ah authority, i.e., functional authority, does not become operative. As a result, the constituent authority of the Sultan is the critical political factor. One might argue that the Sultan derives this authority from the Shari‘ah, but that would not be what al-Ghazālī himself has argued.

From the foregoing, we can see that the Caliph is different from the Caliphate, and that the authority for one differs from the authority for the other. We must now examine the relationship of the Caliph to the Caliphate, and of the Sultan to them both.

If the Caliph does not satisfy all the requirements of the Caliphate in him, it is at least clear that he is its principal personal representative. We have already established that the Caliph has a special connection with the authoritative source of ijma‘. On the other hand, we know that he cannot possibly be the personal subject of functional authority, since he has no power. Contrarily, no governmental act, unless performed directly or indirectly by the Caliph, has any validity.

We have already seen the Sultan is, in some measure, the authority for the Caliphate. However, the actual government in the world of Islam is carried out by the Sultan. Circumstantial authority is not considered sufficient to legitimize the government of the Sultan even if it is not a conformity with the Shari‘ah.¹⁹ The only way in which the government of the Sultan is valid and authorized is through its recognition of the Caliph. As we have already stated, no government, other than that of the Caliph, is valid under the Shari‘ah, and sub-ordinate officials have only delegated authority, not functional. Thus, the validity of the government of the Sultan is established only upon the Sultan’s oath of allegiance to the Caliph, and the Caliph’s appointment of the Sultan. By his exercise of the constitutive authority, the Sultan recognizes the Islamic Sunni community, and in theory, the functional authority which rests with the Shari‘ah proper.

The fact that al-Ghazālī accepts this compromise sheds some light on the political objectives of Sunni theorists. The total achievement of this arrangement is the recognition by the holder of power that the Shari‘ah is the organizing principle of the Sunni community, and, in more concrete

fashion, the establishment of Sunni Islam. The element of compromise enters when al-Ghazālī argues for the legitimacy of this arrangement, even though the Sultan actually ignores many provisions of the Shari‘ah. Recognition of the Shari‘ah by the Sultan with obedience to its provisions is form without content. This leads us to the second objective of the Sunni theorists, that is, the establishment of order and maintenance of discipline.

The governmental scope of the Sultanate included very few of the interests which concern modern governments. By the establishment of order and the maintenance of discipline the Sultanate merely provided a favourable field for the activity of the established Islamic institution. Al-Ghazālī, therefore, felt justified in validating the government of such a Sultan. He was willing to make concessions regarding a limited number of Shari‘ah regulations in order to preserve the religious life of the community.

Just as the Caliphate comprehends the function of the Sultan, so does it also comprehend the religious and legal duties imposed by the Shari‘ah. As we have said, the Caliphate is a religious as well as a political institution of Islam. We have also seen that al-Ghazālī does not insist upon the qualifications which the Caliph must have in order to carry out his religious duties. If necessary, the Caliph may enlist the aid of the most outstanding learned people of the day.²⁰ The principal political function of the ‘ulama’ is the interpretation of the Shari‘ah in terms of the problems facing the community. In short, by their approval of the Sultan’s choices of the Caliph (bai‘ah) and by their fatwas, the ‘ulama’ express the functional authority of the Shari‘ah.

The term caliphate stands for the whole of Islamic government. Although al-Ghazālī seems to follow the traditional prejudices in favour of autocracy, it is obvious that his is a multi-lateral conception of the caliphate. In it there are three main elements: the Caliph, the Sultan and the ‘ulama’, each corresponding in some aspect of the authority behind Islamic government and each performing a function required by the authority. The greatest virtue of al-Ghazālī’s theory is its political realism, and yet he has maintained the essentials of the traditional theory. Each of the parts of the Caliphate represents not only an aspect of authority and a function of Islamic government, but also one of the major elements of political power in the Sunni community.

Was al-Ghazālī’s theory an accurate description of the government of his time? Such a development of the caliphate was the result of many diverse and fortuitous events. Nevertheless, the roots of this development may be traced back to the calculated policy of the early ‘Abbasids. The early ‘Abbasids based their government upon the power of troops imported from Khurasan, and not upon local Iraqi levies. They asserted their own legitimacy upon the circumstantial fact, that they were ruling in accordance with the Shari‘ah. They went out of their way to honour the ‘ulama’ and give them a place at Court.

Ultimately, the success of the system depended upon the maintenance of delicate balance of power, and upon the continued co-operation of those forces. The fact of the matter was that when the relative power of each element of the government changed it was not supported by the others. Al-

Ghazālī argued for the independence of the 'ulama' and he urged them to resist the blandishments of the Sultan. When the Sultan was powerful he interfered with the succession to the Caliphate in a manner calculated to lower the influence and prestige of that office. When the Sultan grew somewhat weaker, the Caliph was eager to exercise local power himself. Al-Ghazālī's theory notwithstanding, the existence of the Caliph alongside the Caliphate was an ever-present temptation to re-establish the old order.

The multi-lateral conception of the Caliphate was not opposed to al-Mawardi's ideal construction. Al-Ghazālī did not reject the traditional Sunni theory. In fact, al-Ghazālī sought only to explain the political conditions of his own time in terms acceptable to traditional Sunni thought. If he ground any axe at all, it was for the Sunni 'ulama', who were certainly a most conservative body. Nevertheless, once the Caliphate could be resolved into its component parts, it became possible for the rest of the parts to hobble along without the Caliph himself. In this sense al-Ghazālī paved the way for the post-'Abbasid development of the Sunni political theory.

The original inspiration for al-Ghazālī's theory of the Caliphate seems to have come from his interest in Hellenistic thought. We find an interesting statement of the same principle in no less an exponent of the opposing "philosopher-king" theory than Nasir al-Din al-Tusi. Al-Tusi says that the second possible variation of the supreme government of the Virtuous City arises when all the qualities required of a philosopher-king do not exist in one man, but are produced in several men collectively.²¹

More significant than the parallel passage in Akhlaq-i Nasiri is the reflection of al-Ghazālī's theory in the writings of ibn Taimiyyah. If anything, ibn Taimiyyah was more enamoured of the past than al-Mawardi, but by the time he wrote the 'Abbasid Caliphate was no more. Ibn Taimiyyah argued that legitimate Islamic government in his days was composed of the Amirs and the 'ulama' acting in co-operation with one another. Ibn Taimiyyah's principle of "co-operation" leads him to repeat al-Ghazālī's theory of divided authority in accordance with the qualifications of various persons in opposition to the theory which accorded complete authority to the ruling war-lord.²²

The origin and development of this principle present many difficulties, but Laoust tells that ibn Taimiyyah was influenced rather by the Arab Neo-Platonists, such as the Ikhwan al-Safa, than by al-Ghazālī.²³ It is unlikely that the idea itself originated with al-Ghazālī who was himself deeply influenced in his youth by the Hellenistic movement in Islam. Nevertheless, his application of it to the Sunni caliphate was certainly an innovation, and all the more noteworthy for its reappearance two centuries later in the works of ibn Taimiyyah. It need hardly be added that the 'ulama' did in fact assume a special position of political authority as well as a part of the "original" Caliphal functions in the ottoman State, and to a lesser extent, perhaps, in the Mughul Empire in India.

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Notes

1. Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddimah, Beirut, 1900, pp. 2-3ff.
2. Goldziher has set forth the arguments of the early political factions in Volume 2 of his Mohammedanische Studien.
3. Al-Mawardi, al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah, Cairo, 1909, Chapter 1.
4. 'Abd al-Qahir ibn Tahir al-Baghdadi, Usul al-Din, Istanbul, 1928, p. 272.
5. Al-Mawardi, op. cit., p. 16
6. Functional authority is that which authorizes each separate act of the Caliph, without regard to the manner of his appointment. Institutional authority is that which provides that there shall be such an institution as the Caliphate. Logically, institutional authority must precede functional authority, though the office and its duties are conceptually joined. Constitutional authority provides for the manner in which a Caliph should be appointed. It will usually be found that the question of legitimacy in Islamic political theory relates to the constitutive process, while functional lapses are regarded as disqualifying and not illegitimizing.
7. Al-Ghazālī al-Iqtizad fi al-I'tiqad, Cairo, n.d., pp. 104 - 09.
8. Al-Baghdadi, loc. cit.; al-Mawardi, op. cit., p. 3; see also al-Baqillani, al-Tamhid, Cairo, 1947, pp. 185 - 86 "Concerning the Purpose for which the Imamate is Established."
9. Al-Ghazālī, op., cit., p. 105.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., p. 107.
12. Ibid.
13. Al-Ghazālī, Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din, Vol. 2; al-Haram w-al-Halal, p. 124.
14. See Goldziher, Streitechrift des Gazali gegen die Batinijja-Sekte, Leiden, 1916, pp. 80ff., for analysis and pp. 58ff. text for al-Ghazālī's early, detailed views, referred to in both Iqtisad and the much later Ihya'.
15. Iqtisad, p. 107; Ihya', loc. cit.
16. Al-Mawardi, op. cit., Chapter 3, pp. 27 - 28.
17. Ihya', loc.cit.
18. Iqtisad, p. 107. The bai'ah is important, even essential, but not constitutive. Thus, according to al-Ghazālī, it a qualified Qurayshite is an actual holder of power, he may be appointed himself as Imam. (This denied by al-Baqillani, al-Tamhid, p.180, and so may not be taken as a generally accepted Sunni theory). Nevertheless, the bai''h remains necessary, having only a declarative effect.
19. Ihya', loc. cit.
20. Iqtipad, p. 107.
21. Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, Akhlaq-i Nasiri, treatise 3, Chapter 3, p. 309.
22. Henri Laoust, Esai sur les doctrines sociales at politiques d'Ibn Taimiya, Cairo, 1939, pp., 282, 294, 307, 315, 317.
23. Ibid., p. 100, note 1.

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**A History of Muslim Philosophy Volume 2, Book 4:
Later Centuries (From the Fall of Baghdad
[656/1258] TO 1111/1700)**

Part 1. The Fall of Baghdad

Chapter 40: Fall of The ‘Abbasid Caliphate

Chapter 40: Fall of The ‘Abbasid Caliphate

The Mongol invasion, which shook the world of Islam to its very foundations in the seventh/13th century was an unprecedented phenomenon in the history of mankind. A people, hitherto unknown even to their neighbours, poured forth from the bare and bleak plateau of Karakorum (Mongolia) and with lightning speed overran the Asian and European continents from China to Hungary and East Prussia, and built up the largest empire know to man. These people were the Mongols¹ or Tartars as called by their contemporaries. Their invasion inflicted more suffering on the human race than any other incident recorded in history. They lived in a wild and primitive state of society. “They are,” says Matthew Paris, “inhuman and beastly, rather monsters than men, thirsty for and drinking blood, tearing and devouring the flesh of dogs and men...They are without human laws.”²

The Mongol storm burst on the Muslim world in two separate waves. The first dates back to 616/1219 when Chingiz Khan³ (550/1155 - 625/1227), who first as the leader of a band of adventurers and later installed as their ruler in 603/1206 welded these barbarians into a strong and well-disciplined military force, attacked the Empire of the Khwarizm Shahs (470/1077 - 629/1231) which at the height of its power stretched from the Ural Mountains to the Persian Gulf and from the Euphrates to the Indus excluding the two Iranian provinces of Khuzistan and Fars. The second wave broke on Khurasan in 654/1256 when Chingiz Khan’s grandson, Hulagu Khan (614/1217 - 664/1265), was selected by his brother, Emperor Mangu Khan (649/1251 - 655/1257), and the great quriltay, i.e. the Mongol assembly, held in 649/1251, to annihilate the ‘Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad and the Isma‘ilis of Alamut and Quhistan in North Iran.

The first invasion, which probably could not have been averted, was provoked by a further incident in which the Governor of Utrar,⁴ a frontier town in Khwarizm, murdered a number of Mongol tradesmen alleged to have been spies. Thereupon Chingiz Khan despatched an embassy consisting of two Mongols and one Turk to the Court of ‘Ala al-Din Mohammad Khwarizm Shah (596/1199 – 617/1220) to protest against this violation of the laws of hospitality and demanded that he should hand over the Governor to them or prepare for war. In reply Khwarizm Shah behaved in a queer fashion which was both foolish and arrogant. He killed the Turk and turned back the two Mongols with their beards shaved off. Upon this the Mongols held a quriltay and decided to attack Khwarizm.

This was not the only evidence of Khwarizm Shah’s suicidal policy. According to the contemporary historian, ibn Athir (d. 632/1234), ‘Ala al-Din Mohammad had already destroyed or weakened the neighbouring Muslim States in order to build up an unstable, sprawling empire, so that in the dark hour of trial when, instead of showing any signs of resistance, he adopted the ignominious course of continued retreat, and left his unfortunate subjects at the mercy of the relentless enemy, there was no Muslim power left to protect or defend them. His gallant son, Jalal al-Din Mankoburni (617/1220 - 629/1231), however, put up stiff resistance against the full might of the Mongol attack and for years continued to show acts of great

heroism in unequal battles until, unaided and deserted, he met his tragic end. By his desperate and indomitable courage against the Mongol blast of death, the dauntless prince has left a permanent mark of gallantry in the annals of Muslim history.

A big factor which hastened the Muslim downfall was the atmosphere of intrigue prevailing in the Muslim world on the eve of the Mongol invasion. According to ibn Athir and al-Maqrizi (766/1180 - 846/1442), the 'Abbasid Caliph al-Nasir (576/1180 - 622/1225) actually encouraged the Mongols to attack Khwarizm, little knowing that his own house was destined to perish at the hands of the same irresistible foe.

The storm burst in 616/1219 and soon engulfed Transoxiana, Khwarizm, Khurasan, the territories lying north of the river Indus, and North Iran, until, instead of turning south or west, it swept across the Caucasus into South Russia, finally to advance as far away as the Baltic and the Adriatic.

The second wave of invasion struck Khurasan at the beginning of 654/1256; the Caliphate of Baghdad was destroyed in 656/1258 by Hulagu Khan who had earlier wiped out the Isma'ili stronghold at Alamut in North Iran in 654/1256. The Mongol army advanced further into Syria, sacked Aleppo, and threatened Damascus into surrender in 659/1260. It was at 'Ain Jalut (Goliath's Spring) near Nazareth, however, that the Mongol tide was firmly stemmed by the gallant Mamluks of Egypt who gave them a crushing defeat in 659/1260. After the death of Jalal al-Din Mankoburni this was the first Muslim victory in 30 years and it broke the spell of the Mongol invincibility.

The Mongols were essentially an engine of destruction. They mowed down all resistance and their opponents "feel to the right and left like the leaves down winter." They have been described by Sir Henry Howorth as one of those races "which are sent periodically to destroy the luxurious and the wealthy, to lay in ashes the parts and culture which grow under the shelter of wealth and easy circumstances."⁵ According to 'Ata Malik Juwaini, Hulagu Khan's secretary, who was appointed Governor of Baghdad after the destruction of the 'Abbasid Caliphate, Chingiz Khan described himself at Bukhara as the "scourge of God" sent to men as a punishment for their great sins.⁶

The bewildering extent of the blood-thirsty ferocity, insatiable thirst for massacre, and devastating destruction which brought unprecedented suffering for the greater portion of the civilized world, would be just impossible to believe, had the facts not been confirmed from different sources, both Eastern and Western.

All historians agree that wherever the Mongols went they exterminated populations, pillaged towns and cities, wreaked special vengeance upon those who dared to resist them, converted rich and smiling fields into deserts, and left behind the smoke of burning towns. In the words of Chingiz Khan himself, quoted by Rashid al-Din Fadh'l Allah, the famous Prime Minister of the Mongol period in Iran and the author of *Jami al-Tawarikh*,⁷ "the greatest joy is to conquer one's enemies, to pursue them, to see their families in tears, to ride their horses and to possess their daughters and wives." In old Mongol traditions there is a story that the future world

conqueror was born with a piece of clotted blood in his hands.⁸ The senseless destruction, cruelty, outrage, spoliation, and the lightning speed of the Mongol attack have been described by Juwaini in the pithy sentence uttered by a fugitive from Merv, “They came and uprooted, they burned, they slew, they carried off, and they departed.”⁹

To have an idea of the brutal lust of conquest and ruthless ferocity shown by the Mongol hordes it would suffice to trace the wonton disregard of human life shown by them in some of the many prosperous cities and towns they ravaged. They reduced to ashes the city of Bukhara which was known for its magnificent palaces, gardens and parks stretching for miles on the banks of the river Sughd, put one million people to the sword in Samarqand, and brutally massacred all the inhabitants of Tirmidh and Sabziwar. Khwarizm suffered an equally tragic fate. According to Juwaini, 1,200,000 people were killed in the city. Amongst the scholars and saints who perished was the famous Shaikh Najm al-Din Kubra (d. 618/1221).

In Balkh the Mongol army came back a few days after the city’s destruction to kill the poor wretches who might have survived the first holocaust, and, having dragged them out of the hiding places, butchered them in the true Mongol fashion. Bamiyan, where a Mongol prince lost his life, was wiped out of existence and orders were issued not leave even babies alive in their wombs. This kind of sadism was not a stray incident, for ibn Athir characterizes the Mongols as a people who “spared none, slaying women, men and children, ripping open pregnant women and killing unborn babies.”¹⁰ At Nasa they made a hecatomb of over 70,000 people. Merv, which was at the height of its glory, suffered, according to ibn Athir, a loss of 700,000 people, but Juwaini puts the figure at 1,300,000, excluding those bodies that were hidden at obscure retreats. The survivors were traced out, as in Balkh and mercilessly killed.

Nishapur, which was like the bright Venus in the galaxy of cities,¹¹ was completely razed to the ground and every living thing, including animals, was massacred. Pyramids of skulls were built as a mark of this ghastly feat of military “triumph.” According to Mirkhwand, 1,047,000 men were butchered in the city in addition to an unknown number of women and children.¹² He adds, however, that 40 artisans and craftsmen were given shelter and transported to Mongolia. In Herat these barbarian hordes set up a new record by putting 1,600,000 men to the sword.

These figures give an idea of the cold-blooded, passionless cruelty of the invaders who, in the words of Matthew Paris, “spared neither age, nor sex, nor condition.”¹³ Juwaini mourns the loss of life in Khurasan in the following words, “Not one-thousandth of the population escaped...if from now to the Day of Judgment nothing hinders the growth of population in Khurasan and ‘Iraq-I ‘Ajam, it cannot reach one-tenth of the figure at which it stood before.”

With the destruction of the scores of cities of fame also perished the priceless treasures of art and literature. The letter of ibn Khallikan (608/1211 - 681/1282) which he wrote from Mosul after his flight from Merv to al-Qadi al-Akram Jamal al-Din Abu al-Hassan ‘Ali, vizier of the King of Aleppo, pathetically describes the nature of the Mongol cataclysm.

In this letter, written in 617/1220, the author pays his last tribute to the libraries of Merv which had made him forget his dear ones, his home, and country, and to the advanced state of civilization in Khurasan which, according to him, “in a word, and without exaggeration, was a copy of paradise.”

He proceeds to laud the achievements of its doctors, saints, scholars, the monuments of science, and the virtues of the authors of this region and then laments the tragedy of Merv in these words, “Those palaces were effaced from the earth...in those places the screech owls answer each others’ cries and in those halls the winds moan responsive to the simoom.” Ibn Athir describes the loss of life and culture in the same strain, “Those Tartars conquered...the best, the most flourishing and the most populous part thereof (the habitable globe), and that whereof the inhabitants were the most advanced in character and conduct.”¹⁴

The reckless assassination of thousands of scholars, poets, and writers, and the destruction of libraries and colleges wrought irreparable disaster upon the Muslim civilization which had flourished for centuries with such remarkable vitality. Transoxiana and Khurasan were the worst sufferers. Fertile plains and valleys in these regions were turned into wilderness. The great highways of Central Asia on which passed the merchandise of China to Western Asia and Europe also lay deserted.

For 20 years after the death of Chingiz Khan in 625/1227, the Mongols continued to pillage Kurdistan, Adharbaijan, and regions to the west of Iran, at times marauding right up to Aleppo. But the Caliphate of Baghdad had survived. The inevitable occurred in 656/1258 when Hulagu Khan stormed Baghdad after he had extirpated the Isma‘ili power at Alamut in 654/1256. The city which been the metropolis of Islam for more than five centuries (632/749 - 656/1258) was given over to plunder and flame. The massacre, according to Diyarbakri (d. 982/1574) in his *Tarikh al-Khamis*, continued for 34 days during which 1,800,000 people were put to the sword. For days blood ran freely in the streets of Baghdad and the water of Tigris was dyed red for miles. According to Wassaf, the sack of Baghdad lasted 40 days.¹⁵ To quote *Kitab al-Fakhri*, “Then there took place such wholesale slaughter and unrestrained looting and excessive torture and mutilation as it is hard to be spoken of even generally; how think you, then, its details?” Al-Must‘asim bi Allah (640/1242 - 656/1258) who was destined to be the last Caliph of this renowned dynasty was beaten to death, and, according to another version, trampled on by horses.

The sack of Baghdad was a supreme catastrophe of the world of Islam and of the Arabo-Persian civilization which had flourished so richly for many hundreds of years. Its magnitude surpassed the devastation of other cities, because the political and psychological implications of this tragedy had a far greater import. The Caliph was regarded as the spiritual and temporal head of the Muslim world and even in its days of decline the caliphate of Baghdad had retained the semblance of Muslim unity and homogeneity. Baghdad, therefore, was more than a city. It was a symbol. With the end of the Caliphate this symbol also vanished. It was also the centre of the most advanced civilization of the time and from it emanated

the rays of knowledge which illuminated the world. The destruction of Baghdad, therefore, meant the extinction of learning.

With it were destroyed the great libraries and unique treasures of art, philosophy, and science, accumulated through hundreds of years. Books were consumed to ashes or thrown into the river. Mosques, colleges, hospitals, and palaces were put to fire. The awful nature of the cataclysm, which completely blocked the advancement of knowledge of Muslim lands, and thus, indirectly the whole world, is, in the words of Percy Sykes, "difficult to realize and impossible to exaggerate."¹⁶ No wonder the great Sa'di (580/1184 - 691/1291) was moved to write in far-off Shiraz an elegy on the destruction of Baghdad and the fall of the caliphate, which has gone down in Persian poetry as one of the most pathetic poems of all times.

What deepened the sombre effects of this tragedy was the fact that, with the extermination of men of learning and the total destruction of Muslim society, the spirit of inquiry and original research so distinctly associated with Arabic learning was practically destroyed. Western Asia was no plunged into darkness as earlier Khurasan and Transoxiana had been wrapped in gloom. The two races - Arabs and Iranians - which together had contributed to the medieval world the highest literary and scientific culture parted ways. For centuries Arabic had been the language of religion, science, and philosophy in Iran, and all thinkers and scientists had chosen Arabic as the vehicle of expressing their thoughts. But henceforth Arabic lost its position of privilege and its use was restricted mostly to the field of theology and scholastic learning. The Arabs themselves lost even the shadow of a major role in Islamic history. The fall of Baghdad, therefore, was also an ominous sign of the loss of Arab hegemony.

The Mongol invasion by its accumulated horror and scant respect for human life and moral values produced an attitude of self negation and renunciation in general and in Persian poetry in particular. The pantheistic philosophy of ibn 'Arabi henceforth made a strong appeal to the minds of subsequent mystics such as Auhhadi Kirmini, Auhadi of Maraghah, and Jami.

The infinite havoc caused by this cataclysm constitutes a melancholy chapter in the history of Muslim civilization. What Juwaini had called the famine of science and virtue in Khurasan¹⁷ came true of all lands stretching from Transoxiana to the shores of the Mediterranean. Never, perhaps, had such a great and glorious civilization been doomed to such a tragic fall. This tragic fall was not, however, a tragic end, for this civilization rose again and produced within two and half centuries three of the greatest empires of the world, and though the main current of its thought changed its course, even before, and long before, its political recovery, it produced the world's first destroyer of Aristotle's logic in ibn Taimiyyah and the first sociologist and philosopher of history in ibn Khaldun.

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Notes

1. The word is derived from the root mong which means brave.
2. E. G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, vol. 3, p. 7.
3. His actual name was Temuchin. The title of Chingiz or Zingis Khan was presented to him by his people in recognition of his rising power. The word zin means great, gis is the superlative termination.
4. Also known as Farab.
5. Henry Howorth, History of Mongols Part 1, P. 10
6. ‘Ata Malik Juwaini, Tarikh-i Jahankusha, Vol. 1, ed. Mohammad ‘Abd al-Wahab Qazwini, Leiden, 1329/1911. p 81. ‘Ala al-Din ‘Ata Malik Juwaini (d. 682/1283) who belonged to a distinguished family of ministers and administrators was one of those Iranian officers whom the Mongols found indispensable in the civil service. He was Hulagu Khan’s secretary and had served him throughout his campaign. He was appointed Governor of Baghdad by Hulagu Khan a year after the conquest of the city and held this office position for 24 years. His famous book which was completed in 658/1260 contains a first-hand account of Hulagu Khan’s military exploits and is one of the most authentic books on the history of this period. It deals with the Mongols, the Khwarizm Shahs, and the Isma‘ili sect and ends with the events of the year 655/1257.
7. Rashid al-Din Fadl Allah (645/1247 - 718/1318), the renowned scholar-administrator of the Il-Khuni (Mongol) period of the history of Iran, served as Prime Minister under three Muslim Mongol rulers, namely, Ghazan (694/1294 - 703/1303) who, along with 10,000 Mongols, embraced Islam on Sha‘ban 4, 694 A. H. and by declaring it the State religion restored its supremacy in Iran; Uljaitu Khuda-bandeh (703/1303 - 716/1316). In spite of his pre-occupation as the Prime Minister of a great empire, Rashid al-Din found time to pursue research and write books, both in Arabic and Persian. Of these his Jami‘ al-Tawarikh, which, in the words of Quatremere, the French editor of portions of this work, “offered for the first time to the people of Asia a complete course of universal history and geography,” is the most celebrated. Though it is a general history of the world, yet it contains a detailed and highly authentic account of the Mongol Emperors from the time of Chingiz Khan to the death of Sultan Ghazan.
8. Encyclopaedia of Islam, vol 1, Part 2, p. 856.
9. Juwaini, op. cit. p. 105.
10. E. G. Browne, op cit. vol 2, p 428.
11. Juwaini, op. cit. p. 133
12. Mirkhwand, Raudat al-Safa, vol. 5, p. 46.
13. E. G. Browne, op. cit. vol. 3, p. 7.
14. Ibid. vol. 2, p. 429.
15. ‘Abd Allah ibn Fadl Allah Wassaf, Tarikh-i Wassaf, p. 87.
16. Percy Sykes, A History of Persia, vol. 2, p. 98.
17. Juwaini, op. cit., p. 4

Part 2. Theologico-Philosophical Thought
Chapter 41: Ibn Taimiyyah

Chapter 41: Ibn Taimiyyah

A. Life and Works

After having seen the rise and development of theological and philosophical movement in Islam and the contributions made by the theologians and philosophers before the sack of Baghdad, we have now come to a point which may be called the pre-renaissance period in the history of Islam. By ibn Taimiyyah's time theology, philosophy, and jurisprudence had made remarkable progress and given rise to different schools of thought. But, unfortunately, political dissensions and doctrinal differences sapped the unity of the Muslims and made their countries easy prey to Mongol invasions in the seventh/13th century. It was at this critical juncture that Imam ibn Taimiyyah appeared as a mujtahid (one qualified to form an independent opinion in Muslim Law) and called upon the people to go back to the original teachings of Islam as they are found in the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet.

He had little respect for theology (Kalam) or philosophy and he could not be called a theologian or a philosopher in the truest sense of the terms, though he himself acted as a great theologian and a great philosopher. The excellence of Imam ibn Taimiyyah as an original thinker and a critic has been widely accepted, and he is generally considered to be the forerunner of Wahhabism, Sanusism, and similar other reform movements in the Muslim world.

Taqi al-Din Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad ibn 'Abd al-Halim, commonly known as ibn Taimiyyah, was born in Harran,¹ a city near Damascus, on Monday, the 10th of Rabi' I 861/22nd January 1263.

During the year 667/1269 when ibn Taimiyyah approached the age of seven, the Mongols ravaged the city of Harran, and his father 'Abd al-Halim went to Damascus with all the members of his family and settled there. Here ibn Taimiyyah received an excellent education under his father who was a great scholar of the Hanbalite School. He also studied under 'Ali ibn 'Abd al-Qawi and mastered the Arabic grammar of Sibawaihi. He studied Hadith with more than 200 Sheikhs.² It is noteworthy that among the teachers, whom ibn Taimiyyah mentions in his Arba'un, were four ladies.³

It is difficult to say whether ibn Taimiyyah was influenced by any of his predecessors in his extra-ordinary enthusiasm for introducing social and religious reforms in the Muslim community and for his unsympathetic attitude towards the theologians, the philosophers, and the Sufis. A close examination of his works suggests that he followed none but the early pious Muslims (salaf al-salihun) in formulating his scheme of reform. This is why his movement is often called the Salafi movement. His motto was, "Go back to the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet." He protested vehemently against all sorts of innovations (bid'ah). He believed that Islam was corrupted by Sufism, pantheism, theology (Kalam), philosophy, and by all sorts of superstitious beliefs. He aimed at purging the Muslim society of practices resulting in undue homage to the tombs of prophets and saints. During his stay in Syria from 692/1292 to 705/1305, ibn Taimiyyah, therefore, wrote books and treatises against the Sufis, the Mutakallimun, and the Aristotelian philosophers.

It was during the early part of this period that he personally took part in the war against the tartars and the Nusairis. In 702/1302, he participated in the battle of Shaqhab (a place near Damascus) where he met Caliph al-Malik al-Nasir, Mohammad ibn Qalawun, the Mamluk Sultan and other notables, and urged them all to join the holy war. Towards the end of 704/1304, he led an army against the people of Jabal Khusruwan in Syria and inflicted a crushing defeat on them. Hence, ibn Taimiyyah can also be called a mujahid (fighter for the cause of Islam). In 705/1305, ibn Taimiyyah faced the criticism of his antagonists in open meetings in the presence of the Deputy of Mamluk Sultan, al-Malik al-Nasir, and defeated them by his clear and cogent arguments. In this very year he proceeded to Cairo and faced a munazarah (legal debate) in which an Indian scholar named Sheikh Safi al-Din al-Hindi played an important part.

It was on the suggestion of this Sheikh that ibn Taimiyyah was ordered to be imprisoned in the dungeon of the mountain citadel with his two brothers for a year and a half.⁴ He also suffered imprisonment at different places for his fatwas (legal decisions) and rasa'il (treatises) against certain social and religious practices; these excited the indignation of the scholars of his time, until at last he was interned in the citadel of Damascus on Sha'ban 726/July 1326. Here his brother Zain al-Din was permitted to stay with him, while ibn Taimiyyah's student ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah was retained in the same prison for his support. In this prison, ibn Taimiyyah wrote books and pamphlets defending his own view, and it is said that here he prepared a commentary on the Holy Qur'an in 40 volumes called al-Bahr al-Muhit. Some of these books fell into the hands of his enemies and he was most ruthlessly deprived of his books, and pen and ink, after which he wrote with charcoal. Having been left alone in prison, he passed his time in devotion to God until his death on Monday, the 20th of Dhu'l Qa'dah 728/ 27 September 1328.⁵

Ibn Taimiyyah was a prolific writer. Nobody could give a definite number of his works though al-Kutubi tried to enumerate them under different heads.⁶ He left innumerable books, religious decisions, letters, and notes, most of which he composed while he was in prison. Al-Dhahabi gives the number to be approximately 500.

In his Rihlah, ibn Battutah says that he himself happened to be in Damascus at the time of the last imprisonment of ibn Taimiyyah, and that the Sultan al-Malik al-Nasir released ibn Taimiyyah after the completion of al-Bahr al-Muhit, but on a Friday, while he was delivering the Jum'ah sermon on the pulpit of the city mosque, he uttered the following words, "Verily, Allah comes down to the sky over our heads in the same fashion as I make this descent," and he stepped down one step of the pulpit. This was vehemently opposed by a faqih (jurist), but ibn Taimiyyah had his supporters who attacked the fiqih and beat him severely with fists and shoes, causing his turban to fall down to the ground and making his silken shashia (cap) visible on his head.

People objected to his wearing the silken cap and brought him to the house of the Hanbalite Qadi 'Izz al-Din ibn Muslim, who ordered him to be imprisoned and put to torture. But the Maliki and the Shaf'i doctors

disapproved of this judgment, and brought the case to the notice of Saif al-Din Tankiz, one of the best and most pious nobles of Damascus, who forwarded the matter to al-Malik al-Nasir along with some other charges against ibn Taimiyyah, such as his decision (fatwa) that a woman divorced by triple repudiation in one utterance will receive one talaq only and that one taking the journey to the tomb of the Prophet should not shorten his prayers. The Sultan, convinced of these charges, disapproved of ibn Taimiyyah's standpoint and ordered him to be thrown into the dungeon again.⁷ This report of ibn Battutah is not chronologically sound. It will be discussed again in connection with the charge of anthropomorphism against ibn Taimiyyah.

Though ibn Taimiyyah was not successful in his mission during his lifetime, it became clear at his funeral that he exercised a great influence upon the public. It is said that more than two lacs of men and women attended his funeral ceremony. Except three persons who were afraid of being stoned to death for their hostility towards him, all attended his funeral and the military had to be called in to guard the crowd.⁸

B. Attitude towards Theology and the Theologians

Ibn Taimiyyah has left us a number of books and treatises on theology, but in none of them is he systematic in his treatment of the subject. Problems of theology and philosophy are scattered throughout his writings, and, according to al-Kutubi's enumeration, many of them have not yet seen the light of day.⁹ A number of manuscripts left by ibn Taimiyyah on theology are also available in England and Germany among which are his *Mas'alat al-'Uluw*, *al-Kalam*, *'ala Haqiqat al-Islam*, *Su'al li ibn Taimiyyah*,¹⁰ etc., etc.

In his *Minhaj*¹¹ as well as other books, ibn Taimiyyah boldly declares that theology and philosophy have no place in Islam, and that theologians like al-Juwaini,¹² al-Ghazālī, and al-Shahrastani¹³ who devoted their lives to these sciences, ultimately understood their defects and returned to the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Shahrastani, he adds, confessed that it was folly to discuss theology, al-Razi, in his opinion, contradicts himself in matters of theology and admitted his perplexity.

In the *Minhaj*¹⁴ as well as in his *Majmu'at al-Tafsir*,¹⁵ ibn Taimiyyah cites the opinion of Imam Ahmad and Abu Yusuf who said that he who would seek knowledge by the help of scholastic theology (Kalam) would turn into an atheist. He also mentions the opinion of Imam Shafi'i that theologians should be beaten with shoes and palm-branches, and paraded through the city so that people may know the consequence of the study of theology.

In his *Tafsir Surat al-Ikhlās*,¹⁶ he tells us that the early leaders (aslaf) tabooed theology since it was vanity, falsehood and saying unfitting things about God.

Among the later thinkers Imam Ash'ari (d. 330/941) defended theology in his *Risalah fi Istihsan al-Khaud fi al-Kalam*. In it, he supported the theories of *harakah* (motion), *sukun* (rest), *jism* (body), *'ard* (accident), *ijtima'* (union), *iftiraq* (separation), etc., by the help of the Qur'an. In his opinion, all religious orders, be they relating to action or belief, have been

based on rational arguments and, thus, it is not unlawful to enter into discussion with them.¹⁷ But ibn Taimiyyah considered the above theories to be Hellenistic and against the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

About the Jahmites,¹⁸ ibn Taimiyyah quotes the views of Imam Ahmad who said that they told lies about God when they denied attributes to Him, and spoke about Him through ignorance. Abu al-'Abbas ibn Suraij, he adds, disapproved of the theories of atoms and accidents. Once, in answer to a questions raised in Kalam, he said, "The doctrine of the unity of God to the vain of the people is to enter into discussion of atoms and accidents (jawahir wa a'rad)." These terms did not exist in Islam during the time of the Prophet. It was the Jahmites and the Mu'tazilites who first invented them; Ja'd ibn Dirham¹⁹ was mainly responsible for this invention. This Ja'd was executed by ibn 'Abd Allah ibn al-Qasri²⁰ at Wasit on account of Kalam (theology). The story goes that before executing Ja'd, ibn 'Abd Allah stood on a pulpit (minbar) and addressed the people saying, "Oh men, offer your sacrifice to God. Surely I am offering my victim in the person of Ja'd who says that God did not take Abraham as His friend, nor did He speak to Moses. God is far above what Ja'd attributes to Him." He then got down from the pulpit and cut off Ja'd's head.²¹

Ibn Taimiyyah refutes the view of al-Imam Hilli who expressed in his Minhaj al-Karamah²² that Hadrat 'Ali was the originator of theology. Ibn Taimiyyah opposes this theory as 'Ali could not go against the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and none among the Companions (Sahabah) or their followers (Tabi'un) ever discussed the phenomenal nature of the world as derived from the origination of bodies (huduth al-ajsam). He repeats that theology came into existence at the end of the first/seventh century. It was Ja'd ibn Dirham and Jahm ibn Safwan who introduced it, and eventually the students of 'Amr ibn 'Ubaid like Abu al-Hudhail al-'Allaf and others carried it on. The object of 'Amr and Wasil in propagating the above theory was to introduce into Islam the idea that God's power is not unlimited and that sinners will abide in hell forever.²³

From the foregoing statements, it is evident that ibn Taimiyyah generally uses Kalam in its pre-Ash'arite sense of Mu'tazilite theology, though later he does not spare the Ash'rite views either.

Let us now discuss the divine attributes with reference to ibn Taimiyyah's refutation of the Jahmite and the Mu'tazilite views.

According to ibn Taimiyyah, it was Ja'd ibn Dirham, a Jahmite, who first professed that "God is not seated on His Throne, "and that istiwa' means istaula," that is, God is the master of His Throne and not that "He is settled on it." This idea was then taken up by Jahm ibn Safwan (d. 128/745). Consequently, a new system of scriptural interpretation became popular at the close of the second/eighth century at the hand of Bishr ibn Ghiyath al-Marisi (d. 218 or 219/833 or 834) and his followers.²⁴ The Mu'tazilite doctrine of divine attributes was publicly preached during the last part of the third/ninth century²⁵ and then the Shi'ite doctors, Mufid,²⁶ Musawi,²⁷ and Tusi²⁸ adopted it.

The beliefs that God is eternal and that "He exists without His attributes" are dogmas of the Jahmites and the Mu'tazilites. In regard to God's

knowledge, power, seeing, hearing, etc. the older ultra-Imami sect was downright anthropomorphist, while subsequent generations went further and denied the existence of all divine attributes.²⁹ The Karramites,³⁰ in his opinion, were anthropomorphises. The Sunnites were unanimous in declaring that God was totally unlike men in His essence, qualities, and actions. The traditionists, the hermeneutists, the Sufis, the four jurists and their followers, never believed in anthropomorphism. The accusation that has been levelled at jurists like Malik, Shafi‘i, Ahmad and their followers, is based on sheer misunderstanding. These jurists in affirming the divine attributes never maintained that these attributes resembled bodily forms.³¹

Ibn Taimiyyah further maintains that the word qadim (eternal) relating to God, on which the Jahmites and their followers base their arguments, has not received a place among His asma’ al-husna (beautiful names) though the word awwal (first) is one of them. Awwal does not signify that God alone exists without His attributes from eternity and pre-existence. The attributes that are always associated with God’s eternity needs some additional eternal essence. The statement that the divine attributes are additional to His essence (dhat) is to be taken in the sense that they are additional to the concept of the essence held by the nufat (deniers of God’s qualities) and not in the sense that there is in God an essence denuded of attributes and the attributes are separate from and additional to the essence.³² For example, whenever an attribute is attached to a locus (mahall), its relation is established with the object itself and not with anything else.

When a thing is associated with blackness and whiteness, is set in motion, it is sure to move with those qualities alone and not with anything else. God, to who are attributed speech, volition, love, anger, and pleasure, must actually be associated with all of them without any additional qualities that have not been ascribed to Him. One who is speechless, motionless or inactive cannot be called speaker (mutakallim), mover (mutaharrik), or doer (fa‘il). So to attribute life, power, knowledge, etc., to God without associating them with His essence, as the Jahmites and their followers do, indicates that God lives without life, is powerful without power, and knows without knowledge, while the Qur’an and the Sunna abound with proofs that God is associated with His attributes.³³

Ibn Taimiyyah’s Anthropomorphism

From the above discussions and the similar contents of his al-‘Aqidat al-Mamawiyyat al-Kubra,³⁴ people misunderstood ibn Taimiyyah and suspected him to be an anthropomorphist. They thought that he taught, according to the literal meaning of the Qur’an and the Sunnah, that God has hands, feet, face, etc., and that He is settled on His Throne. The objection of the theologians was that if God possessed limbs and sat on the Throne, then He must be possessed of spatial character (tahayyuz) and subject to division (inqisam). Ibn Taimiyyah refused to admit that “spatial character” and “divisibility” are the essence of bodies (ajsam). Ibn Battutah’s statement that in Damascus he heard ibn Taimiyyah addressing the people saying, “Verily, God descends to the sky over our world (from heaven) in the same way as I make this descent,” while he stepped down one step of the pulpit, is nothing but a canard.

This story, as we have noticed,³⁵ has been so skilfully concocted that it appears to be a real occurrence. But when we examine this report, we cannot believe that such a thing could have happened during the visit of ibn Battutah to Damascus. Ibn Battutah, as we understand from his own description, entered Damascus on the 19th of Ramadan 726/23 August 1326, whereas ibn Taimiyyah had been imprisoned more than a month earlier (on the 26th of Sha‘ban of the same year) without being allowed to come out before his death in 726/1328.³⁶ In his *al-Aqidat al-Tadmuriyyah*,³⁷ ibn Taimiyyah clearly states, “Whoever considers God to be similar to the body of men or an originated thing to be similar to Him, is telling a lie about God. He who maintains that God is not a body and means by it that no originated thing is similar to Him is right, though the word body (*jism*) is applied here is an innovation (*bid‘ah*).”

He further says that we should say of God what He has said of Himself or what the Prophet has said about Him, and declares that the early Muslims ascribed to God attributes “without asking how” (*bila kaif*), and without drawing analogy (*tamthil*), or making alterations (*tahrif*), or divesting Him of His attributes (*ta‘til*).³⁸ Ibn Taimiyyah believes in “God’s settling Himself on His Throne, as it befits Him, without any resemblance to human action. He quotes the opinion of the early Muslims who stood between *ta‘til* and *tamthil*.³⁹

The above evidence clearly shows that in his interpretation of the divine attributes, ibn Taimiyyah attempted rather to guard himself against the charge of anthropomorphism. While refuting the Jahmite and the Mu‘tazilite conception of the divine attributes, he vehemently opposed their views which divested God of the Qur’anic expressions of face, hands, etc, as understood by the Arabs and attempted to substitute the usual meanings of these expressions by metaphorical interpretations. In his opinion, it would be absurd to suppose that the later generations should have a deeper insight into a better understanding of the divine attributes than the Prophet and his Companions who never attempted to explain them in terms of philosophy. It is for this reason that he attacked the theologians who attached the highest value to human reason as a criterion for understanding the divine attributes. Unlike other European scholars, H. Laoust is also of the opinion that the charge of anthropomorphism against ibn Taimiyyah is incompatible with his methodology and with “the positive content of his theodicy.”⁴⁰

Al-Qur’an Kalam Allah Ghair Makhluq

Al-Qur’an Kalam Allah Ghair Makhluq (The Holy Qur’an is the Uncreated Word of God)

With regard to this problem, ibn Taimiyyah not only accuses a section of people of maintaining that the Qur’an is created, but goes a step further and interprets words *ghair mukhluq* (uncreated) as eternal (*qadim*). He considers this an innovation (*bid‘ah*) which resulted from their controversies with the Mu‘tazilites and Kullabites in defining the uncreatedness of the Qur’an. Such a theory was unknown to the early Muslims. It was Ja‘d ibn Dirham along with Jahm ibn Safwan who first introduced the heretical theory that the Qur’an is created, whereas it is the Word of God, and so uncreated.⁴¹

Wahi (Revelation)

Ibn Taimiyyah admits the commonly accepted view as to the three forms of revelation received by the Prophet: received (1) in waking state as well as in dreams, (2) from behind a veil, and (3) through an angel.⁴² But to these he adds a fourth, namely, revelation common to all (al-wahi al-musharak), prophets and others. This he derives from a saying of ‘Ubadah ibn Samit and from the verses in the Qur’an which speak of revelation to people other than prophets;⁴³ for example, God speaks with His servants in their dreams. It is this common revelation which the philosophers like ibn Sina and others are said to have gained.

But he emphatically denies that Aristotle had any share in prophecy. His contemporaries were worshippers of planets and were unaware of the prophets like Abraham or Moses. Unlike Empedocles, Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato who believe at least in the origination (huduth) of the celestial spheres, Aristotle professed “the doctrine of the eternity of the heavens,” which, according to ibn Taimiyyah, clearly shows that he had no share of wahi al-mushtarak, mentioned above.⁴⁴

C. Attitude towards Philosophy

In his refutation of Aristotelian metaphysics and logic, ibn Taimiyyah left the following independent books in addition to what he wrote against them in many other writings:

1. Kitab al-Radd ‘ala al-Montiyyin, edited by ‘Abd al-Samad Sharaf al-Din al-Kutubi, Bombay, 1949.
2. Bayan Muwafiqat Sarih al-Ma‘qul li Sahih al-Manqul on the margin of Minhaj al-Sunnah, four volumes, Cairo, 1321/1903.
3. Naqd al-Montiz, edited by Sheikh Mohammad Hamid al-Faqqi, Cairo, 1370/1951.⁴⁵
4. Al-Radd ‘ala Falsulafat-i ibn Rushd published at the end of Fasl al-Makal and al-Kashf of ibn Rashd, Cairo, n.d.
5. Kitab al-‘Aql w-al-Naql on the margin of his Minhaj al-Sunnah, Cairo, 1321 - 23/1903 - 05.

His Tafsir Surat al-Ikhlās (Cairo, 1323/1905) also sheds sufficient light on his views on philosophy and theology.

Ibn Taimiyyah is not the first man to speak against the unsoundness of Aristotelian philosophy. In his Kitab ‘ala al-Montiyyin, ibn Taimiyyah mentions that Hassan ibn Musa al-Naubakhti, under whom Thabit ibn Qurrah and others translated Greek sciences, had written his Kitab al-Ara’ w-al-Diyanah pointing out the fallacies of Aristotle. Moreover, Hibat Allah ibn ‘Ali Abu Barakat, a courtier of Mustanjid bi Allah, left a book on the refutation of Aristotle’s philosophy.⁴⁶ The famous Muslim physician and philosopher Abu Zakariyah al-Razi (d.c. 313/925) was a great opponent of Aristotle’s philosophy and supported Pythagoras. In his opinion, Aristotle “had not only ruined philosophy but had also perverted its very principles.” Ibn Hazm of Andalus (d. 456/1063) and the Mu’tazilite al-Nazzam (d. 231/845) were also against the philosophy of Aristotle. Abu ‘Ali al-Jubbai’i (d.303/915) left a book in refutation of Aristotle’s book De generatione et de corruptione.⁴⁷

In his Kitab al-‘Aql w-al-Naql, ibn Taimiyyah says, “Look at the followers of Aristotle! They are following him blindly, while many of them

know full well that their master's theories are wrong. Still it is their pious belief which prevents them from refuting them in spite of the fact that many wise men have proved that there are undeniable and indubitable errors in his logical system, and they support them only for the reason that they are associated with his name. In metaphysics also Aristotle and his followers have committed blunders.”⁴⁸

In his Kitab al-Radd ‘ala al-Mantiqiyyin,⁴⁹ ibn Taimiyyah says that, according to Aristotelian logic, knowledge is of two kinds, namely, based on concept (tasawwar) and that on judgment (tasdiq), both of which are either immediate (badihi) or mediate (nazari). It is evident that all kinds of knowledge cannot be immediate or self-evident. Similarly, all kinds of knowledge cannot be mediate or acquired as in that case, to gain the knowledge of a mediate concept; one would have to depend on another mediate concept leading to a circle (daur) or endless chain (tasalsul) both of which are logically impossible. Logicians further hold that the concepts and judgments which are mediate (nazari) require some means to reach them, and, therefore, the way through which concepts are reached, is called hadd (definition), and the way through which judgments are arrived at is called qiyas (syllogism). Hence hadd and qiyas are the two fundamental bases on which the whole structure of Aristotelian logic stands. In order to refute the Aristotelian logic, ibn Taimiyyah endeavoured to demolish the fundamental bases at four points which serve as the four main chapters of his Kitab al-Radd ‘ala al-Mantiqiyyin:

1. The desired concept cannot be obtained except by means of definition (hadd).
2. Definition gives the knowledge of concepts.
3. The desired judgment cannot be obtained except by means of syllogism.
4. Syllogism or ratiocination gives the knowledge of judgment.

It may be noted here that of the above propositions the first and the third are negative, while the second and the fourth are affirmative. The main targets of ibn Taimiyyah's refutation were the “definition” and “syllogism” of Aristotelian logic.

1. The first basic proposition of the logicians that concepts cannot be obtained except by means of definition has been refuted by ibn Taimiyyah on the following grounds:⁵⁰

A. It is a negative proposition for which the logicians have not advanced any proof (dalil). Such a negative proposition cannot be accepted as the basis of positive knowledge. Therefore, the very first proposition of Aristotelian logic is based on a wrong foundation. Hence, such logic cannot be treated as a science which, according to the logicians, only protects human understanding from committing mistakes.

B. When the definition is the word of the definer, the definer will understand the thing defined either with the help of a (previous) definition or without any definition. Now, if he understands the thing defined by a previous definition, then his words in the second definition will be as good as his words in the first definition which will necessarily lead to a circle (daur) or endless chain (tasalsul) in the reasoning process, both of which are

impossible. If he understands the object defined without any definition, then the assertion in the proposition that “concepts cannot be obtained except with the help of definition” stands refuted.

C. People of different branches of learning and professions know their affairs well without taking recourse to definition.

D. No definition universally agreed upon has yet been found. For instance, nobody has so far been able to offer any definition of the two famous terms “man” and “sun” on which all could agree. In philosophy, theology, medicine, grammar, etc. many contradictory definitions have, thus, come down to us.

Now, the logicians maintain that concept is dependent on definition, but as no agreed definition of anything has yet been made, ibn Taimiyyah declares that no concept in the proper sense of the term has yet been formed. Similarly, the logicians believe that judgment is dependent on concept (tasawwur), but since concept has not yet been obtained (in the proper sense of the term), judgment also has not yet been arrived at. The result, in the opinion of ibn Taimiyyah, is the worst type of sophistication.⁵¹

E. Logicians say that the concept of quiddity (mahiyyah) can only be arrived at by definitions which are composed of genus (jins) and differentia (fasl). The logicians themselves have admitted that this sort of definition is either impossible or rarely found. But ibn Taimiyyah opines that the true significance of things may be achieved by men without definition and, therefore, concepts are not dependent on definitions.

F. To the logicians correct definitions are the combination of genus and differentia, but that which is simple and unitary, like each of the “intellects” (‘uql), has no definition; still they define it and hold it to be a concept. This shows that sometimes concepts do not need definition. If this is possible, then the species which are nearer to perception and are visible can be conceived in a way which is surer and better than the type of knowledge which is derived from the combination of genus and differentia.

G. The definition of a thing consists of several terms each of which indicates a definite meaning. Unless a man knows the terms and their meaning beforehand, it is not possible for him to understand the definition itself. For instance, a man who does not know what bread is cannot know it by its definition. Here ibn Taimiyyah makes a distinction between conception (taswir) and differentiation (tamiz) and sides with the Mutakallimun (scholastic theologians) who hold things are actually known by differentiation and not by definition.

H. When the definition is the word of the definer, the definer must have the knowledge of the object defined before defining it. It is, therefore, wrong to say that the conception of a thing depends on definition.

I. Concepts of existing things are derived either through external senses or through internal senses, none of which stands in need of any definition. Here ibn Taimiyyah observes that whatever cannot be known through the senses can be known through valid inference but not through definition.

J. Logicians say that a definition should be rejected by means of refutation and contradiction. Ibn Taimiyyah argues that refutation or contradiction is possible only when one has already formed a conception of

the object defined. So it is proved that concepts may be formed without the help of definition.

K. Knowledge of a particular thing may be self-evident to some, but acquired by others. Similarly, things which are not self-evident to some may be self-evident to others who would, therefore, need no definition for their knowledge of them. Hence it is wrong to say that knowledge depends on definition.

2. The refutation of the second proposition of the logicians, that definition gives the knowledge of concept, forms the second chapter of ibn Taimiyyah's Kitab al-Radd.⁵² In the opinion of ibn Taimiyyah, logicians and scholastic theologians gave different interpretations of definition. Greek logicians and their Muslim and non-Muslim followers claimed that definition contained the description of the object defined, while the prominent scientists held that definition served as a distinction between the object defined and the object not defined. Therefore, definition cannot give the knowledge of a concept. That definition offers true significance of the object defined and gives the knowledge of concept, has been refuted by ibn Taimiyyah on the following grounds.

A. Definition is a mere statement of the definer. For example, when man is defined as "rational animal," it is a statement that may be right or wrong. It is a mere assertion without any proof. The listener may understand it with or without its definition. In the former case, he knows it without proof which may or may be correct, while in the latter case the definition serves no purpose.

B. Logicians say that definition neither rejects the proof nor needs it. Unlike syllogism (qiyas), definition can be rejected by refutation or contradiction. To this ibn Taimiyyah replies that when the definer fails to advance any proof in favour of the correctness of the definition, the listener cannot understand the object defined by a mere definition which may or may not be correct.

C. If the conception of the object defined is attained by the definition, then it is obtained before one has known the correctness of the definition, since the knowledge of the correctness of the definition is not attained except after one has known the object defined.

D. The knowledge of the object defined depends on the knowledge of the thing (named) and of its attributes which the logicians call essential attributes (al-sifut al-dhatiyyah) and names as "the parts of definition," "parts of quiddity," etc., etc. If the listener does not know that the object defined is attributed with those attributes, he cannot conceive it. If he knows that the thing is attributed with those qualities, he has known them without any definition.⁵³

Ibn Taimiyyah then advances four similar arguments and proves that definitions do not offer true significance of the objects defined.⁵⁴

3. The third proposition of the logicians, that judgments cannot be attained except by means of syllogism, has been refuted by our author on the following grounds:⁵⁵

A. It is an uncertain claim and a negative proposition in favour of which they have not advanced any proof. According to ibn Taimiyyah, both the

self-evident (badihi) and the acquired (nazari) forms of knowledge are relative. If some people failed to attain judgments without the help of syllogism, it does not mean that nobody from among the children of Adam knows the judgments without syllogism.

B. Knowledge of a thing does not depend on a particular syllogistic process of thinking. Khabar al-mutawatir (universally accepted traditions and experiences) gives the knowledge of judgments, while syllogism does not. To one a premise is perceptible, while to another it is not. Therefore, its conclusion (natijah) is undependable.⁵⁶ Ibn Taimiyyah admits that when the premises are correct, the conclusions are also correct, but then he does not admit that knowledge depends on syllogism.⁵⁷

C. According to the logicians, the syllogistic process of gaining knowledge requires two premises, but ibn Taimiyyah says that such knowledge may be attained by one, two, three, or even more premises according to the needs and requirements of an argument. Some persons, he adds, may not require any premise at all, since they know the matter by some other source (e.g. intuition). The saying of the Prophet, “Every intoxicating thing is wine, and all kinds of wine are unlawful,” does not, in any way, support the syllogistic process of thinking in Islam. The prophet never adopted such a process in gaining knowledge of a thing. Every Muslim knows that wine (khamr) is unlawful, and he does not stand in need of two premises to prove that all intoxicating drinks are unlawful.⁵⁸ The very first figure of syllogism, therefore, says ibn Taimiyyah, does not require the roundabout way of inference for obtaining the conclusion.⁵⁹

The logicians claim that ratiocination gives the benefit of perfect knowledge, and that it deals with the knowledge of “universals,” the best of which are the ten intellects (al-‘uqul al-‘ashrah) which do not accept any change or alteration and through which the soul (al-nafs) attains perfection. The “universals” are attained by intellectual propositions which are necessary such as “All men are animals,” and “Every existing thing is either necessary or possible,” and the like which do not accept any change. Ibn Taimiyyah opposes this claim on the following grounds:⁶⁰

A. According to the logicians, since ratiocination deals with intellectual matters having no connection with the physical world, it gives no knowledge of existing things. We may, therefore, consider it useless for all practical purposes.

B. Ratiocination does not help us in understanding the Necessary Existent (wajib al-wujud), the ten intellects (al-‘uqul al-‘ashrah), the heavens (al-aflak), the elements (‘anasir arba‘ah), or the created things (muwalladat) in the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms.

C. The science of divinity to the logicians is not the knowledge of the Creator nor that of the created. They call it metaphysics (‘ilmu ma ba’d al-tabi‘ah), but some name it as “the science of divinity,” the subject-matter of which is the “simple universals” which they divide into “necessary, possible, eternal, accidental, essence, accident,” all of which have no existence in the physical world.⁶¹

Ibn Taimiyyah then traces the origin of logic to geometry. He, therefore, says that:

D. Logicians gave the geometrical forms of argumentation in their logic and called them “terms” (hudud) like those of Euclid’s geometry in order to transfer this method from the physical object to the intellectual one. This is due to the bankruptcy of their intellect and their inability to derive knowledge through a direct process. But Allah has given the Muslims more knowledge and perspicuity of expression combined with good action and faith than to all classes of people.⁶²

The logicians admit that divine knowledge is not objective. It follows that it has no existence either in the intellectual or in the physical world. It is a “universal knowledge” which does not exist except in the imagination. Therefore, there is nothing in this knowledge for the perfection of the soul.

E. Perfection of the soul depends on both knowledge of God and virtuous action (‘amal salih), and not on philosophy. Knowledge alone cannot elevate the soul. Good action must be there, because the soul has two functions, one theoretical and the other practical. Service to God consists of knowledge of God and love for Him, and God sent the prophets to call people to worship Him. Similarly, faith (iman) in God does not mean knowledge of God only, as the Jahmites believe. It consists of both knowledge and practice.⁶³

F. The fourth proposition of the logicians, that syllogism or ratiocination gives the knowledge of judgments (tasdiqat), has been refuted by ibn Taimiyyah in the fourth section of his book where he discusses the topic elaborately in about 300 pages.⁶⁴ In this section, the author seeks to prove the futility of syllogism in attaining knowledge, and often ridicules the renowned logicians by citing their alleged death-bed recantations.⁶⁵ Here he repeats in a new way almost all that he has said in the previous chapters about definition and syllogism of Aristotelian logic and brings in many irrelevant topics in favour of his arguments. He considers that syllogistic process of thinking artificial and useless. In his opinion, God has endowed human beings with “necessary knowledge” to understand their Creator and His attributes. But men invented, from very early times, various sciences which the Shari‘ah of Islam does not require for the guidance of mankind.⁶⁶

Syllogism, as has been said before, does not give us the knowledge of existing things even when it is apparently correct. Sure knowledge or judgment may be attained even by a single premise without undergoing the syllogistic process. Here, ibn Taimiyyah blames the philosophers who, from differences in the movements of the stars, inferred that there are nine heavens and that the eighth and ninth heavens are the kursi (Chair) and ‘arsh (Throne) of God, respectively. He hates Aristotle and his followers for believing in the eternity of the world (qidam al-‘alam), though most of the philosophers were against this view. They put forward further different theories regarding the life-span of this world based on the calculations of the movements of the heavens. Some said that the world would be destroyed after 12,000 years, while others held that it would last up to 36,000 years, and so on. To ibn Taimiyyah, these inferences were baseless and unfruitful.⁶⁷

Ibn Taimiyyah considers Aristotle to be ignorant of the science of divinity, and accuses ibn Sina of having adulterated it with heretical views

of the Batiniyyah who interpreted Islamic Shari‘ah according to their whims and false ratiocination. Some of them, according to our author, said that the Prophet was the greatest philosopher, while others went so far as to say that the philosophers were greater than the prophets. Sufis like ibn ‘Arabi, ibn Sab‘in, al-Qunawi, Tilimsani, etc. followed these heretical views of the Batiniyyah and used Islamic terms in naming their theories. Some of these Sufis, namely, ibn Sab‘in and his followers, did not distinguish between Islam and other religions like Christianity and Judaism. Followers of any religion could approach them and become their disciples without changing their faith.⁶⁸

To ibn Taimiyyah, knowledge of the particular is surer than knowledge of the universal. Therefore, there is not much benefit in the study of inductive logic in which knowledge of the individuals leads to knowledge of the universal. Moreover, knowledge of the individual is derived more quickly than knowledge of the universal which is often gained (by common sense or intuition) without undergoing any syllogistic process.⁶⁹

Ibn Taimiyyah opines that in syllogism (qiyasw) conclusion may be drawn out of one term only, and that it does not require *sughra* and *kubra* (minor and major) terms for drawing conclusions, because he who knows the universal quality is available in every individual.⁷⁰ Ibn Taimiyyah further believes that the teachings of the prophets include all the scriptural and the rational proofs. In support of his view, he cites a number of Qur’anic verses, e.g.:

“Lo, those who wrangle concerning the revelation of Allah without a warrant having come unto them, there is naught else in their breasts but (the quest of) greatness, which they shall never attain to.”⁷¹

“And when their messengers brought them clear proofs (of Allah’s sovereignty), they exalted in the knowledge they (themselves) possessed and that which they were wont to mock befell them.”⁷²

Keeping in view the real existence of concepts, ibn Taimiyyah adds that the philosophers divided knowledge of things into three classes: physical, mathematical, and philosophical. Of these, philosophical knowledge deals with some theoretical problems relating to the existence of simple universals.⁷³ It has nothing to do with practical purposes and is, therefore, useless.

Ratiocination, in the opinion of our author, does not prove the existence of the Creator. The Universals, according to the logicians, have no independent external existence of a definite being distinguishable from the rest of existence.⁷⁴ Moreover, in syllogism a complete conception of the middle term saves us from logical inference. Because a person, who knows that wine is forbidden and every intoxicating (drink) is wine, certainly knows already that every intoxicating (drink) is forbidden (without going through the syllogistic process of thinking).⁷⁵

Such are the arguments of ibn Taimiyyah in proving his assertion that syllogism does not give us the benefit of a new judgment.

Now, let us see how ibn Taimiyyah refutes the views of the scholastic philosophers by tackling the theories of atom, body, similarity of bodies

(tamathul al-ajsam) etc. and declares that all these are innovations in Islam, and that scholars have failed to come to any agreement about them.

Theory of the Atom

This theory was held by most of the scholastic theologians including the Jahmites, the Mu'tazilites, and the Ash'arites. Some of these atomists held that bodies were combinations of atoms existing by themselves, and that God does not destroy any of them. He destroys only the accidents (a'rad), namely, their union (ijtima'), their separation (iftiraq), their motion (harakah), and their rest (sukun). Others maintained that atoms are phenomenal: God created them ex nihilo, and once they come into existence they are never destroyed, though accidents may be destroyed. This view was held by most of the Jahmites, the Mu'tazilites, and the Ash'arites. Most of them, further, believed that it was supported even by ijma' (consensus). Ibn Taimiyyah rejects this theory on the ground that it is an innovation and that early Muslims knew nothing about it. Further, the theologians are not unanimous; some of them totally deny the existence of atoms and the composition of bodies from them.⁷⁶

Theory of the Body

Some opine that a thing which is definite or which has dimensions is called a body, while others say that it is a combination of two atoms, whereas some people maintain that it is a combination of four atoms or make up to 32. Besides these, a class of philosophers holds that bodies are formed not of atoms but of matter and form, while many other scholastics and non-scholastics profess that bodies are neither a combination of atoms nor of matter and form. Even Imam al-Haramain al-Juwaini (d. 478/1085), the teacher of Imam al-Ghazālī, doubted the combination of matter and form, though it is reported that he himself transmitted this as a view accepted by ijma' (consensus).⁷⁷

Theory of the Similarities of Bodies

This theory is popular among some Muslim philosophers. The upholders of this theory profess that bodies of all kinds are at bottom alike, because they are the combinations of atoms which are themselves like one another. The difference between one body and another is the difference of accidents (a'rad). Ibn Taimiyyah rejects this theory, first, on the ground that it has been refuted by Razi and Amidi along with many other philosophers. Secondly, because al-Ash'ari also rejects it in his Kitab al-Ibanah for being a theory of the Mu'tazilites. Thirdly, because the upholders of this theory, in accordance with the principles of the Jahmites and the Qadarites, maintain that each individual body God gives accidents (a'rad) peculiar to itself. According to them, the species (ajnas) cannot change from one into another. A body does neither turn into accidents nor one species of accidents into another.

If it is argued against them (the philosophers) that since all bodies are phenomenal and all phenomenal things turn from one to another, it necessarily proves the change of species, they would say in reply that matter (maddah) in all kinds of creation is the same. It is the qualities (sifat) that change due to union (ijtima'), separation (iftiraq), motion (harakah), and rest

(sukun), while matter (maddah) remains unchanged at all stages of creation. To ibn Taimiyyah, this argument is a mere assumption of the philosophers who have observed only the phenomenal change in things without having any knowledge whatsoever of the essence which they claim remains unchanged. These philosophers, ibn Taimiyyah continues, further assert that all things are combinations of atoms preserved in matter, and then created afresh, while the other maintains that the parts of a body are separated but will again be united in the next world. Unfortunately, the latter have to answer a riddle.

If a man is eaten up by an animal (say a fish) and then the animal is eaten by another man, then how would he be raised on the Day of Resurrection? In reply, some of them say that in the human body there are certain parts that cannot be dissolved and in these parts there is nothing of that animal which has been eaten by the second man. Ibn Taimiyyah objects to this and points out that according to the scientists ('uqala') there is nothing in the human body that cannot be dissolved and that, according to the aslaf (earlier writers), the fuqaha (jurists) and also the people in general, one body (jism) turns into another by losing its identity completely. On the basis of this the jurists discussed the problem whether an impure thing may become pure when it is changed into another. For example, they agreed that if a pig falls into a salt-mine and becomes salt, it will be lawful for a Muslim to eat that salt. Thus, ibn Taimiyyah comes to the conclusion that the arguments in favour of the theory of the similarity of bodies are not sustainable. He believes that bodies are dissimilar and inter-changeable.

Theory of Motion

Philosophers among the Jahmites and the Mu'tazilites have argued about the origination of bodies (huduth al-ajsam) from the story of Abraham, who refused to call the stars, the moon and the sun his lords (rubub).⁷⁸ They hold that Abraham did not worship these heavenly bodies simply on the ground of their motion and shift (al-harakat w-al-intiqal) as suggested by the word uful in the Qur'an.⁷⁹ In other words, they maintained that motion and shift are the distinctive signs origination of bodies.⁸⁰ Ibn Taimiyyah rejects the theory on the following grounds:

1. No such theory was maintained by the Muslim scholars nor is there any indication anywhere that Abraham's people ever thought of it. Why Abraham's people worshipped the heavenly bodies may be attributed to their superstitious beliefs that they would bring them good luck and save them from evil. That is why Abraham said, "Oh my people, I share not with you the guild of joining gods with God."⁸¹

2. To the Arabs the word uful means setting (of the sun, the moon, etc.) and being covered by veils. They did not mean by it "motion" and "shift" as understood by these philosophers.

3. "Motion" and "shift" in the heavenly bodies exist at all times. There was no reason for Abraham to ascribe "motion" and "shift" to the heavenly bodies only at the time of their disappearance. He could recognize them even before they disappeared from the sky. It was on account of such misinterpretations that ibn Sina arrived at the wrong conclusion that

“disappearance is the possibility of existence and everything the existence of which is possible is liable to disappear.”⁸²

The theory of indestructible atoms held by the philosophers goes against the agreement of the learned people (‘uluma’) that one thing may turn into another and that the atoms have no existence, just as the intellectual atoms (al-Jawahir al-‘aqliyyah) of the Peripatetics is mere conjectures.⁸³

The actual cause of the divergence of opinion among the ‘ulama’, as suggested by ibn Taimiyyah, was their invention of certain equivocal terms. For example, what is an indivisible atom? It is obvious that most intelligent people have failed to conceive it. Those who are supposed to have understood it could not prove it, and those who were said to have proved it had to take shelter under long and far-fetched interpretations.⁸⁴ None of the Companions of the Prophet nor their Successors nor anyone prior to them in natural religion (din al-fitrah) ever spoke about indivisible atoms. Naturally, therefore, it cannot be suggested that those people ever had in mind the term “body” and its being an assembly of atoms. No Arab could conceive of the sun, the moon, the sky, the hills, the air, the animals and the vegetables being combinations of atoms. Was it not impossible for them to conceive of an atom without any dimension? The traditionists, the mystics and the jurists never thought of such doctrines.⁸⁵

Theory of the Necessary Cause (Mujib bi Dhat)

Ibn Taimiyyah refutes the philosophical interpretation of the necessary cause. He says that if by “necessary cause” the philosophers mean an existence which has no “will” and no “power,” then such an existence bears no meaning, nor has it any significance externally, much less can it be existing necessarily. Ibn Rushd and other philosophers contradict themselves in their discussion of this problem. They postulate at the outset “a final cause” or ‘illat al-ghayah and then other final causes to assist it in creation (khalq) which needs volition (irudah). And since they interpret the final cause as mere knowledge and “knowledge” as the “knower,” it becomes totally absurd and contradictory, because we know necessarily that volition (iradah) is not identical with knowledge, or knowledge with the knower.

With these philosophers, says ibn Taimiyyah, heterogeneous expressions may have only one meaning, by knowledge they mean power or volition, by attribution they mean attributed, just as by knowledge they mean the knower, by power they mean the powerful, by volition the volent, and by love the lover. Granted that there is a being without “will” and “choice,” it is impossible for such a being to create this universe, because such a necessary cause needs its own causes and they cannot be independent.⁸⁶

Theories of Harakat al-Falak, Namus, and Mumkin

Ibn Sina and his followers, in trying to compromise between prophecy and philosophy, invented the theory of harakat al-falak or movement of the sky. They maintain that the heaven moves in obedience to the “First Cause” (al-‘Illat al-Ula). To these people the word ilah (deity) means a leader in obedience to whom the sky moves, and their highest philosophy is to remain obedient to leader. The “Maqalat al-Lam,” Book 1, in Aristotle’s *Metaphisca* supplies us with such a description.⁸⁷

The philosophers believed in *namus*. By *namus* they meant government of the world run by wise men for the attainment of good and avoidance of oppression. Those amongst them who acknowledged “prophecy” maintained that all religious were of the type of *namus* brought to the world for the common good. Ibn Sina was one of those who held this view. In accordance with their grades of practical philosophy, those people considered the acts of worship (*‘ibaddah*), revealed laws (*Shari‘ah*), and injunctions (*ahkam*) to be moral, domestic, and civil laws respectively. Ibn Taimiyyah strongly opposes the theories of both *harakat al-falak* and *namus*, and condemns the philosophers for their vain attempt. He pronounces them all to be far from the truth and stigmatizes Aristotle, their first teacher, as the most ignorant of men (*ajhal al-nas*), who knew nothing of God though he was well versed in physics.⁸⁸

As for the theory of *mumkin*, the scholastics are of the opinion that every possible thing (*mumkin*) either occupies space (*mutahayyiz*) or exists in that which occupies space (*qa‘im bi al-mutahayyiz*). Ibn Sina and his followers, al-Shahrastani, al-Razi, etc., in affirming an existing thing different from these, postulate humanity, animality, or such other generic concepts. To Ibn Taimiyyah these generic concepts exist only in the mind. He observed that people objected to such theories when the philosopher wanted to prove a thing which was beyond imagination or which existed by itself imperceptibly. He further disapproved of the theory that all existing things must be visible to the eyes or perceptible to the senses.⁸⁹

How far is Ibn Taimiyyah justified in declaring, against the philosophers, that God is above us in the heaven? Can “direction” be applied to God?

According to Aristotle, upward and downward do not signify place, but the predicament “where,” just as “yesterday” and “today” do signify time, but the predicament “when.”⁹⁰ This does not contradict the dialectics of Ibn Taimiyyah who protests against those who say that God cannot be in any direction, because it signifies a place, and one who is in a place must have been created (*hadith*). In his opinion, those who say that God exists in some direction, meaning thereby that He is in some existing place within the universe, are wrong, but if a “direction” they mean some non-existing thing above the universe (*‘alam*), then they are right, because above the universe there is nothing but God.⁹¹ Then the question arises, what is the Throne of God and why do men raise their hands upwards at the time of prayer?

Ibn Taimiyyah says that this is because, according to the Qur’an, God is on His Throne and the angels bear it.⁹² The early philosophers erroneously believed that the Throne meant the ninth heaven (*al-falak al-tasi‘*), because the astronomers could not discover anything beyond it. They further maintained that this ninth heaven was the cause of the movements of the other eight heavens. The ninth heaven was also called by them spirit (*al-ruh*), soul (*al-nafs*), or the Preserved Table (*al-laah al-mahfuz*) as also active intellect (*al-‘aql al-fa‘al*) and so on. They further compared this ninth heaven in its relation to the other heavens with the intellect in human beings in relation to their bodies and their activities.⁹³ All such theories are, in the opinion of Ibn Taimiyyah, mere conjectures without any foundation.⁹⁴ He quotes a tradition in defence of his belief that the *‘arsh* is above all the

heavens which are above the earth and is in the shape of a dome (qubbah).⁹⁵

Granted that the 'arsh is round and it envelops the whole creation, he further argues, it must be on top of all existing things from all directions, and a man will naturally turn his face upwards when asking for God's favour, and not downwards or in any other direction. If one who looks to any of the heavens in any direction other than upward must be counted as a fool, then what is to be said of a man who seeks God's favour but looks in any direction other than upward when upward is nearer to him than any other direction, right, left, front or back? Supposing a man intended to climb the sky or anything that is upward, he must begin from the direction that is over his head; no sensible person will ever advise him to rend the earth and the go downward because that is also possible for him. Similarly, he will not run to his right or left, front or back and then climb, though that is also equally possible for him to do.⁹⁶

By the time ibn Taimiyyah appeared with his polemics against all sciences and religious institutions whose origin could not be traced to early Islam, pantheism occupied the mind of a number of reputed Muslim scholars. Of these he mentions ibn 'Arabi (d. 638/1240), ibn Sab'in (d. 667/1269), ibn al-Farid (d. 577/1181), al-Hallaj (executed in 309/922), and a few others. Pantheism, according to ibn Taimiyyah, is based upon two wrong principles which are against Islam, Christianity, and Judaism and are contradictory to rational and scriptural arguments.⁹⁷

Some pantheists who profess the doctrines of incarnation (hulul), unification (ittihad), or other closely related doctrine like "Unity of Existence," maintain that "existence" is one, though there are two degrees of it. It is (1) necessary in the Creator and (2) contingent in the creation. To this group of pantheists ibn Taimiyyah assigns ibn 'Arabi, ibn Sab'in, ibn al-Farid, Tilimsani, etc. Of these ibn 'Arabi distinguishes between existence (wujud) and affirmation (thubut) saying that "substances" do exist in non-Being ('adam) independent of God, and that the existence of God is the existence of the substance themselves: the Creator needs the substances in bringing them into existence, while the substances need Him for obtaining their existence which is the very existence of Himself.⁹⁸ Al-Qunawi (d. 673/1274) and his followers made a distinction between "the general" and "the particular" (al-itlaq w-al-ta'yin). They maintained that the necessary One is unconditionally identical with the existing things in general. To ibn Taimiyyah these are fantastic imaginings, because what is general in conception must be definite in individuals.⁹⁹

Ibn Sab'in and his followers hold that "the Necessary" and "the contingent" are like "matter" and "form." Ibn Taimiyyah considers this view absurd and self-contradictory. In his opinion, it leads to the theories of incarnation and unity of existence. These people are the pantheists who failed to conceive of the divine attribute called al-mubayanah li al-makhluqat, different from originated things. They knew that God exists and thought that His Being is the same as His existence, just as a man looks to the ray of the sun and calls it the sun itself.¹⁰⁰ Ibn Taimiyyah quotes a saying of Sheikh Junaid Baghdadi, "To believe in the Unity of God is to

separate the quality of origination from that of eternity,” and emphasizes that there must be a distinction between the Creator and the created; they cannot be one and the same.¹⁰¹

According to ibn ‘Arabi, non-existence is a positive thing even in its state of non-being.¹⁰² He further maintains that the existence of such things is the existence of God Himself; they are distinguished by their essential characteristics which persist in the void, and are united with the existence of God, who knows them. Abu ‘Uthaman al-Shahham,¹⁰³ the teacher of al-Jubai’i, was the first to speak about it in Islam. These people argued in favour of their theory that had there been nothing in the void, there would not have been any difference between (1) things known, and (2) things unknown. Distinction, in their opinion, can exist only between positive things. Such a theory is absurd according to ibn Taimiyyah. The Sunnite Mutakallimun called these people heretics.¹⁰⁴ Ibn ‘Arabi’s theories generally revolve around this point. Regarding the above doctrine of ibn ‘Arabi, ibn Taimiyyah remarks that the Jews, the Christians, the Magians and even the heathens never maintained such a belief. He, therefore, calls it a Pharaonic theory which had also been held by the Qarmatians.¹⁰⁵

According to ibn Taimiyyah, ibn ‘Arabi’s theory reveals two things when analyzed: (1) denial of the existence of God, and (2) denial of His creation of creatures.¹⁰⁶ Besides, according to ibn Taimiyyah, ibn ‘Arabi maintains that sainthood (wilayah) is better than prophethood (nubuwwah) and that sainthood will never come to an end, whereas prophecy has already been terminated.¹⁰⁷

Ibn Taimiyyah then gives various explanations of the pantheistic views of ‘Arabi, and declares them absurd. He compares ibn ‘Arabi to the deaf and dumb, and quotes the verse of the Holy Qur’an, “Deaf, dumb and blind, therefore, they shall not retrace their steps from error.”¹⁰⁸ Similar attacks were made also by him against other Muslim philosophers.

We have seen ibn Taimiyyah’s attitude towards theology, logic, and philosophy. He quotes Imam Shafi’i that theologians should be beaten with shoes and palm branches but while replying to theological as well as philosophical questions, he cannot help adopting theological and philosophical argumentation. From his method of discussion it is evident that in theology and philosophy he is able to put forward an argument by referring everything to the Holy Qur’an and the Sunnah declaring the rest to be innovations.

As for his views about Aristotelian logic, he exhibits his power of argumentation in an extra-ordinary way. He is, no doubt, an independent thinker and is free from the fetters of blind following (taqlid) in every matter. He may be called the precursor of the modern trend of anti-Aristotelianism.

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- Fawat: Al-Kutubi, Fawat al-Wafayat, bulaq, 1299/1881
Ikhlās: Ibn Taimiyyah, Tafsir Surat al-Ikhlās, ed. Mohammad Badr al-Din al- Hallabi, Cairo, 1323/1905
Jawab: Idem, Jawab Ahl- al-‘Ilm w-al-Imam bi al-Tahqiq ma Akhbara bihi al- Rasul al-Rahman min anna Qul hu w-Allah To‘dil Thuluth al-Qur’an, Cairo, 1325/1907
IOL: India Office Library, London
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Lisan: Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Lisan al-Mizan, Hyderabad, 1323/1905
MR: Ibn Taimiyyah, Majmu‘at al-Rasa’il, published by Mohammad Badr al- Din, Cairo, 1323/1905
MRK: Idem, Majmu‘at al-Rasa’il al-Kubra, 2 vols., Cairo, 1323/1905
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M. Sunnah: Majallah al-Majma‘ al-‘Ilm al-‘Arabi, Damascus
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R. ‘Ubudiyyah: Ibn Taimiyyah, Risalat al-‘Ubudiyyah in MS
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Naqd al-Mantiq: Idem, Naqd al-Mantiq, ed. Mohammad al-Hamid al-Faqqi, Cairo, 1370/1950
Istihusun al-Khaud: Al-Ash‘ari, Risalah fi Istihan al-Khaud fi ‘Ilm al-Kalam, Hyderabad, 1323/1905

Notes

1. A place famous for its Hanbalite School. Here lived the Sabeans and the philosophers who worshipped the heavenly bodies and images after their names. Prophet Moses was sent to these people for their guidance. See MRK, vol. 1, pp. 425 et sq.
2. Fawat, vol. 1, p. 35.
3. Arba‘un, pp. 34 - 36.
4. Subki, Tabaqat, vol. 5, p. 240, s.v. Mohammad ‘Abd al-Rahim ibn Mohammad al-Sheikh Safi al-Din al-Hindi, born in India in 644/1246 and died in Damascus in 715/1315, ten years after the mundzarrah held in Cairo.
5. Fawat, vol. 1, p. 141; Rihlah, vol. 1, p. 216; Majallah, vol. 37, part 3, p. 196.
6. Fawat, vol. 1, pp. 42 et sqq.
7. Rihlah, vol. 1, p. 217.
8. Majallah, vol., 27, Part 2, p. 193; Fawat, vol. 1, p. 41
9. Al-Kutubi, Fawat, loc. cit.
10. This treatise has been edited by Scrajul Haque in JASP, vol. 2, 1957.
11. M. Sunnah, Vol. 3, pp. 68 et sqq.
12. Imam al-Haramain Abu al-Ma‘ali ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Yusuf (d. 478/1085), the greatest theologian of the fifth/11th century.
13. Abu al-Fath Mohammad ibn ‘Abd al-Karim (d. 469/1076).
14. M. Sunnah, vol. 1, p. 181.

15. M. Tafsir, p. 387 et sq.
16. Ibid., p. 62 et sq.
17. Ash'ari, Istihsan al-Khaud, Hyderabad, 1323/1905
18. The leader of this group Jahm ibn Safwan, was put to death at Merv in 128/745 for his heretical doctrines. Baghdadi, Farq, p. 19; Shahrastani, vol. 1, p. 60; Bukhari in the last book of his Sahih refutes the Jahmite views.
19. Mizan, vol. 1, p. 185, No. 1443; ibn Hajar, Lisan, vol. 2, p.105 no. 427
20. Khallid ibn 'Abd Allah (66 - 126/685 - 743).
21. Ikhlas, p. 63; ba'labakkiyah, p. 392.
22. Fol. 58/B. IOL. Loth. 471
23. M. Sunnah, vol. 4 p. 144 et sqq.
24. MRK, vol. 1, p. 425 et sq.
25. M. Sunnah, vol. 1, p. 172.
26. Mohammad ibn Mohammad ibn al-Nu'man al-Mufid (336 - 413/947 - 1022), teacher of al-Tusi.
27. Sharif al-Ridha' al-Musawi, Yaqut, vol. 5, p. 174
28. Mohammad ibn Hassan ibn 'Ali al-Tusi (d. 460/1067)
29. M. Sunna, vol. 1, pp. 172 - 74.
30. Followers of Abu 'Abd Allah Mohammad ibn Karram (d. 255/868)
31. M. Sunnah, vol. 1, pp 172 - 74.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., p. 178
34. See MRK, vol. 1
35. Supra, p. 798
36. See the article by Bahjat al-Baitar in Majallah Majma' al-'Ilm al-'Arabi, Damascus, vol. 27, part 3, p. 411.
37. MS. Berl. No. 1995, fol. 54(b).
38. Ibid., fol. 2(a); MRK, vol. 1, p. 428.
39. MRKvol. q1, pp. 428 - 29.
40. H. Laoust, Quelques opinions sur la theodicee d'Ibn Taimiya, Memoires publies,m Cairo, 1937, vol. 43, pp. 431 - 33.
41. Jawab, pp. 74 - 87.
42. Qur'an 42:50.
43. Ibid., 5:3, 38:6.
44. See Serajul Haque, "A Letter of ibn Taimiyya toAbu al-Fida" in Dokumenta Islamica Inedita, Akademic Verlag, Berlin, 1952, pp. 155 et sqq.
45. This is perhaps identical with No. 1.
46. Cf. Sayyid Sulaiman Nadawi, "Muslims and Greek Schools of Philosophy," Islamic Culture, Hyderabad Deccan, vol. 1, p. 87.
47. Ibid., p. 86.
48. Ibid., p. 89.
49. Al-Radd, p. 4.
50. Ibid., pp. 7 - 14, 180.
51. Ibid., p. 8.
52. Ibid, pp. 14 - 87.
53. Ibid, p. 39.
54. Ibid. p. 32 - 39.
55. Ibid pp. 88, 240.
56. Ibid. pp. 92, 298.
57. Ibid. p. 298.
58. Ibid. pp. 168 et. sq.
59. Ibid. p. 200.
60. Ibid. pp., 122 - 26.
61. Ibid. p. 126.
62. Ibid. pp. 137 et sq.
63. Ibid. pp. 138, 144 et sq.
64. Ibid. pp. 246 - 545.

65. Ibid. pp. 248, 321
66. Ibid. pp. 256 et sq.
67. Ibid. pp. 267 et sq.
68. Ibid. pp. 278 - 83.
69. Ibid. p. 316
70. Ibid. pp. 337 - 40.
71. Qur'an 40:56
72. Ibid. 49:83
73. Al-Radd, pp. 324 et sqq.
74. Ibid. p. 344.
75. Ibid. pp. 351 et sq.
76. Ikhlas, p. 16
77. Ibid. p. 50
78. For the full story see the Qur'an 6:76 et sqq
79. Ibid. 6:77 - 79
80. M. Sunnah, vol. 1, pp. 197 et sqq.; Al-Radd, pp. 304 - 05.
81. M. Sunnah, vol. 1, p. 197.
82. Cf. M. Sunnah, al-aful hu w-al-imkun wa kullu mumkin afil.
83. Ibid. vol. 1, p. 182.
84. Ikhlas, pp. 52 et sq.
85. Ibid. p. 53
86. M. Sunnah, vol. 1, p. 111.
87. Ikhlas, p. 57.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid., pp. 65 et sqq.
90. Aristotle, Organon, London, 1877p. 18.
91. M. Sunnah, vol. 1, p. 250.
92. Qur'an, 40:7
93. MRM, vol. 4, pp. 106 - 08.
94. Ibid., p. 116.
95. On the authority of Abu Dawud, narrated by Jubair ibn Mut'im. Here ibn Taimiyyah appears to have quoted a tradition of doubtful authenticity, because this tradition has not been accepted by all authorities. See annotation by Rashid Rida in MRM, vol. 4, pp. 114 et sqq.
96. MRM, vol. 4, pp. 124 - 26
97. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 66.
98. Ibid., p. 67.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid.
101. Ibid., p. 102
102. Ibid., p. vo. 4, p. 6
103. Known as Abu Ya'qub al-Shahham, see al-Farq, p. 163.
104. MRM, vo. 4, p. 6
105. Ibid., p. 17.
106. Ibid
107. Ibid., p. 58.
108. The Qur'an, 2:18

Part 3: The Sufis

Chapter 42: Jalal al-Din Rumi

Chapter 43: Mahmud Shabistari, Al-Jili, and Jami

Chapter 44: Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi

Chapter 42: Jalal al-Din Rumi

A. Life

Jalal al-Din Rumi is the greatest mystical poet of Islam. It can be said without fear of contradiction that in the entire range of mystical literature of the whole world there is none to equal him either in depth or in comprehensiveness and extent. There have been mystics both in the East and in the West whose experiences in the realm of the spirit may have equalled the spiritual perceptions of Rumi, but their emotional or intuitional side was not matched by an equally clear and powerful intellect. Rumi's uniqueness lies in the fact that in him reason is wedded to a wide and deep religious experience. The Muslim world has honoured him with the title of Maulawi'i Ma'nawi (the Doctor of Meaning), a religious scholar who is capable of philosophizing, of penetrating into the meaning of physical and spiritual phenomena, and lifting the veil of appearance to peep into the reality behind them.

When he argues he is a match for a superb dialectician of the stature of a Socrates or a Plato, but ever conscious of the fact that logic is a poor substitute for life. He inherited vast and rationalistic outlook of Hellenism sifting the grain from the chaff, separating the kernel from the husk. As a Muslim he has an heir to the spiritual wealth bequeathed to humanity by the glorious line of great prophets from Abraham to Mohammad. We find in him the sturdy ethics of the Israelite prophets, the dynamic view of life of Islam and the all-pervading love of Jesus. He calls his magnum opus the Mathnawi, the "Shop of Unity," wherein the diversities of life are harmonized and apparent contradictions transcended by creative unities. Nothing that is human or divine is alien to him. He expands with great force and conviction the original thesis of Islam, of the fundamental unity of all spiritual religions despite the contradictory dogmas that narrow theologies have formulated.

The windows of his soul are wide open in all directions. Although a believing and practising Muslim, he is temperamentally a non-conformist for he realizes the secondary nature of the form in comparison with the spirit. He is a Protestant of Protestants, never tiring in the exposition of his thesis that in the realm of the spirit mere authority without personal realization is of no avail. Faith in the sense of believing in the unbelievable and indemonstrable realities is repudiated by him in very strong terms. For him, God is a reality to be experienced and apprehended as more real than the objects of sense-experience; similarly, the relation of man to God is not a matter merely to be rationalized and moulded into a dogma but to be realized in the depth of one's own being where the human gets into tune with the divine and the finite is embraced by the infinite. It is impossible to put any label on a genius like him.

During his life rigid orthodoxy was extremely suspicious of his beliefs and averse to some of his practices which were stigmatized as innovations and aberrations. There was sufficient material in his beliefs and utterances to convict him of heresy before a court of inquisition. His biographers have related an incident in his life which throws light on his catholicity. It is said that the chief of orthodox would expose his heresies. At the very outset,

Rumi was asked to declare as to which of the 72 sects he offered allegiance. Rumi gave a very unexpected answer by saying that he believed in all of them, meaning thereby that there is some truth in every sect which has been exaggerated and distorted by the fanatical exuberance of the blind followers of its tenets. The theologian was non-plussed, not knowing how to tackle a man of such an indefinite attitude. Piqued by this disconcerting reply the theologian, in an angry outburst, said that it signified that he was a heretic and an atheist. The reply to this was still more disturbing for the theologian: Rumi said that he endorsed even this judgment about him.

Let us start with a short biographical sketch of this remarkable religious genius to note his background and the influences that moulded him. He was born in 604/1207 during the reign of Mohammad Khwarizm Shah whose empire extended from the Ural Mountains to the Persian Gulf and from the Euphrates to the Indus. The family had been settled there for several generations. As Balkh was in the Persian domain and Rumi wrote in the Persian language, the modern Iranian scholars claim him as belonging to the Iranian nation. On the other hand, the Turks call him a Turk because after his early youth the family settled in Anatolia which was a Turkish province but was formerly a part of the Roman Empire, and hence the great mystic poet is Arab because at the summit of his genealogical table we find the great Caliph Abu Bakr, the first successor of the Prophet.

The spirit of Rumi, the universal mystic, must be smiling at these attempts of racial appropriation. In one of his lyrics he says that heaven is his original homeland, to which he craves to return. In another lyric he asks his fellow Muslims as to what he should say about himself, "As to my homeland it is not Khurasan, nor any other place in the East or the West, and as to my creed I am neither a Jew, nor a Zoroastrian, not even a Muslim as this term is generally understood."

In his ancestry we find great names, great not only as scholars and divines, but also from the mundane point of view. On the maternal side he is a grandson of the great monarch Mohammad Khwarizm Shah who had given his daughter in marriage to the famous mystic Husain Balkhi, Rumi's grandfather. The father of Rumi, Baha' al-Din was famous for learning and piety. He lectured from morning until evening on religious sciences as well as on mystical lore, and delivered sermons on Mondays and Fridays to crowded audiences. Commoners as well as scholars, aristocrats, and royalty gathered to hear him. The monarch held Imam Fakhr al-Din Razi, the commentator of the Qur'an and one of the great dialecticians, in great esteem and sometimes brought him along to hear Baha' al-Din.

Razi was reputed to be imbued with Greek dialectics, and attempted to prove religious truths by logic. Seeing Razi in the audience Baha' al-Din would pour his wrath on these attempts at the Hellenization of Islam, but the presence of the monarch and the prestige of the preacher prevented him from defending himself. Rumi as a young boy must have heard these denunciations from the lips of his learned father. In the Mathnawi, when Rumi takes up the cudgel on behalf of personal experience against mere logic-chopping, he points to Razi as a representative of a class of people

who want to enter the realm of religious truth, walking on the wooden legs of mere argumentation:

“If dialectics alone could reveal the secrets of the spirit, Razi would have certainly reached them, but the feet of the dialectician are wooden and the wooden feet are most shaky.”

It is said that Razi was so jealous of the popularity and prestige of Baha' al-Din that he poisoned the mind of the monarch against him by insinuating that, if the influence of this preacher were allowed to develop indefinitely, he would wield a power that would surpass the power of the sovereign. Autocratic rulers in Christendom as well as in Muslim kingdoms have often shown fearful jealousy of religious leaders, be they popes or priests. There is no wonder that Khwarizm Shah became apprehensive of the growing influence and prestige of Baha' al-Din and his fears were fanned by the latter's rivals in the religious field. It is quite possible that Baha' al-Din left Balkh along with his whole family to forestall an adverse action against him. But there is also another version about his motive to migrate.

Shortly after he left Balkh the Tarter invasion over-whelmed the domains of Khwarizm Shah. It may be that Baha' al-Din had seen that it was imminent and so he decided to move to a safer region. The family moved first to Nishapur and then to Baghdad where Baha' al-Din stay was prolonged because Baghdad was a cultural centre of the Muslim world and attracted scholars from distant Muslim lands. A delegation from the Sultan of Rum, 'Ala al-Din Kaiqubad, happened to visit Baghdad during this period, its members were greatly impressed by Baha' al-Di's lectures and sermons. On their return to Anatolia they spoke to the Sultan about the spiritual eminence of Baha' al-Din and the Sultan persuaded him to come over to his realm. Baha' al-Din travelled from Baghdad to the Hijaz and passing though Syria he stayed for about a year in the town of Aque and then stopped for seven years in Laranda in Zinjan.

Here, in 662/1263, his illustrious son Rumi, now mature in mind and years, was married. It was here that Rumi's son Sultan Walad was born a year later. The Sultan invited the family to settle down in Quniya, capital of his kingdom. The Sultan with his retinue received him at some distance from the town and reaching the city wall he got down from his horse to escort the great divine on foot. Baha' al-Din's family were lodged in a palatial house and the Sultan would visit him on a regular basis.

We see from this family background that Rumi grew up in an atmosphere of religious learning in which religious problems were discussed and controversies entered into with great enthusiasm. Rumi must have learned much from his father and the great scholars who were devoted to him. The most eminent among them was Burhan al-Din Muhaqqiq whose title denotes that he carried on independent research (tahqia). Rumi's father entrusted the education of his promising son to this teacher who inculcated in his student the habit of independent thinking. Rumi's education continued after the death of his father and we find him at the age of 25 travelling in search of knowledge to great centres of learning like Damascus and Halab (Aleppo).

Rumi lived for some time in the hostel of Helariyyah College. There were eminent teachers on the staff of this College, one of whom was Kamal al-Din ibn 'Adim Halabi, who wrote a history of Halab, a fragment of which has been published in Europe. Rumi's education covered the whole curriculum: the Qur'anic commentary, Hadith, jurisprudence, and Arabic language and literature. His Mathnawi bears ample evidence of this vast learning. It is on account of this intellectual and academic training that his mysticism is not merely emotional. At every step we find him intellectualizing his supra-rational spiritual experiences. He spent seven years in the colleges of Damascus and we find him still engaged in academic pursuits even at the age of 40. The Holy Prophet Mohammad had started his mission at that age. In Plato's Republic Socrates proposed a similarly long process of education for those who would be philosophic rulers of his ideal republic.

Although it is stated in the Manaqib al-'Arifin that at the time of the death of Rumi's father his teacher and tutor Burhan al-Din certified his student's thorough attainment in prevalent sciences and then launched him on a long course of mystical practices which continued for nine years, yet we do not find any fruits of these spiritual experiences in the life of Rumi before his encounter with the mystical and mysterious Shams of Tabriz. Rumi now engaged himself in teaching theology and giving sermons as the learned religious teachers of his time and usually did. His verdict or fatwa was sought and quoted about religious questions on which he was held to be an authority. He avoided music as the rigid puritanical orthodoxy of his time did.

There is no doubt that his meeting with Shams was a turning point in his life. As to what happened when Shams and Rumi met for the first time, there exist a number of legends that are inconsistent. According to one version, Rumi, surrounded by books and students, was engaged in teaching when Shams suddenly dropped in and asked him, "What are these books about?" Taking him to be a man without any learning Rumi replied that the questioner could not know what they contained. At this the heap of books burst into flames. Rumi in great consternation asked him the meaning of this miraculous phenomenon. At this Shams said, "This is what you cannot understand." Another version of this legend is that Shams threw the books in a cistern of water and when Rumi became enraged at this Shams brought them out without the water having touched them, they were as dry as before.

Shibili, the eminent modern writer of a book on Rumi, is evidently right in his judgment that these legends are not based on facts because Sipah Salar, who spent 40 years in intimate contact with Rumi, relates his meeting with Shams in a simple story unadorned by any legend. If anything unusual had happened, surely this friend and devotee would not have missed mentioning it. He says that Shams was the son of 'Ala' al-Din and was a descendant of Kaya Buzurg, an Imam of the Isma'ili sect before dissociating himself from it. Shams received his education in Tabriz and then became a disciple of Baba Kamal al-Din Jumdi, who introduced him to the mystic way of life.

He travelled from place to place living in caravanserais, weaving girdles and selling them for bread. He was staying in a serai of Quniyah when Rumi went to see him. The impression of this mystic on Rumi's mind was deep and lasting. Sipah Salar says that the two were closeted together for six months in Salah al-Din Zarkub's room, which none but Zarkub was allowed to enter. Now Rumi left off teaching and preaching and spent days and nights only in the company of Shams. It was rumoured that a magician had bewitched the great divine.

Rumi's sons and disciples turned against Shams whom they considered to be a charlatan and a sorcerer. Under these circumstances Shams left Quniyah suddenly, leaving no clue as to his whereabouts. After a long time Shams wrote to Rumi from Damascus. This letter kindled the flame in Rumi's mind again. In the meantime his disciples whose resentment had driven away Shams had repented of their conduct. Rumi's son Sultan Walad in his Mathnawi has mentioned this incident in detail because he was deputed by his father to go to Damascus accompanied by some other disciples to persuade Shams to return to Quniyah.

The epistle of Rumi written in verse is recorded in the Mathnawi of Sultan Walad. This letter shows how deeply Rumi had felt the pangs of separation from his spiritual guide and in what great esteem he held him. Shams accompanied this delegation and returned to Quniyah where he was received with great honour by Rumi and his disciples. It appears that Shams now meant to stay on, having allayed the suspicions of Rumi's disciples by marrying a maid of Rumi's house whose name is Kimiya. A residential tent was pitched for the wedded couple in front of the family residence of Rumi. Something happened again which turned Rumi's son 'Ala' al-Din Chalpi against Shams and others joined him with the result that Shams disappeared now for good.

Rumi's reliable biographer, Sipah Salar, says only this much, Shams left Quniyah again in indignation and although Rumi sent people to search for him in various places, no one could find him. But other biographers of Rumi are in full accord about the conviction that Shams was assassinated by some of Rumi's disciples, and the author of Nafahat al-Uns mentions the name of Rumi's son, 'Ala' al-Din, as his murderer. The assassination or disappearance of Shams took place in about 645/1247.

It is difficult to assess the mind and character of a man who appeared from nowhere and disappeared without leaving a trace after having influenced so deeply one of the greatest religious geniuses of all times. Could a man of Rumi's mental calibre be the subject of an abiding delusion created by a master hypnotist? The world has valued Rumi as a man of deep spiritual apprehension, a man whose religious life was rooted in a personal experience which could stand the test of reason. We find him acknowledge his debt to Shams in a thousand soul-stirring lyrics. Shams found Rumi an academic theologian and conventional preacher and converted him into an ecstatic mystic in deep personal contact with the ineffable verities of life. The prosaic Rumi over-night was turned into an ecstatic lyricist, who now found poetry and music much better than philosophy and theology as vehicles for the expression of truth.

Rumi identified himself so completely with Shams that the voluminous collection of mystical lyrics is called Diwan-i Shams-i Tabriz. In hundreds of lyrics the inspiration received from this mysterious spiritual guide is acknowledged with vibrating gratitude. The realm of mystical experience is a doubly sealed mystery to be uninitiated, but he has to accept the testimony of Rumi about it, however personal and subjective it may be, when he says with unshakable conviction that in Zarkub's shop, where the guide and the disciple were closeted together in mysterious intimacy, he found a spiritual treasure of indescribable value and ineffable beauty, both of form and meaning.

We can say only this much, Shams must have been a man of extraordinary psychological power capable of influencing the master mind of his age, whose magnum opus of intellectualized and versified religious experience created a monument of mystical poetry in which eternal love and cosmic reason seem to have achieved perfect accord.

Rumi had no intention of either founding a new sect or initiating a new movement; his devotees and disciples, however, did form a distinctive group after his death, but they developed and perpetuated only some external observances and rituals, and degenerated into a community of whirling dervishes. A felt-cap without a seam - the leaders also wrapping a turban round it and wearing voluminous trousers of many folds - became the standard livery of this group which was incapable of comprehending either the depth of Rumi's thought or the spirit of his religious experience. Rumi was bitterly averse to imitation and blind conformity in religious life became a victim, by irony of accompanied by spontaneously gushing forth lyrics was an involuntary expression of a deeply stirred soul.

The imitators of externals adopted it as a regular practice of inducing religious emotion, unconsciously believing, like William James, that the voluntary adoption of the physical expression of an emotion tends to create the emotion itself. The ecstasy-seeking group sits in a circle, while one of them stands up to dance with one hand on the breast and the other arm spread out. In the dance there is no forward or backward movement but that of whirling around with increasing tempo. When accompanied by music, only flutes and drums are used. This a trying process of under-going a discipline of service to others before a candidate for membership could qualify for it. It starts not with the service of men but the service of animals for 40 days, obviously with the idea that if a man can serve animals dutifully with love and consideration he would serve his fellow beings still better. After this he sweeps the floors of the lodgings of poor devotees. It is followed by other terms of service for 40 days each of drawing water and carrying fuel and other general domestic chores. This is considered to be a cure for man's love of power and privilege and class and caste. At the end he is given a bath to symbolize riddance of lower passions. He takes a vow of total abstinence from all forbidden acts and is allowed to wear the garb of the sect.

B. Beliefs and Philosophy

Rumi as a philosopher of religion stands shoulders above all those Muslim thinkers who are called hukama' in the history of Muslim thought.

He compiled no systematic treatise either on philosophy or theology and made no sustained attempt to build a system of either speculative or mystical metaphysics. One cannot put him in the category of philosophers like al-Farabi, ibn Sina (Avicenna), ibn Rushd (Averroes), and even al-Ghazālī. He did not hitch his wagon to these stars with the exception of al-Ghazālī, who attempted a monumental synthesis of orthodox Muslim theology and mysticism attempting to bridge the gulf between the two. He is the heir to the ethical monotheism of the Israelite prophets which culminated in the dispensation of Islam, but by the time this heritage reached him it had already been supplemented by Hellenistic thought. But he deepens and broadens all that he inherits. He belongs to no school or sect. He picks up what he considers to be true and discards whatever he thinks to be false, however time-honoured and orthodox the view or dogma may be.

A patient study of his Mathnawi reveals him not as a mediocre eclectic but a man with a definite view of the nature of existence. He has a deep-rooted feeling about the basic unity of reality and appearance. For a man like him every thesis and anti-thesis is transcended by a higher synthesis wherein contradictions are resolved in the ever-advancing movement of life. He talks of mere dialecticians with disdain but does not shun dialectics to sustain a thesis. You may consider him a free-lance both in philosophy and religion, but his freedom is informed with a basic attitude that never wavers and perpetually returns to itself after numerous digressions and deviations.

While dealing with a genius like Rumi one is always conscious of a feeling of injustice towards him. The best that he has uttered vibrates with life, while an intellectual analysis in relation to life itself is, in the words of Goethe, like grey autumn leaves as compared with the sapful green tree which has dropped them. But this drawback is inherent in all intellectual analysis and theories and one has to regretfully remain contented with it. We will make an attempt to give a brief summary of his beliefs, outlook and metaphysics under a few headings.

C. The Nature of Existence and Evolution

The ground of all existence is spiritual. It is not easy to define the meaning of the term “spiritual,” especially in the world-view of Rumi. For him, the ground of being is akin to what we feel in ourselves as spirit or ego. Infinite number of egos emerging out of the Cosmic Ego constitutes the totality of existence. In this view even matter is spiritual. The thinker nearest to Rumi in this respect is the German philosopher Leibniz, who centuries after Rumi conceived of existence as infinity of egos at different levels of consciousness. As in the metaphysics of Leibniz, Rumi believed God to be a universal cosmic Monad. There is nothing like lifeless matter; matter is also alive though at a lower gradation of being. “Earth and water, fire and air are alive in the view of God, though they appear to be dead to us.”

In all speculative philosophy, the starting point, the point of departure, is an indemonstrable postulate. So is the case in the thought of Rumi. Assuming existence to be spiritual in the process of creation, he starts with a belief in devolution. There is no satisfactory explanation of why the infinite,

self-existent, self-sufficient Spirit should start dropping egos to the lowest level of sentience and consciousness.

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have inculcated a belief in creation ex nihilo by a voluntary act of the Creator at a particular moment of time. In Rumi's view there is no creation in time because time itself is created and is a category of phenomenal consciousness which views events in serial time, and mystic consciousness diving into the spiritual ground of being apprehends reality as non-spatial and non-temporal. We see here the Neo-Platonic influence replacing the orthodox Islamic concept of creation in time. Instead of creation in time, we have eternal emergence of egos. Rumi has repeated in many places his view of the eternity of spirits. "I existed when there were neither names nor the things that are named.

We see him moving only one step with Plotinus in conceding that there is emanation instead of creation in time, and then he suddenly parts company with him. Starting with initial unexplainable devolution he becomes a creative evolutionist. All beings have emerged from God by a kind of overflow of the divine spirit, but every being or ego is impelled irresistibly by an urge to return to its origin. This urge which Rumi calls love becomes the evolutionary principle of all existence. Existence, viewed phenomenally, is graded, the egos in one grade being superior or inferior in self realization. The essence of all egos or monads is spiritual which may be called divine because they have all emerged from the self-same divine principle.

The doctrine of the fall of Adam is re-interpreted in Rumi's metaphysics. The original state from which the ego fell was not the traditional paradise of gardens and streams but the unitary ground of divinity. The Fall is concerned not only with man or the disobedience of Adam and Eve, but is a universal cosmic phenomenon. One might say metaphorically that monads in the realm of matter and vegetable and animal kingdoms are all fallen angels striving to return to their original divine ground. The principle that everything has a natural tendency to return to its origin holds good in all spheres and applies to every existent.

Previous to Rumi we find among Greek thinkers guesses about the biological evolution of birds and beasts and man having been gradually differentiated and developed from fish due to environmental changes and the needs of adaptation, but this speculation was never developed any further either by materialistic thinkers like Democritus or idealists and realists like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

We find a doctrine of graded existence and a theory of development in Aristotle's concepts of form and matter and entelechies. Inorganic matter is organized into different species of plants because every plant realizes the idea of its species. Every realized form serves as matter for the embodiment of a still higher entelechy until we reach God who is pure idea or self-thinking though unconcerned with the particularities of phenomenal existence and unrelated to creatures contaminated with matter. Matter for Aristotle is a negative end-concept without a shadow of reality because all reality belongs to ideas and matter as such is bereft of any Idea. Aristotle is not a monadologist like Rumi and Leibniz and for him the human ego also has a transitory phenomenal existence; what is real in it belongs to universal

reason and whatever is personal or individual has no abiding value or reality.

After Aristotle the doctrine of Emanation and Return is found in Platonis. In his view also there is a gradation in existence which is a result of more or less distance from the original ineffable One who is devoid of all qualities like the Nirguna Brahman, can rise again to their original ground by discarding material and biological urges. This leads logically to a negativistic, quietistic, and ascetic view of life of which we find no trace in Rumi because of the Islamic ethics of integration and the eternal value of the individual. For Aristotle, the scheme of graded existence was eternally fixed and there was no idea of the evolution of species. In Plotinus, too, there are more of eternally graded devolutionary states of existence than an eternal urge to develop into higher and higher states which is so clearly depicted in the metaphysics of Rumi. Rumi touches Plotinus and Aristotle only tangentially and then develops a thesis of his own, not found before him in any speculative or religious metaphysics except that of the Ikhwan al-Safa and ibn Miskawaih.

In the whole history of philosophy he is one of the outstanding evolutionary thinkers. He is not a mechanical or biological evolutionist like Darwin and Spencer. Bergson's creative evolution comes nearest to Rumi. For Bergson, too, life is creative and evolutionary; however, he believes this creative evolutionary process to be without any goal. But how could one say that life evolves unless there is an implicit idea of a goal towards which it moves? For Rumi God is the ground as well as the goal of all existence, and life everywhere is a goal seeking activity.

Bergson developed no concept of the self, nor is evolution for him a process of self-realization. Rumi tells us why life is creative and evolutionary and defines for us the nature of the creative urge. It was only in the last decade of his life that Bergson in his book *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* identified the elan vital with love and moved from philosophy to religion by accepting the prophets and the saints as individuals endowed with intuition and saturated with love which is the creative urge of evolutionary life.

Rumi has presented his view in a language which conforms partially even with the view of materialistic and biological evolutionists. Like them he says that life has evolved from matter, but for him matter was from the outset essentially and potentially spiritual. This removes the insoluble problem of lifeless and goalless matter evolving out of itself a germ of life which even in the lowest and initial is adaptive and goal-seeking.

The Odyssey and voyage of the ego's self-discovery and its gradual unfolding are given in Books Three and Four of the *Mathnawi* with great definiteness. "For several epochs I was flying about in space like atoms of dust without a will, after which I entered the inorganic realm of matter. Crossing over to the vegetable kingdom I lost all memory of my struggle on the material plane. From there, I stepped into the animal kingdom, forgetting all my life as a plant, feeling only an instinctive and unconscious urge towards the growth of plants and flowers, particularly during the springtime as suckling babies feel towards the mother that gave them birth.

Rising in the scale of animality I became a man pulled up by the creative urge of the Creator whom one knows. I continued advancing from realm to realm developing my reason and strengthening the organism. There was ground forever getting above the previous types of reason. Even my present rationality is not a culmination of mental evolution. This too has to be transcended, because it is still contaminated with self-seeking, egoistic biological urges. A thousand other types of reason and consciousness shall emerge during the further course of my ascent; a wonder of wonders!"

The same course is traced in Book Three of the Mathnawi hinting at higher stages until the ego reaches back the divinity from which it had emanated, a state which cannot be grasped by our present rationality nor could imagination visualize it. No category of reason or phenomenal existence applies to this state; it is ultra-existential. We must note here that it is not an impersonal existence which goes on moving from phase to phase but selves or egos from the very start which are perpetually engaged in self-realization. Orthodox Islam, like Christianity, believes in the creation of the universe in time.

The souls are believed to be created with the birth of the individuals though after that they are destined to be immortal remaining eternally either in heaven or hell. But, according to Rumi, the category of time does not apply to the realm of the spirit, so the question of the temporal creation of egos is irrelevant. For Rumi as for al-Ghazālī, time and space are categories of phenomenal consciousness only. He says about serial time, "You think in terms of the past and the future, when you get rid of this mode of consciousness, the problem will be solved."

There is also a hint in the verses that follow that our concept of time is inter-linked with space, an idea which has been mathematically and scientifically developed in modern times by Einstein. Rumi says that in the realm of divine light, which is non-spatial, serial time, divisible into past, present, and future, does not exist. Past and future are relative to the individual self. About space there are numerous verses in the Mathnawi and Rumi repeatedly points to his conviction, which may either be the result of spiritual experience or an epistemological thesis, that in the realm of the spirit the category of space does not hold and has no relevance. The Qur'anic verse *wa la gharbiyyah*, supports this view, and Rumi's intellect and experience must have been strengthened by this scriptural corroboration.

As the human spirit, too, is basically divine, as corroborated by the Qur'an, in which it is said that God breathed His own spirit into Adam, man also, diving into his own real self, can realize the non-spatial nature not only of his own reality but also of all existence viewed as noumena and not as phenomena. He exhorts man to realize this basic fact both about himself and the universe. "You live in space but your reality is non-spatial; space is a phenomenal creation of that which in itself is not space." Rumi develops this thesis still further. He says that space is the basis of division and multiplicity, in which the basic unity of the cosmic spirit is infinitely pulverized and atomized.

Human egos are also basically one. It is only material frames in which the selves at the biological level create the illusion of diversity. Here, too, Rumi gets support from the Qur'anic teaching that there is a fundamental unity in the multiplicity of human egos. "It is He who created you of one spirit."¹

Rumi uses similes to make his meaning clear. He says that sunlight entering houses through many windows is split up the spatial barriers but remains essentially the same. In another place he says that lamps lightening a hall may be many but the light that emanates from them and envelops all of them negates the illusion of separateness. It is a common trait of Rumi that he first uses logical and philosophical arguments and then invariably tries to enlighten the mind of the reader by similes and analogies, but at the end finding the intellect incurably bound by spatial visualization and fettered by the logic of identity and contradiction, refers invariably to ultra-rational spiritual experience which realizes reality as unity and conceives diversity as mere phenomenal appearance.

Talking of a group of divinized souls, he says that they feel themselves as the waves of the self-same sea whose diversity is created by wind. He relates a spiritual experience in which the spirit transcends our spatially inter-linked serial time and enters a dimension of Being wherein the mutually exclusive diversity of psychological processes is negated and a man's causal thinking, with the problem that it creates and attempts to solve, exists no more. As it is a spaceless reality that manifests itself into extended and divisible spaces, creating the illusion of separated things and events, so it is a timeless spirit that creates the categories of serial time with the illusory division of past, present, and future. It is possible for the human spirit to enter this non-dimensional dimension of consciousness and reality. Such an experience does not give one knowledge in the ordinary sense; it is a consciousness of wonder.

D. Love

As we have remarked already, two lines of intellectual and moral and spiritual development running their course independently for more than a millennium had converged in Hellenized Christianity, of which the first unmistakable evidence of the Gospel of John which identified Jesus with Logos. But after this amalgamation the distinctive features of the message of Jesus were not lost and remained recognizably different. Jesus identified God with love, while Hellenism had made reason the ground of reality. Islam, too, was an heir to Israelite prophetic outlook and grappled with the Hellenistic thought incorporating some of its elements and repudiating others which were antagonistic to the fundamentals of its ideology.

Islam attempted a synthesis of reason, love, and law, and an integration of the higher and the lower aspects, not sacrificing the lower and annihilating it altogether but transmuting the lower into the higher. It means surrender to the will of God which is not a passive attitude of submission but a continued volitional effort to attune oneself to eternal realities of which the focus is God. Whatever Islam took over as its heritage, it transformed it in the process of synthesis and assimilation, until the product became qualitatively different. In the opening chapter of the Qur'an we find

God neither as the self-thinking thought of Aristotle nor the top point of the Platonic pyramid of ideas but a conscious and eternally creative will.

The basic attributes of God given in this surah are: (1) Rabb al-'alamin (the Nourisher of all realms and beings), (2) Rahman and Rahim (Creative Love and Forgiving Love), and (3) Malik Yaum al-Din (the Master of the Day of Judgment). We see here that love is prior to law and justice and hence is more basic to the nature of God, who is the Ultimate Reality. The Western critics of Islam are wont to take original Islam as concerned more with unconditional obedience to the revealed will of God than with an attitude of love towards Him. They forget that this obedience is to be rendered to a being who is essentially a lover; as Rahman, He creates out of love, as Rabb He sustains out of love, and as Rahim He forgives out of love.

It is a misrepresentation of Islam to assert that the concept of love is foreign to it and was adopted from Christianity and philosophies of Sufis and mystical and metaphysicians. The fact is that what mystics and thinkers like Rumi did was to elaborate the meaning of love, not only making it basic to religious and ethical life but giving it a cosmic significance as a creative, ameliorative, and evolutionary urge in all creatures and all strata of existence.

It is stated in the Qur'an that God had enjoined love (rahmah) on Himself² and that it encompasses everything.³ In another verse the extent of paradise is given as the extent of the heavens and the earth, which means entire existence. The Prophet was asked by a non-Muslim where hell would be located if paradise covered all existence. He said, "Where is the night when the day dawns?" meaning thereby that when the love of God becomes manifest it shall be revealed as covering the entire existence.

The cosmic significance of love could be derived from the Qur'anic teaching but it required acquaintance with other ideologies to help Muslim thought in its elaboration. So far as theories and speculations are concerned, we can discover distinctively pre-Islamic concepts in Rumi. Here a passage may be quoted from Khalifah Abdul Hakim's book, *The Metaphysics of Rumi*, "So far as the theories of love are concerned a part of his arguments and views can be directly traced back to Plato who has had a decisive influence on all mysticism, both Islamic and Christian, by his conception of a super-sensuous Reality, as well as Eros (love) as a cosmical power. Rumi's Love as an experience was not a product of any theory, as something intimately personal; it cannot be a subject of criticism.

But the conceptual apparatus that he employs to philosophize about love requires to be understood in its historical connections. The contents of (Plato's two Dialogues) *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*...were not unknown to the thinkers of Islam. Ibn Sina's *Fragment on Love*⁴ is mostly a reproduction of the dialogue (Plato's) *Symposium*...Love as the movement towards beauty which being identical with Goodness and Truth represents Perfection and the Highest Idea, and Love, as the inherent desire of the individual for immortality;...given by Avicenna is a simple repetition of the Platonic theory of Love. The processes of Assimilation, Growth, (and) Reproduction are so many manifestations of Love. All things are moving

towards Eternal beauty and the worth of a thing is proportionate to its realization (or assimilation) of the beauty.”⁵

Newton explained the movement of heavenly bodies by physical gravitational pull and Kant promulgated the nebular hypothesis to explain the origin of heavenly bodies out of incandescent vapour. Hegel explained the ever-progressing dynamism of Nature and Mind as the dialectical unfolding in time of the Eternal Absolute. Darwin presented a biological view of the creation of higher species by the blind urges of the struggle for existence and life’s adaptation with the environment. Rumi’s evolutionary concept comprehends all these partial and fragmentary theories, taking them up in a grand synthesis.

Similarly, Rumi has an intuition of the gravitational pull of atoms and masses of matter but, instead of explaining it by mechanical dynamics; he resorts to love as the fundamental urge which creates attraction and affinities. “All atoms in the cosmos are attracted to one another like lovers; everyone is drawn towards its mate by the magnetic pull of love. Heavenly bodies draw the earth towards them in a welcoming embrace. It is on account of this cosmic pull of that earth remains suspended in space like a lamp, the forces from all directions pulling it by equilibrated attraction not allowing it to fly away or drop down in space, as if the stellar dome of heaven were a magnetic dome inside which a piece of iron is suspended without visible cord”

According to Rumi, the same force that creates heavenly bodies out of nebulae resulting in stars and planets and systems, proceeds further and generates life because love by its essence is creative. As atoms by their affinities conglomerate in the molecules so in a further evolutionary urge they emerge as life cells which first appear in vegetation and then advance towards animality. Hegel said that creation proceeds through a synthesis of the opposites, but Rumi says that these apparent opposites were already akin by the affinity of love. Love originates in God and moves towards God who is essentially a creator; therefore, love as it advances from phase to phase in the upward movement of creation brings into being new forms of existence at every step.

We have already stated that Rumi is a monadologist and when he talks of atoms and their mutual attractions he is really taking of egos that in the process of realizing their divinely-rotted self-consciousness. It is this urge for self-realization that makes the egos act as they do. As their source is God, so their goal is also God, and the process of moving towards this goal creates new perfections at every stage. Everywhere there is life and life is essentially a goal-seeking activity. The lower merges into the higher; it is not a process of progressive annihilation but assimilation.

Rumi says that the heavenly movements are not blindly mechanical but are waves in an infinite ocean of love. If cosmic love were not there, all existence would get frozen and shrink into nothingness. The inorganic would refuse to merge and emerge into vegetation would not be lifted up into animal life nor would life ascend towards the mind and spirit. The egos like infinite swarms of locusts are flying towards the harvest of life. Without love, nothing would move.

The religion of a mystic philosopher like Rumi is a universal religion which could be enclosed within any orthodox or dogmatic boundaries. His religion is not the creed of any one particular religious community but being the religion of the universe is a universal religion. It is the religion of glowing stars, of flowing streams and of growing trees. Whose belief, intuition, and practice accord with his outlook, he has attained the truth. Religion, if it is genuine is not a blind faith about the understandable unknown; it is an ever-present reality perceived and lived. It is the alchemy of life which though the magic of love transforms the lower into the higher.

We see ourselves that bread is transubstantiated into life and mind. Could any narrow scientific intellect explain this miraculous transmutation? In the Aristotelian logic of identity everything remains what it is, and in mechanistic materialism there is no way of explaining the goal-seeking tendency of life from non-purposive aimless atoms. Life has an infinite assimilative power; there is nothing that could remain eternally foreign to it. As fire burns even a dross and converts it into a pure flame, so every happening in life is capable of being converted into light and life.

The universe, according to Rumi, is a realm of love. In comparison with love, law and reason are secondary phenomena. It is love that creates to fulfil itself and reason steps in later to look at it retrospectively, discovering laws and uniformities to seek the threads of unity in the diversities of manifested life. Language was not created by any pre-conceived grammar, nor do the flowers blossom by any conscious planning or according to the laws of botany or aesthetics. Rational thinking follows creation but does not precede it. Rationalization, being a secondary phenomenon, is not by itself a creative force.

As Hegel has said, philosophy always comes too late only to contemplate retrospectively what the dynamism of history has already created and completed. Cosmic love transcends all creeds and all philosophies and so the religion of love could never be completely identified with any orthodoxy, dogmatism, or speculative theory. Rumi says that there is no contradiction between universal love and universal reason, but when the human intellect narrows itself, it begins to take a part for a whole, making the mistake of identifying a fragmentary phenomenon with the whole of reality.

Human intellect, divorced from universal reason, remains at the biological and utilitarian level, and language which is the outward garb of the intellect possesses no vocabulary for the description of the intuition of cosmic love. Human consciousness remains generally at the biological level and its perceptions, affections, and conations are governed directly or indirectly by biological needs. This biological instrument Rumi calls *khirad* or particular reason (*'aql-i juzwi*) to distinguish it from universal reason, which exultingly calls itself scientific reason, capable of explaining all reality and solving the riddle of the universe, proves to be utterly useless when faced with the intuition of life and love, and, instead of gracefully accepting its inadequacy, begins foolishly to deny the reality that it cannot comprehend.

The deep impress of Rumi which has continued to develop through the centuries in modern times produced a disciple of the intellectual calibre and poetic genius of Iqbal. The reasons for this influence may be briefly summed up as follows. Here was a man who, like the great prophets and saints, did not accept religious faith at second hand; for him it was a personal experience more convincing than either logical argument or sense-perception. But religious experience, if it rests in its subjectivity, cannot be communicated; it cannot induce conviction in others who do not have it.

Rumi deplores the inadequacy of human speech to convey it and also points to the limitations of sense-experience as well as inductive or deductive reasoning of what he calls the particular intellect which deals with reality piecemeal. But side by side with his ultra-sensuous and ultra-rational mystic experience of the all-enveloping spirit in which every ego lives and moves and has its being, he presents himself to us as an acute logician and a skilled metaphysician. When you add his lyrical fervour and poetic genius to his remarkable capacities, he begins to tower above all those who are either mere mystics or mere philosophers or mere poets.

One finds in him anticipations of Kant who tried to prove phenomenality or subjectivity of time, space, and causality; anticipations of Bergson in his criticism of the intellect and in his conception of elan vital creative evolution, and anticipations of Nietzsche in his conviction that present humanity must be superseded in a further advance towards new dimensions of being. He is an idealist and spiritualist of the highest order. He is fundamentally an evolutionary thinker who conceived of existence not in static but dynamic terms.

The unconscious urge to rise to higher levels is implicit in all existence; the inorganic is always ready for being assimilated by the organic. In every entity there is an upward urge from within and a pull from above. The inertia of matter on which Newton based his physics and astronomy is declared to be an illusion, the reality of which is infinite motion or restlessness of what Democritus and the 13th/19th century physicists call atoms but Rumi calls egos. Rumi re-establishes the reality of the world and the dignity of all life, particularly of human life which has become self-conscious and conscious of its divine origin and goal. All movement is from God unto God.

Rumi performs the admirable task of ridding mysticism of quietism and irrationalism. He establishes with all the force of his genius the reality of free-will which is vouchsafed to man to identify it freely with the cosmic will. He has brought out the essence of universal religion as creative love. He preaches the infinite potentialities of life because all egos have their origin in the Infinite Self and are restless and nostalgic in order to realize their infinity. Many creeds and philosophers had declared life to be an illusion, but Rumi declares life at all grades to be Eternal Reality; it is not life but death which is an illusion. The purpose of life is more life, higher and better.

Nietzsche criticizes bitterly all creeds that say "No" to life and says that there are only two kinds of creeds: those that say "Yes" to life and those that say "No" to it. Rumi's is a life embracing creed. Although one of the

greatest mystics of all time, he was not a body-torturing and self-annihilating mystic. In a verse he talks of great souls as great hunters of life trying to capture and assimilate the spirituality of angels, saints, and prophets, finally aiming at capturing the cosmic spirit itself for perpetual and eternal enrichment of the self, actualizing its infinite potentialities. He wants you not to gather your garments to prevent them from getting wet but to plunge a life's challenge, is the way of life that he preaches and practises. Only for a sleeping soul life is an empty dream; creeds of illusion are the products of lovers of sleep and worshippers of the night.

About the infinity of life and its restlessness he says, "Human egos have experienced the shaping of universe after universe, could you say which of them mirrors the essence of yourself? Is it not that the seven heavens are below the empyrean but our flight is beyond the empyrean? Neither the heavens nor the empyrean could be our goal; we have to fly towards the rose-garden of union with the divine."

For Rumi life is an alchemy perpetually engaged in transformation and transubstantiation. You see before your eyes earth, water, light, and air being transformed into plant life, plant life turning into animal life by assimilation, and animal life, ascending to mind; why couldn't mind be transformed into a divinized spirit? "They say, copper turns into gold by alchemy, but the copper of our life converts itself not only into gold but becomes an alchemy itself with the quality of spiritualizing whatever it touches."

The space at our disposal compels us to finish this brief survey of Rumi's outlook on life with two of his lyrics: in one he gives the characteristics of the "Man of God" and in the other depicts a mystic's search for God through the emblems of various creeds, ending in finding God within himself. "The 'Man of God' is intoxicated without wine and full without meat; he is struck with wonder and cares not about food and sleep. He is a king in a dervish's cloak; he is a treasure found in a ruin. The constituents of a man of God are not the four elements - earth, air, water, and fire. He is a boundless ocean of the spirit containing countless pearls.

The heaven within him contains numerous suns and moons. He gains the truth by knowledge is beyond right and wrong. The heaven within him contains numerous suns and moons. He gains the truth by knowledge from God and from books. He stands above creeds and heresies, and he is beyond right and wrong. He has ridden away from Non-Being in glory and majesty. He is hidden, Oh Candle of Faith! Such a 'Man of God' do you seek and find."

Rumi is talking here of the ideal man or the ideal of humanity. He is hidden in the nature of every man. The purpose of life is to reach this perfection. In another verse he has repeated the story of Diogenes moving about in the market-place of Athens with a lamp in his hand in broad daylight seeking Man in a crowd of men who, according to him, were only counterfeiting humanity. When he is told that no such being could be found, he replies, "I am craving to find him who is not found."

Religion has been aptly defined by Hoffding as Faith in the conservation of values. According to Rumi's mystical metaphysics, the spirit is the origin

and locus of all intrinsic and abiding values. The Real which is manifested in the human spirit is eternal and immortal. He exhorts human beings not to lament the transitoriness of phenomenal life because that which is real can never perish. The streams of phenomenal life continue to flow and pass away, lament not their vanishing because inexhaustible eternal source remains undiminished and shall continue to issue in many more streams.

We must note that here we have no blank qualities, no transcendent infinity of a static Absolute, but a perpetually gushing fountain of eternal life, from which all egos quaff as much as they can. Mortality belongs to appearances alone, not life but death is an illusion. Every ego is destined to be immortal by participation in life eternal. The purpose of life is self-perpetuation and self-enrichment not only through the reproduction of the species but by the upward and forward urge of every ego. Life moves by a series of negations and assertions, self-realization cannot proceed without self-abnegation.

Every stage reached by an ego has to be negated and transcended so that “on their dead selves’ stepping stones men may rise to higher things.” Rumi says that from the very outset life has placed a ladder before you so that you may rise step by step. After this he reiterates his fundamental hypothesis that life has advanced from the inorganic to the organic, traversing the vegetable and the animal kingdom, reaching the stage of reason, knowledge and faith, until man, with his body which was only a part of the earth, evolves a mind and spirit and becomes a whole. But even after having become conscious of infinity, the voyage of discovery through the infinite continues. For a long time it was a journey towards God, but now it will be a journey in God’s infinity, from earth to heaven, from humanity to angelhood until the finite embraces the Infinite: man the Son of God becomes one with the Father. It is the bodies that become old and decrepit, life remains eternally youthful.

The Qur’an says about the creation of man’s body was made of clay, but the material frame having been perfected, God breathed from His own spirit into him. Rumi in his discourses collected in *Fihi ma fihi* has quoted a tradition of the Prophet wherein it is said that Adam’s clay was kneaded in 40 days. The Qur’an says that God’s day is an epoch of a hundred thousand years. This mode of expression is not meant to convey an exact mathematical figure but is an idiomatic or rhetorical expression for an immensely long period. Accordingly, God’s 40 days might mean hundreds of millions of years.

Rumi concludes from this that man’s bodily organism too did not come into existence by the creative fiat of God in a moment but is a product of a long process of evolution. It was after the perfecting of the physical organism that the spirit of the Lord became manifest in man awakening the eternal essence of the human ego. With the emergence of this consciousness the human ego realizes that it is not a product of this evolution but, in its essence, is prior to the phenomenal course of the universe. After this realization, the universe with its diversity of objects is viewed not as a cause but as an effect, because the ego pours existence into its own moulds with the categories of time, space and causation.

Rumi says that the body is not the cause of the mind but is created by the mind as its instrument for working on the material or phenomenal plane. What we consider to be the qualities of an independently existing matter exist only in relation to a perceiving mind. In a lyric, Rumi describes his search for God after having realized the nature of his own ego. He moves from creed to creed and dogma to dogma. Not finding Him in temples, institutions, and symbols, he returns unto himself and discovers Him there in the sanctuary of his own heart. He is not satisfied with any creed until God is directly experienced by him. Here is one of the finest mystical lyrics of Rumi:

“I existed at a time when there were neither the names nor the objects of which they were the names; the names and the objects named came into existence in relation to us at a time when egos were not yet individualized and there was not yet any question of ‘I’ and ‘We.’ I searched for God among the Christians and on the Cross but therein found Him not. I went into the ancient temples of idolatry, no trace of Him was there. I entered the mountain cave of Hira (where Arch-angel Gabriel appeared to the Prophet) and then went as far as Qandhar but God found I not, neither in low nor in high places. With a set purpose I fared to the summit of Mount Caucasus and found there only ‘anqa’s habitation. Then I directed my search to the Ka‘bah, the resort of old and young, God was not there even. Turning to philosophy I inquired about Him from ibn Sina but found Him not within his range. I fared then to the scene of the Prophet’s experience of a great divine manifestation only a ‘two bow-lengths’ distance from him’ but God was not there even in that exalted court. Finally, I looked into my heart and there I saw Him, He was nowhere else.”

This is the experience and language of the great mystics of all spiritual religions who were not satisfied with institutional religion, and who based their spiritual life on personal experiences and convictions not derived from theologies and philosophies. These experiences are the common heritage of all great souls and the common ground on which great religions meet, disregarding intellectual formulation of dogmas and diversities of modes of worship which have made religion a dividing instead of a unitive and harmonizing force.

Rumi is one of those rare saints and mystics whose intellectual fibre and creative moral and social effort is not weakened by subjective emotional experiences unrelated to the realities of everyday life. In him spirituality, rationality, and universal morality have found a healthy synthesis. God, universe, and humanity are embraced in a single all-encompassing vision, the vision of creative love. Tennyson ends his “In Memoriam” with a stanza which sums up Rumi’s vision and creed:

“That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.”

His appeal to the philosophers of religion, epistemologists, and metaphysicians is as great as his appeal to the mystics of all religions. Neither modern philosophy nor modern science has left him behind. For

about a century now the entire philosophical and scientific though has been dominated by the concept of evolution, and it is the evolutionary concept that has been mainly responsible for sabotaging ancient theologies and views of creation, resulting in almost universal scepticism and agnosticism. Theology everywhere has been making an attempt to save the abiding realities and values of religion by accepting universal evolution as an indubitable fact and recasting old beliefs and dogmas. Rumi performed this task six centuries ago in a manner that can offer guidance to all who want to reconcile religion with philosophy and science.

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Notes

1. The Qur'an 6:99
2. Ibid., 6:12, 54
3. Ibid., 7:156
4. This fragment on love forms part of his collected works preserved in the British Museum Library and has been edited by N. A. F. Mehren (leiden, 1894).
5. Khalifah Abdul Hakim, The Metaphysics of Rumi, Institute of Islamic Cluture, Lahore, 1959, pp. 44 - 45.

Chapter 43: Mahmud Shabistari, Al-Jili, and Jami

A. Mahmud Shabistari

Mahmud Shabistari, so called after the name of Shabistar, a village near Tabiz in Adharbaijan, was born about the middle of the seventh/13th century and died about 720/1320. Little is known of his life. His *Gulshan-i Raz* (The Garden of Mystery) is a poetical exposition of the doctrine of the Unity of Being. It was written in 710/1311 in response to certain questions about mystical philosophy asked by one Amir Husaini from Khurasan.

The exposition of the doctrine of the Unity of Being in the book adds nothing to what had earlier been said by ibn 'Arabi. Mahmud, however, is much clearer and much more precise than his spiritual teacher. Being, by its very definition, he says, is existent, and non-Being, non-existent. There is nothing in existence except the one. The contingent and necessary were never separate; they existed from eternity as one. If you look at one side of One, it is one, and if you see the other side, it becomes many - the only difference being that the aspect of unity is real, while that of plurality is illusory. Reality is one but its names are many, and it is this plurality which becomes the cause of multiplicity.¹

Essence as such is beyond our knowledge or comprehension. But according to Shabistari, this inability on our part to know God's essence arises because of His nearness to us. Essence as absolute light is as invisible to the eye as non-Being which is absolute darkness. Nobody can look at the sun directly. But it can be seen as reflected in water. Relative non-being is like water. It serves as a mirror of the Absolute Light in which is reflected the illumination of Haqq (truth). This relative non-being is the latent reality ('ain al-thabitah) of ibn 'Arabi's system, which reflects the divine light in accordance with its natural propensities. The divine light as pure light was a hidden treasure, but when it was reflected in the mirror, the treasure became manifest. But, in this process, the essence that was One became many.²

Shabistari then describes the process of descent of the one after the manner of ibn 'Arabi. The first manifestation of the essence is the universal reason ('aql al-kulli), the stage of unity (ahadiyyah); the second is the universal soul (nafs al-kulli). Then comes the Throne ('arsh), the heavenly Chair (kursi), seven heavenly spheres, and four elements, the three kingdoms of minerals, vegetables, and animals. The last in the series is man who is the acme of creation. Though temporally last in the series, man is logically first, as tree is potentially prior to the seed. The entire world was created for him while he was created for himself, as the embodiment of God's highest manifestation. But he possesses certain baser elements which, however, are essential for his moral progress. A mirror, to be able to reflect things, must have one side totally blackened. If it were a crystal, it would cease to serve as a mirror.

As man is the final cause of creation, everything is made to obey his command. All things are manifestations of the different names of God, but, being the reflection of the Named, man comprises within himself all the names; therefore, all the creation is within him. He is the most marvellous creation of the Lord and owes everything to Him, his power, knowledge, and will are all God's.

Reason is perfectly useless, according to Shabistari. It's a long, winding, and arduous path. A philosopher is like a cross-eyed man who sees duality everywhere. He starts with the objects of the world conceived as real. On this basis he argues the existence of the Necessary, as distinct from and other than the contingent. Arguing on the basis of a continuous series of causes and effects, Shabistari asserts that the Necessary Being is the Primal Cause of the process of creation. The whole process of reasoning, according to him, is wrong. There is no possibility of the knowledge of God through the category of contingency as the latter does not possess any similarity to the former. "It amounts to discovering the burning sun with the help of the dim light of a tiny candle."

The best method, therefore, is to give up logical reason and enter the valley of gnosis.³ Knowledge gained through discursive reason leads one to sleep, while gnosis awakens one from slumber. Like Abraham, one must go beyond the divinity of the stars, the sun, and the moon which, according to him, represent sense-perception, imagination, and reason, respectively.⁴

In the sixth question of *Gulshan-i Raz* the Sheikh explicitly rejects the usefulness of reason in the mystic search for truth. He holds that there is "a way" beyond reason by which man is able to know the secret of reality. This intuitive power of man is hidden within him as fire is implicit in the stone. When this fire blazes forth, the entire world becomes bright and illumined.

Discussing the value of knowledge in the tenth question he says that by knowledge he does not mean the device by which people gain worldly power and prestige, for that is contrary to the spirit of a true mystic. Knowledge is useful only when it leads one to the right action, action that springs from the heart. Shabistari also suggests a study of both the sources of knowledge mentioned in the Qur'an - the external world (*afaq*) and the internal world of self-consciousness (*anfus*). But in practice the mystics' study of the internal world has always led them to emphasize the illusory character of the external world.

The account of moral qualities given by Shabistari is a mere reproduction of Platonic and Aristotelian theories. Wisdom (*hikmah*), moral purity (*'iflah*), bravery (*shaja'ah*), and justice (*'adalah*) are the main moral qualities. He discusses briefly the Aristotelian principle of the mean. Paradise is the result of following this middle path, while adopting either of the extremes would lead to hell. When moral purification is attained, man is vouchsafed divine light (*tajalli*) which illumines his soul and raises him to the highest level. Saints and prophets are the persons who fall in the category of the illumined souls.

This manifestation (*tajalli*) of God is not only in things that are good but also in things which in common usage, we call evil. As God is the only being and the only cause of everything, so all things without distinction manifest His light. The logical position of pantheism is that good and evil are all alike and, as manifestations of God, stand on an equal footing. But when we come to the ordinary common-sense view, we distinguish between them and attribute good to God and evil to Satan.⁵

Like all other pantheists, Shabistari is completely deterministic. He holds that the so-called sense of freedom possessed by man is due to his

consciousness of selfhood as an entity distinct from God. Man is by nature non-existent and, therefore, it is meaningless to attribute freedom to him. Believers in freedom of choice are Zoroastrians who make a distinction between the god of good and the god of evil. to attribute power, will, and action to man is wrong and in this matter, according to him, both the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites have gone astray - the former in saying that man is free in his choice and the latter in making man responsible for his deeds due to the power of "acquisition" attributed to him.

According to Shabistari, man is not created for exercising moral responsibility, but for some other purpose. He does not explain what that other purpose is. His commentator, Lahiji, however, adds that it is to serve as a polished mirror for manifestation of God's essence, attributes and names. Can we ascribe any freedom to the mirror in reflecting objects? For every one of us, actions were pre-determined. God's actions are inscrutable. "Can you explain," he asks, "why one man is born Mohammad and another Abu Jahl?" Man's dignity lies in being under compulsion and not in having a share in free-will.

But, then, why is man held responsible for his deeds? Is it not injustice? The Sheikh thinks that it is not injustice but an argument in favour of God's absolute power and arbitrariness. Again, the object of making man responsible for deeds over which he has no control is to compel him to renounce this world forever, as he is elementally incapable of fulfilling the obligation of following the right path and obeying God's Law, i.e. Shari'ah.⁶

What are the steps by which an individual reaches the stage of perfection? He is born, according to him, as the acme of creation, the purest of the pure, and the highest of the high. But due to illumination which he receives through his intuitive powers or his rational capacity man realizes his weakness and then sets on a journey backward. It is travelling from contingency to necessity from plurality to unity, from evil to good.

There are three stages in this journey. The first is called absorption. Here, the light of God shines through his actions so that the mystic regards the actions of everything as illusory. Nothing besides God possesses any causal power. At the second stage the divine light shines through God's attributes and so the Sufi regards the attributes of everything else as merged in God. The last stage comes when the mystic receives illumination from the very essence and sees the real state of affairs. For him nothing is existent except He and the being of all things is derived solely from Him. When he reaches this stage, he becomes perfect and attains a state of union with his Lord "so much so that neither angels nor prophets can equal him. The whole circle of existence is covered and man reaches the point from where he started."⁷

The religious Law (Shari'ah), the mystic Path (Tariqah), and Truth (Haqiqah) - all go to form the perfect man. Shari'ah, according to the Sheikh, is like the protecting shell of the almond. It is useful to a certain stage. When the stage of perfection is reached, the shell becomes useless and is better thrown away. Nevertheless, a perfect Sufi needs religion - not for himself but for others.

Shabistari follows the general trend of mystic writers in describing the nature of saint ship (wilayah) and prophethood (nubuwaah). Saint ship is a

more general category than prophethood. Saints so called and prophets are all saints in the first instance. In a mystic saint ship is hidden, while in a prophet it is manifest. A saint is a follower of the prophet in Law and in this he attains the highest position and becomes equal to the prophet in realizing union with the Lord. With the death of the Holy Prophet the first cycle of saint ship, a cycle in which prophethood and saint ship were both manifest in the world, came to an end.

After the Final Prophet, saint ship continued and the new cycle began to take its shape. One day the seal of saints will appear, who shall be the acme of saint ship and, with his appearance, the cycle of the two worlds will come to an end. He will be the whole, of which all the previous saints were parts. Like the “Seal of the Prophets,” he shall be a blessing to the whole world. He will succeed in bringing peace and security to man; justice and equity will reign.⁸ The word “seal,” according to ibn ‘Arabi, does not signify a mystic with who saint ship will come to an end, but with Shabistari, the seal of saints, like the “Seal of Prophets,” would terminate saint ship forever. The last of the saints is the “seal” with which the world will come to an end.

This world of matter, however, being the locus of God’s manifestation (tajalli) cannot come to an end at all. There shall be no time when the manifestation of Haqq can be said to have ceased. The present world and the world to come will meet and there is no dividing line between the two. The next world is something ever in the making. What we usually call this world and the next are mere names for what Shabistari, following ibn ‘Arabi, calls the ever-new process of creation, an unending cycle of annihilation and recreation.

The life to come, man would be without body but it would be something subtle and transparent. Our deeds and mental dispositions of the present life would take concrete shape and become materialized in some tangible form. Good disposition will take the shape of light (paradise) and bad the shape of fire (hell).⁹

After the death, the individuality of man shall vanish at last and many shall be dissolved into One.¹⁰ Man shall be vouchsafed the beatific vision, but it will not be something external, it will be a manifestation within him.¹¹

B. Al-Jili

‘Abd al-Karim b. Ibrahim al-Jili was born in 767/1365 and died at about 832/1428. Except for the few references in his book, almost nothing is known about his life. He was the disciple of Sheikh Sharaf al-Din al-Jabarti and lived in Zabid (Yemen). He also visited India during his travels. He claims that he received mystic illumination which led him to write his well-known book, *al-Insan al-Kamil fi Ma‘rifat al-Awakhir w-al-Awa’il*. Its object is to expound and express the truth.

He holds that Absolute being is one and that all multiplicity is illusory. “Absolute Being is the essence (‘ain) of what we call the phenomenal world (khalq) and God (Haqq). The Absolute Being manifests itself in two different realities, khalq and Haqq.”¹²

Essence, Attributes, and Names

Absolute Essence is that to which names and attributes are ascribed. It is a Self (nafs) which exists by itself. It deserves every name which Its perfection demands. No description in words can fully convey Its essence. A thing can be understood by another thing which is related to it positively or negatively, but there is nothing in the universe which is so related to the Absolute. It is Pure Being which is equal to non-Being - a sum of contradictions. "It is two contradictories gathered in a unity and this sum of contradictions is not impossible."¹³ It has two attributes: eternity and everlastingness, two qualities: God (Haqq) and the world (khalq), two descriptions eternity (qidam) and createdness (huduth), two names: Rabb and 'abd (Lord and slave).

It has two faces: outward (visible), i.e. the present world and inward (invisible), i.e. the world to come. It has two predicates: necessity and possibility, two points of view: according to the first, It is non-existent for Itself and existent for others, while, according to the first, It is non-existent for Itself and existent for others, while, according to the second, It is existent for Itself and non-existent for others. Two modes (ma'rafah): according to one, It is positive (wujub) in one plane and negative in the other, while, according to the other, the position is reversed. With regard to Its Self (nafs), It is simple, with regard to Its form, It is compound, with regard to Its essence, It is unique, with regard to Its emanation, It is light, and with regard to its indivisibility, It is darkness, and still It is beyond what we have said about It."¹⁴

It is clear that according to al-Jili reality is one¹⁵ and belongs to divine Substance (jauhar) which has two different aspects: God and the world. Multiplicity is only subjective and relative. "You can say what you like. You are at liberty to say the circle [of reality] is God and its inside is the world or that the circle is the world and its inside is God. It is God as well as the world."¹⁶ "You should know that knowledge of that lofty essence is that you should realize through mystic experience that you are He and He is you. This is neither union (ittihad) nor incarnation (hulul), for the slave is slave and the Lord is Lord: the slave does not become Lord, or the Lord a slave."¹⁷

A true mystic or the perfect man is able to realize in his super-sensuous experience that multiplicity is only a subjective way of look at things; otherwise reality that underlies it is one.¹⁸ What we call the world is nothing but the manifestation of God. In another place, he says, "Just as God was present in eternity in the Dark Mist ('Ama') which is also called Reality or realities, Hidden Treasures and White (Pure) Chrysolite, so is He present now in all the things of the phenomenal world without incarnation (hulul) and mixture (imtizaj). He is manifested in the parts and atoms of the phenomenal world without becoming many."¹⁹

Like ibn 'Arabi, he deals with the problem of transcendence and immanence as differentiating attributes of the essence which correspond to the twin characteristics of God and the world. Immanence (tashbih) is the form of divine beauty which is manifested in all things to the phenomenal world without any distinction.²⁰ The Christians are right when they say that Jesus, Mary, and the Holy Ghost are all manifestations of God, but they are

wrong when they limit this manifestation to three persons only. As a matter of fact, God is immanent in the whole world.²¹ Any belief about reality that ignores any of these two characteristics, transcendence and immanence, is defective and wrong as is the case with Christianity for instance.

Transcendence (tanzih), when applied to God, implies that, in spite of His manifestation in all things, He is above and beyond all of them. But this sort of transcendence, according to al-Jili, is related to immanence and, therefore, does not fully represent the true essence which is characterized by what he calls essential which none claim to understand. He is, therefore, above even the transcendence which is asserted of Him in correlation with His Immanence.²²

Name (ism) is that which specifies the named in the understanding, pictures it in the mind, brings it in imagination, arranges it in thought, preserves it in memory, and presents to the intellect. A man who does not know the named gets its knowledge through the name. The name and the named are related to each other as outside to inside (zahir to batin) but in fact both are identical. There are some names the named of which do not exist in actual reality, as, for instance, 'anqa' which exists only in name. 'Anqa' and Allah stand at opposite poles, while the object of 'anqa' is non-Being, the object of Allah is Absolute Being. We can reach knowledge of God through divine names and attributes or through the name of Allah which comprises in itself all names and attributes. Names are of two kinds: (1) of the essence, e.g. one (ahad), single (wahid), unique (fard), etc., and (2) of the attributes, e.g. knowledge, power, mercy, etc.²³

An attribute of a thing is that which leads one to the knowledge of its state. This distinction between attributes and essence is operative only in the sphere of the phenomenal world. "Everything in the phenomenal world which is qualified by an attribute demands that the attribute should be other than the thing, because it is subject to division and multiplicity. At the same time it demands that the attribute should be identical with it. We say that man is a rational man. It means that animality is a separate entity and so is rationality a thing different from man. But it also means that rationality and animality are both identical with man, because he is composed of both and is nothing beyond them. With regard to division, the attributes of a creature are different from its essence, while with regard to arrangement (tarkib) they are identical with it. But in God, this otherness disappears, for division and multiplicity does not apply to Him. His attributes are his essence and the two are identical."²⁴

Thus, according to al-Jili, the material world is not a non-reality, a maya, but a reality which expresses the outward form of the Real. Plurality and division in the external world are the manifestations of the divine essence as attributes which are in the last analysis identical with it. If we do not accept this view of identity, the universe would not, according to him, lead to the essence.

In the 57th chapter of Insan-i Kamil, al-Jili says explicitly that thought or idea is the material of the universe. "Thought is the life of the spirit of the universe...Existence is nothing but a thought. Thought is the origin and the source of being (wujud) and is the essence in which God is completely

manifested. Do you not see your belief about God as having names and attributes which pertain to Him? Where is the locus of the belief (i.e. the universe) in which God has manifested Himself for you? It is nothing but thought.”²⁵ Later on, he asserts that Being (wujud), as a matter of fact, is nothing but “a thought within a thought within a thought.”²⁶ Thus by identifying attributes and essence, he is able to give reality to the physical world of nature which to the mystic becomes a source of the direct knowledge of God.

Among the important divine attributes he mentions divinity (ilahiyyah), mercifulness (rahmaniyyah), and lordship (rububiyyah). Divinity is the sum of all the realities (i.e. all individualities) of Being and their maintenance in their respective positions (maratib) within the whole. It is the rank of God as Necessary Being. “You should know that Being and non-Being are two opposites, and the sphere of divinity comprises both. It is a sum of two pairs of contradictories: eternal and created (hadith), God and the world, Being and non-Being. At this stage God appears in the form of the world and the world in the form of God.”²⁷

Divinity is the highest manifestation of the essence and is invisible, while its effects in the form of nature are visible everywhere. Essence is visible to the eye but its locus is not fixed or visible; we see it manifested but cannot describe its quality. Take the example of man. He is characterized by some attributes, all of which never come within the compass of our comprehension, though we see man all right. It means that essence is visible while its attributes are not. Of the latter we see nothing but effects. For instance, we see the marching forward on the part of a generous man. “Marching forward, and “giving alms” are not bravery and generosity respectively, but only the effects of these attributes.”²⁸

Mercifulness (rahmaniyyah) is the manifestation of the essence in the realities of names and attributes. It refers only to the creative and not to the creaturely attributes, while ilahiyyah refers to both. In this respect, mercifulness appears to be higher in scale than divinity, as sweetness of sugar does with regard to the sugar cane. If you prefer sweetness to the sugar cane, mercifulness is better than divinity, but if looking at the generality and comprehensive character of the sugar cane, you prefer it to sweetness, then divinity will be prior in rank. The name that manifests itself in this rank is that of Rahman (the Merciful) which includes both the attributes of the essence as oneness (ahadiyyah), uniqueness (wahdiyyah), eternity (samadiyyah), etc. and attributes of His Self which are seven, viz. life, knowledge, power, will, speech, hearing, and sight.”²⁹

The first mercy of God was the creation of the universe from His own Self.³⁰ His manifestation permeated all existents and His perfection appeared in every atom and particle. In spite of manifestation in the many, He does not become many but remains One as His nature demands. The nature of His permeation is that He created the world out of His Self which is not divisible.

God is the substance (hayula) of the universe.³¹ In order to clarify his position, al-Jili gives the example of water and ice. God is like water which is the reality of ice and the world is like ice which is nothing but water (i.e.

God) in a congealed form. The use of the term “ice” is only metaphorical and secondary, and not real. For the world and God are identical. “The world is nothing but ice, and ice, according to our opinion, is nothing but water. Or belief is that ice and water are identical.”³²

God permeates the whole of existence through His name Rahman and this permeation is neither incarnation (hulul) nor contact, for both these conceptions imply duality; as a matter of fact, He is consubstantial with existents (‘ain al-maujudat).

Lordship (rububiyyah) is the name of the rank which demands those names that require the being of the existents and comprehends such names as the knower (‘alim), the hearer (sami’), the seer (basir), the self-subsisting (qayyum), and the willing (murid). Each name under this category demands its logical correlate. The knower implies the object known and willing implies the objects towards which the will is directed.³³

There are four kinds of attributes: beauty (jamal), perfection (kamal), majesty (jalal), and essence (dhat).

Every divine name and attribute has its effect which reflects one of the three: beauty, majesty, or perfection. All existents absolutely reflect all the names and attributes of beauty and some of the names and attributes of absolute beauty, while hell is the manifestation of absolute majesty. The perfect man alone is the complete manifestation of all these divine names and attributes.

Al-Jili then deals with the ten main attributes: life, knowledge, will, power, speech, hearing, sight, beauty, majesty, perfection, even though they are so innumerable that none can comprehend them in their entirety.³⁴

1. Life

Complete life is the existence of a thing for itself, while incomplete or relative life is its existence for another. God exists for Himself, is living (hay) and, therefore, His life is complete and not subject to death. All creatures live for God and, therefore, their life is relative and hence subject to decay and death. Life of God as manifested in created beings (khalq) is one and complete and yet the creatures receive it in different degrees. In some, this life appears in its complete form as, for instance, in the perfect man and the exalted angels and those things which are not composed of material elements, as the Exalted Pen, the Preserved Tablet, etc. In others, this life appears in its real form but is incomplete, as, for instance, in animal, man, lower angel, and jinn, because though each of them lives for his own self and knows that he exists and possesses different attributes, yet his existence is not real, for he is far removed from the sources of life. In others, as in animals, life does not appear in its real form. There are others for whom life has lost its real significance and, therefore, they live for others and for themselves as, for instance, plants, minerals, etc.

Everything existent is alive, for existence by itself implies life, through different things manifest it in various degrees; some enjoy complete life while others have imperfect life. But if we look at the matter from the transcendental point of view, life of everything is complete, though there seems to be a quantitative difference due to the inherent capacity of the

thing itself. Life as such is a fountain, a unity, a substance, existent in everything by its own perfection and is not subject to diminution or division.

The essence of a thing is its life, that is, life of God, whereby everything subsists. The life of things with regard to themselves is created (hadith) but in relation to God it is eternal (qadim), for the life of a thing is in reality His life. “You should know that forms, shapes, actions, words, minerals, and plants to which we attribute ‘existence’ possess like man complete life by themselves and for themselves. But because most people do not know this fact, we include them in a category lower than that in which they should be placed. As a matter of fact, everything possesses being for itself and complete life with which it speaks, hears, sees, understands, and has power and will of its own and does what it wishes to do. This fact has been learned by me from direct revelation in mystic experience.”³⁵ In other words, everything, material as well as non-material, is, according to al-Jili, self-determined, and possesses a unique individuality of its own.

2. Knowledge

Of all the attributes, knowledge is nearer to life as life is nearer to essence. Every living thing (or everything, for, according to him, everything has life) possesses knowledge in one form or another. The first form of knowledge is instinctive or what he calls inspirational (‘ilm-i ilhami), possessed even by animals. The other is clear, necessary, or inferential knowledge possessed by man, angels, and jinn. Life and knowledge are correlated and each demands the other.

Al-Jili holds that knowledge by which God knows Himself and knowledge by which He knows the objects of the universe are one and the same and there can be no division or difference in the two. According to ibn ‘Arabi, God’s knowledge of the objects is dependent on what they (objects) give of themselves to Him. Commenting on the Qur’anic verse (3:178), “Verily God is not unjust to His servants,” ibn ‘Arabi says, “No, I dealt with them only according as I knew them, and I knew them only by what they ‘gave’ me of themselves of what they themselves really are.”³⁶

Similarly, discussing the problem of creation, ibn ‘Arabi says that when God says “Be” to a thing, it is not God’s will that brings a thing into existence because God wills nothing and commands nothing the existence of which is not made necessary by the very nature and laws of things themselves.³⁷ Thus, according to him, God’s will and knowledge are both dependent on the nature of the objects. Al-Jili rejects this view as wrong. God’s knowledge of objects, according to him, is totally independent of the objects themselves.

It is true, he says, and that God’s decree (hukm) with regard to a thing is determined by what its essence demands it to be, but it is wrong to infer from this that God’s knowledge of objects is thereby determined by the nature of the objects themselves. As a matter of fact, the objects demanded of Him that very thing which He knew by His universal, essential, and fundamental knowledge before they were brought into existence. God’s knowledge of objects is determined not by the necessity or demand of those objects but by its own inner demand.³⁸

3. Will

God's knowledge manifests itself according to the demands of His essence and it is will which gives existence to His objects of knowledge as His Knowledge demands. Our created will is identical with God's will, but when attributed to us it becomes temporal, while attributed to God it is eternal, just as Being when attribute to us is created (makhluq) and when attributed to God is eternal.

Here again he disagrees with ibn 'Arabi, according to whom God is nothing but the name of immutable laws which operate in the universe. "Ibn 'Arabi rules out not only the individual freedom of man, but that of God's will, as well. God does not will in the sense that he chooses, but in the sense that He decrees what He knows will take place. That the thing or action which God has decreed should take place depends entirely on its own necessary laws."³⁹

But, according to al-Jili, just as God is free and undetermined in His knowledge, so His will is absolutely undetermined and uncaused. God's will operates in every form and shape without any cause or condition; it is absolutely God's free act. He says that, according to ibn 'Arabi, it is wrong to call God free (mukhtar), for He does not operate in the universe by His free-will, His actions are determined by the necessity and nature of the objects. But, according to al-Jili himself, God operates in the universe through His free-will and is not determined by any necessity external to Him.⁴⁰

4. Power

It is an attribute of the essence which brings objects of knowledge into the world of actuality. Power is the creation or bringing into existence of objects from the state of non-Being.

Here, again, he controverts the position of ibn 'Arabi according to whom there is no creation at all. The objects of the physical world existed from eternity as objects of God's knowledge. What we usually call creation is nothing but manifestation of these already existing objects of knowledge on a different plane. There is no question of temporal priority or posteriority nor is there any creation ex nihilo at all.⁴¹ Al-Jili does not accept this position in toto.

He says that it is true that creation means the coming into actual existence of things which are previously the objects of God's consciousness.⁴² But ibn 'Arabi, according to him, forgot to note the fact that God's existence was prior to the existence of latent realities, things as objects of His consciousness (a'yan al-thabitah), and at this stage the things were non-existent and there was in existence nothing but Allah to whom alone we can attribute eternity (qidam). It follows that He created the objects of His consciousness from non-existence ('adam).

Allah is essence is independent and His being is first only as a matter of rank (rutbah); creatures are dependent on Him and, therefore, their being is posterior in the same sense. The creatures are non-being with reference to the First Being. There is no lapse of time between the non-existence of things and their becoming objects of God's consciousness.⁴³ The question of priority is only logical and not temporal.

The same line of argument is presented in discussing the nature of eternity (azal) and everlastingness (abad). Eternity is of two kinds. One is the eternity of a created thing. It refers to the time when it had no being. Eternity of one creature is different from the eternity of others. For instance, eternity of inorganic matter is different from that of organic substances, for it is prior to the latter. We can, therefore, speak of eternity with reference to the organic substances when the inorganic substances were in existence and had not yet developed and evolved into organic form; it does not, however, imply any temporal priority.

The other is absolute eternity which belongs only to God who is above Being and non-Being. God's eternity has no relation whatsoever with that of the creatures because He is (logically) prior to them. We cannot say, as ibn 'Arabi, for instance, holds, that in the state of absolute eternity the world existed, if not objectivity, as the object of God's knowledge, for if we accept this position, we would be bound to regard the verse (76:1) in support of his thesis, "Has there not been over a man a long period of time when he has nothing - to be spoken of?"

Al-Jili holds that time (dahr) in this context means Allah and a portion of time (hin) is one of His manifestations when man had no being, either as an intelligible ('ilmi, i.e. an object of God's consciousness in the form of latent reality) or an actual reality ('aini). The part of the verse "nothing - to be spoken of" signifies that he did not form the content of God's mind.⁴⁴

Similarly, when we apply everlastingness to God, it is logical and not temporal. "Eternity and everlastingness are only logical determinations and not temporal events in reference to God." "These two, i.e., eternity and everlastingness with their temporal implications, have been employed only to clarify the real existence of God (in relation to the world), otherwise (as a matter of fact) there is neither temporal eternity nor everlastingness. Time has no reference or significance in relation to God."⁴⁵

Difference between eternity and everlastingness is that eternity refers to the logical priority of God, while everlastingness means that He was never non-existent nor in need of an efficient causality for His Being. We apply to Him the term "everlastingness" only for understanding His eternity, otherwise ascription of temporal priority and posteriority to Him as related to the world is out of the question. Temporality (huduth) implies that things, although they have been in the knowledge of God since eternity, in respect of their existence are created things.⁴⁶

5. Speech (Kalam)

Speech is a reflection of the Being of God, it is an over-flowing or emanation (faid) from the essence of God. It is an intelligible epiphany. It manifests itself in two directions. The first is of two kinds. (a) The kind of speech (kalam) issues forth from God's position of power ('izzah) which must be obeyed by all. The Qur'anic verse 41:11, refers to this fact.⁴⁷ (b) The second kind of speech issues forth from the position of Lordship in the language of the people such as the revealed books. In this case, the question of obedience and disobedience arises. Some obey while others disobey the injunctions contained in them.

The second significance (direction) of speech is metaphysical and is the basis of the doctrine of Logos. The Word of God is the reality of the existents and every existent is a Word of God. Al-Jili refers to the Qur'anic verse, "If the sea were ink for the Words of my Lord, the sea would surely be consumed before the Words of my Lord are exhausted" (18:109). Thus, Nature is the materialization of the Word of God and exists in its physical form. It is the objective and material of the contents of God's consciousness, the physical shape that the objects of His knowledge, called a'yan al-thabitah, assume.⁴⁸

6. Hearing is Divine Epiphany

It is an attribute of His essence which His perfection demands. He hears the words of His own consciousness as well as those of His manifestations (shu'un). The second hearing (of the manifestations) is the demand of His names and attributes which are to be manifested in the physical world. It is revelation of Himself to Himself in the state of self-consciousness.⁴⁹

7. Sight

The attribute of sight with reference to seeing the object of knowledge is nothing but God as He is in His essence, and the same is the case with His attribute of knowledge. With regard to the epiphany of knowledge which is the originator of the universe, it is the revelation of the attribute of knowledge from Himself to Himself, while the epiphany of 'ain, which is the objective physical world, is the manifestation of the attributes of seeing, and both are identical with His essence. Seeing and knowing are two different attributes and yet, with reference to His essence, they are one: His seeing is His knowing. When the things were on the plane of the unseen, they were the objects of His knowledge, when they appeared on the plane of existence; they became the objects of His hearing.⁵⁰

8. Beauty

It is of two kinds. The first is real and is reflected in the "beautiful names" in which God sees Himself. The second is sensory and reflected in the physical created world. He is the absolute beauty, and reveals Himself in its different manifestations.

9. Majesty is Beauty in its Intense Form

Beauty signifies His exalted attributes, while majesty is His essence as manifested in His names and attributes.

10. Perfection is the name of Divine Essence which is perfectly unknowable

All attributes of God are identical with His essence and not added to it and so perfection is His by His very nature.⁵¹

Self-revelations of the One

The ultimate Reality, according to al-Jili, is One which manifests itself in the multiplicity of forms without thereby becoming many. The state of the One before It revealed Itself is called, after ibn 'Arabi, blindness (al-'Am'). The term was adopted from a prophetic tradition. The Holy Prophet was once asked about the place of God before creation. He answered that God

was in 'Ama'. On the basis of this simple answer, ibn 'Arabi and al-Jili have built a super-structure of their pantheistic systems.

The essence is Absolute Being in which all relations, modes, and directions disappear. As such it cannot be called a necessary or eternal being for this implies determination of one sort or another. It is even above the characterization of absoluteness.⁵² Al-Jili calls this essence 'Ama' and describes it as essence in its inwardness. It is like a flint which hides fire in its innermost recesses. Though sometimes fire is revealed, yet it remains hidden within it. It is the Reality of realities which is above the distinction of God (Haqq) and the world (khalq), beyond the determinations of names and attributes.⁵³

It is the one epiphany which has no relation whatsoever with "other." In spite of this, it comprises within itself all (later) manifestations or revelations which are present in it only potentially like stars in the light of the sun. In this epiphany of essence, God knows nothing but Himself, while in other epiphanies He knows Himself as well as others.⁵⁴

This state of blindness is related to the Absolute Oneness (ahadiyyah), in both of which names and attributes are annihilated and nothing is manifested, with the difference that in the former the inward aspect is emphasized, while in the latter its outward aspect takes its form. 'Ama', with regard to inwardness and occultation or hiddenness, is the essence, while Absolute oneness with regard to God's manifestation to Himself in His mind (nafs) in which all relations are negated.⁵⁵

Absolute Oneness denotes that the Pure Being is about to start on the process of descent, coming down towards manifestation.⁵⁶ This is the first stage of the descent or self-revelation of the essence from the darkness of 'Ama' to the light of manifestations. At this stage, unity is complete and all multiplicity is negated, although it resides in it; it is divested of all attributes, names, relations, and modes, and yet they all lie hidden in its innermost being. Its apparent unity is identical with its hidden plurality. It is like a wall when seen from a distance.

Although it is composed of different constituents like bricks, mortar, etc., and is, thus, a plurality, yet it shows itself to an observer as a unity which has a peculiar existence of its own and is not merely a conglomeration of different parts. It is the first self-revelation of the One and is above the distinctions of God and the world. No one can claim to receive illumination from the One at this stage, for it is beyond all multiplicity; what we experience is really unity in its second stage, Rabb or Allah.⁵⁷

The unity (ahadiyyah) of God at a particular stage of manifestation spreads out into a pair of opposites which later on are reunited at the stage of uniqueness or simple oneness (wahdiyyah). The intervening stage between ahadiyyah and wahdiyyah is represented by He-ness (huwiyyah) and I-ness (aniyyah).⁵⁸

Ibn 'Arabi employs the term huwiyyah (He-ness) as equivalent to divine essence.⁵⁹ But for al-Jili this He-ness is a stage removed from the essence. It is derived from the pronoun huwa (he) which refers to the "absent one" (aha'ib) and, therefore, refers to the essence of God from which names and attributes are absent, that is, to His unity which negates the many. It is the

inward aspect of the unity which informs us about its inwardness (batin) and absence (ahaibubiyah). It is the inmost consciousness of Allah.⁶⁰

Aniyah (I-ness) is the outward aspect of unity in which One blossoms forth into multiplicity. Zahir (outward) and batin (inward) are not two different aspects of the One but only Its different views; as a matter of fact, the outward and the inward are identical. He-ness and I-ness, outwardness and inwardness refer to the reality which is signified by the name Allah because ilahiyyah is a sum of contradictories.⁶¹

The stage of self-revelation called simple Oneness (wahdiyyah) is the manifestation of the essence in which all different attributes are gathered together. Here everything is One and many, many is One and One many.

At this stage, essence is manifested as attribute and attribute as essence. Every attribute is identical with the other, as generosity is with revengefulness, for both are identical with (and 'ain of) Allah. In ahadiyyah, there is no manifestation of names and attributes and the Real is the pure essence. In wahdiyyah, names and attributes as well as their traces and effects are fully manifested, but they are not separate from the essence; here every attribute is identical with (the 'ain of) the other. In ilahiyyah names and attributes are manifested but are distinguished one from the other and are even contradictory to one another.⁶²

Ascent of the Soul

The different grades of the self-revelations of the One are only a logical description of how, according to al-Jili, the Real, i.e., God, manifests Himself in nature and man. It is man in whom He becomes self-conscious and who realizes the ultimate truth that there is no multiplicity or division, for reality is one. But, as al-Jili says, this realization does not dawn on him all of a sudden. It is not possible for man to realize and comprehend all the divine realities at the time of birth. He ascends to the truth only by gradual stages.⁶³ Al-Jili enumerates four different stages which man has to traverse before he is able to achieve unity with the source and origin of life, the One.

1. Illumination of Action

At this stage man feels that God permeates all objects of the world; it is He who moves them and is ultimately responsible for their rest. The power of performing action is attributed by al-Jili to God only and man is looked upon as devoid of all power or will. He enumerates several degrees and grades of this stage. There are some who first see the divine will and then look to the action and, thus, they are made to realize the conflict between God's will and religious injunctions. There are some who follow His will, although thereby they violate His order (amr). With regard to the first, i.e. will, they are obedient, while, with regard to the second, they are classed among the disobedient. Al-Jili leaves the problem unsettled by asking the question, "Is it better for man, in order to win God's favour, to put on the dress of disobedience for the sake of fulfilling God's will or to put on the dress of obedience and defy thereby His will, though, as a matter of fact, only that happens which is according to the will of God?"⁶⁴

2. Illumination of Names

When a mystic receives illumination from any one of the divine names, his being is completely submerged under the light of the name. Both are greatly identified that when anyone calls God by that name the response comes from the mystic. The result is that he comes to realize his unity with the Real. “Anyone who calls Laila (my beloved) by her name receives answer from me; when anyone calls me, then Laila answers on my behalf. We are one soul though in two different bodies or us two are like a person who in essence is one but has two names. As a matter of fact, we are not two persons that have become one, bur are one; the lover is the beloved.

Al-Jili enumerates several grades and degrees of this illumination, all of which are based on his mystical experiences. Other people may arrive at a different set of stages on the basis of their mystical experience. The first is the illumination of the name Eternal (Qadim). Here God reveals to man his position as he existed before the creation of the world in the consciousness of God (i.e. as ‘ain al-thabitah). His physical existence vanishes.

As the knowledge of God is eternal, so are the objects of His knowledge. This being so, the man who receives illumination from the name Eternal ipso facto loses his temporality and becomes as eternal as his latent reality (‘ain al-thabitah). He who receives the epiphany of the name al-Haqq (the Truth) realizes the hidden truth contained in the Qur’anic verse (15:85), “We created the heavens, the earth, and whatever is in them with truth.” For him the phenomenal world ceases to exist and only the essence, devoid of all attributes and relations, remains. There are others who receive epiphany of the name al-Ahad (the One). God reveals to them the true nature of the phenomenal world and they realize in their mystic revelation that this world is a reflection (buruz) of His essence and is related to Him as waves to the sea. In this state the mystic sees the One in the many; rather, the many disappear altogether and only the One remains as the Real.

Al-Jili sums up his position in these words, “I lost my (separate) being (wujud). On my behalf He represented me; rather, He was I and I, He. Being was one and there was no conflict or difference. I was annihilated and achieved abiding life (baqa’) with Him and in Him, and all the veils of difference and dualities were removed. I raised my self (nafs), the veil was lifted and I awoke as if I had not fallen asleep. With the eyes of reality I found myself as Haqq. Then His attributes became my attributes and myself (dhat) His essence. As a matter of fact, my name is His name and the name of his essence is my name.

There are some who receive light (tajalli) from the name al-Rahman (the Merciful). At this stage, the mystic receives illumination gradually and turn by turn from all the divine names and is illumined according to the capacity of the light inherent in his nature. Then the name Rabb (Nourisher) and all other names that are related to it like ‘Alim (Knower), Qadir (Powerful), etc. descend on him. This process goes on until he is illumined by all the names. Last of all comes the epiphany of the Name Qayyum (Self-Subsisting). This is the final stage after which the mystic passes on to the next higher stage of the illumination of divine attributes.⁶⁵

3. Illumination of Attributes

At this stage, the self (nafs) and existence (wujud) of the mystic are annihilated. When the light of slavehood ('abdiyyah) and the spirit of creatureliness in him pass away, God substitutes in his body, in place of the thing that has been snatched away, a spiritual substance of His own essence without incarnation. This spiritual substance, called the Holy Spirit (Ruh al-Quds), becomes an inalienable part of his self. God's epiphany to man in this state means His epiphany to His own Self, we call man slave, though, in reality, and there is no distinction between Lord and slave. When slave disappears, his logical correlate, Lord, must also disappear. The creatures are like waves which, though many, are parts of the sea. If the sea is in motion, it is all waves; when it is calm, there are neither waves nor number (i.e. multiplicity)."

He enumerates several grades of this illumination which different people attain according to their inborn capacities and the magnitude of their knowledge of the power of their will. When a person is illumined by the divine attribute of life, he feels that he is the sole source of life as manifested in all the creatures in different proportions. Al-Jili says that when he was at this stage he felt that he was life itself, one and indivisible.

When a mystic is illumined by the attribute of knowledge or sight, he knows the reality of everything that was, is and will be and sees everything, even the unknown of the unknown (ghaib al-ghaib). When he is illumined by the attribute of hearing, he hears the speech of every creature: minerals, plants, animals and angels.

Some receive the light of the attribute of speech (kalam). In this condition, the recipient looks upon all existents as God's Word. Sometimes he hears the Words of God without a veil of names, without any direction, without the help of any bodily organ. This hearing of God's words cannot be described in usual physical terms, for the ear does not play any part in it. In this state man attains a very high position. He is addressed by God as His lover and beloved. "You are My mouth among My people. You are My inmost secret and the best reflection of My life. You are My name, My person (dhat), My attribute. You are the epitome and the (final) object of existence and creation (huduth). If there had been no Lord (Rubb), there would have been no slave. You manifested Me as I manifested you. You brought me into existence, as I created you. If you had not been existent, I would not have been existent. My lover, I am the (hidden) meaning of you and you are the (apparent) manifestation of Me."

A man who reaches this stage receives God's Word according to his capacity. When carried to the Highest Tree (sidrat al-muntaba) he is addressed by God. Then he sees light in the heart and is convinced by its very brilliance that its source is God. He is told, "My friend, your I-ness (aniyyah) is my He-ness (huwiyyah). 'You' is identical with 'I.' Your simplicity is My compositeness and your compositeness is My simplicity. You are a point (centre) round which the circle of existence revolves, and in that circle you are the worshipper as well as the worshipped; you are the light, the manifestation, the beauty."

Some are illumined by the divine attribute of will. At this stage the illumined person sees that everything in the world is subject to his will.

Some are illumined by the attribute of power. At this stage, which al-Jili claims to have reached, he heard the ringing of bells, his whole physical body seem to have been torn asunder and his existence changed into non-being. He experienced here darkness upon darkness until by the grace of God he was relieved of all this and came upon light. At this stage, the illumine one gets extra-ordinary spiritual powers, a thing comes into existence at his bidding. The last stage is the illumination of the attribute of divinity (ilahiyah), where two contradictory positions seem to be reconciled and incorporated into the world as true and yet he looks upon all of them (including Islam) as false, for, according to him all Muslims, believers, gnostics and the righteous ones are on the wrong path and he does not accept the opinion of any but the perfect Sufi (muhaqqiq) as true.⁶⁶

4. Illumination of the Essence

When God reveals Himself to man through this epiphany, man dies to himself and, in place of that, receives from God a divine substance (latifah ilahiyah) which is either attributive (sifati) or essential (dhati). When this substance is essential, i.e. when man is illumined by divine essence, he truly becomes a perfect man.⁶⁷

Doctrine of Logos and the Perfect Man

According to al-Jili there are three metaphysical categories: (1) Absolute Being which is completely unknowable. It is the essence above all kinds of determinations, relations, and modes.⁶⁸ (2) The reality viewed as Haqq, the aspect of He-ness or Divinity. (3) The reality viewed as khalq, the aspect of I-ness, or humanity. Ultimate Reality is One, but it appears in two different aspects of God and man (Haqq and khalq).⁶⁹ Sometimes he expresses this doctrine in a form which most Western writers (like Nicholson) construe to be the acceptance of the Christian doctrine of Trinity. Al-Jili says, “Essence has two aspect: ‘You’ and ‘I...’ ‘You’ refers to your He-ness (huwiyyah); ‘I’ refers to my reality... ‘I,’ as ‘I’-ness, is God and ‘You’ in its creaturely aspect is man. You make look at yourself as ‘I or as ‘You’; in reality, there is nothing here except the Universal Reality.”⁷⁰

Later on, al-Jili says, “In itself the essence is one. If you say it is one, it is true. And if you say, it is two, and then it is, as a matter of fact, two. If you say, ‘No, it is three,’ you have spoken the truth.” Explaining it further, he says, “Look at His oneness (ahadiyyah) which is His essence and here He is one (wahid) and unique. If you look at Him with regard to the two aspects of Creator and creature, Lord and slave (Rabb and ‘abd), He is two. And if you look at His real nature and at that wherein two contraries are gathered together, you will be amazed. You will not be able to call His loftiness lowly and His lowliness lofty. You will have to fix a third name to illustrate His nature which is characterized by the two attributes. This third thing is that whose name is Ahmad with reference to the celestial sphere and Mohammad with reference to the terrestrial sphere.⁷¹ This is the doctrine of Logos or the perfect man which he discusses in detail in the 60th chapter of his book.

The perfect man, according to him, is the Pole (Qutb) on which the sphere of existence revolves from first to last. He has been one and

unchangeable since being came into existence. He is dressed in different ways and in each guise he has a different name. His real name is Mohammad. In every age he has a name which is most suitable for that time. Referring to his personal experience he says that he had a chance of seeing him (i.e. Mohammad as a perfect man) in the form of his Sheikh, Sharf al-Din al-Jabrati, at Zabid in 796/1393, though he did not know at the time that he was Mohammad. The Holy Prophet, as a matter of fact, in his capacity as the perfect man, has the power of assuming different forms.

When the mystic observes him in the form which he possessed in his earthly life, he calls it the form of Mohammad. But when he (the mystic) sees him in some other form, though he knows that it is in reality, Mohammad applies to nothing except the reality of Mohammad (haqiqat al-Mohammadiyyah). Al-Jili is, however, very careful to point out that this is not the doctrine of metempsychosis. Mohammad has the power, according to him, to manifest himself in different forms and he has been appearing in the form of the perfect man in every age. Such men are outwardly his (i.e. Mohammad's) vicegerents, while inwardly he constitutes their essence.⁷² At another place, al-Jili calls Mohammad as "the heaven and the earth and the length and the breadth."⁷³

The basic reality of Mohammad is present in all people in proportion to their inherent capacities. Saints and prophets all partake of it in different degrees, while Mohammad alone possesses it in its fullness and, therefore, according to al-Jili, nobody except he can be called a truly perfect man.⁷⁴ Different names and attributes are manifested individually and separately in different saints and prophets, but in the perfect man they are manifested in their totality.

The perfect man is the whole of reality in miniature; he is the microcosm who combines in himself the inward and the outward aspects of reality. He is the copy of God as a tradition of the Prophet says, "Allah created Adam in His own image." God is living, knowing, mighty, willing, hearing, seeing, and speaking and so is the perfect man. Then there is the perfect man's he-ness (huwiyyah) as against God's He-ness (huwiyyah), I-ness (aniyyah) against I-ness, essence against essence, who against whole, universal against universal, particular against particular.⁷⁵

The microcosmic character of the perfect man is further explained by al-Jili as follows, "The perfect man in his essence represents all the realities of existence. In his spirituality he corresponds to the spiritual realities and in his corporeality to the physical realities. His heart corresponds to the Throne of God (al-'arsh),⁷⁶ his aniyyah to the Heavenly Chair (kursi),⁷⁷ his mind to the Exalted Pen (al-qalam al-a'la),⁷⁸ his soul to the Guarded Tablet (al-lauh al-mahfuz),⁷⁹ his nature to physical elements, his potentialities to hayula, etc., etc. In short, every faculty of the perfect man corresponds to different manifestations in the physical world."⁸⁰

According to al-Jili, there are three stages (barzakh) of development for the perfect man. In the first stage called beginning (bada'ah) the perfect man becomes endowed with divine names and attributes. In the intermediary stage (tawassut) he is able to grasp both divine and human realities. When he is able to acquire all that is possible to do at this stage, he gets knowledge

of all hidden things and becomes aware of the secrets of the unseen world. In the third and final stage (khitam) he acquires creative power and is given full authority to manifest this power in the world of nature. “At this stage, there are only two things: he, the perfect man himself and God the Great.”⁸¹

He is called “the guide” (al-mehdi) and the seal (al-khatam). He is the vicegerent to whom God refers in the story of Adam. All things are drawn towards him in obeying his order as an iron is attracted by the magnet. The entire world is subdued to his power and greatness, and he does what he wishes to do. Nothing remains hidden from or unknown to him. The saint (i.e. the perfect man) possesses the divine substance as simple essence (like God Himself) and is not limited by any rank (martabah) of Creator and creature,⁸² and as such he is able to bestow on things what their nature demands without any lot or hindrance.⁸³

Saint ship and Prophethood

Al-Jili quotes Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir on the authority of ibn ‘Arabi, “Oh prophets, you have been called prophets but we have received something which you did not get.” Another mystic says, “We have dived in the river (saint ship) while the prophets are staying at its banks.” Al-Jili remarks that there is truth in these statements, but a prophet as prophet is superior to a saint qua saint.⁸⁴

Al-Jili regards prophethood as a developed stage of saint ship. The seventh stage of the spiritual development is nearness (qurb) which he calls great saint ship (wilayat al-kubra). It has four aspects. The first is friendship (khullah), the position attained by Abraham. The second is love (hub), where Mohammad was given the rank of a lover of God (habib Allah). The third is finality (khatam), the rank of Mohammad (maqam-i Mohammadi) where the banner of Ahmad was hoisted for him. The last and fourth is the rank of slave hood (‘abdiyyah) where God called him by the name of slave (‘abd).⁸⁵ In this rank he was made a prophet and sent with a message to the people.

Other people who succeed in attaining this rank are only entitled to be called slaves and they are the vicegerents of Mohammad on all planes (hadarah) of existence. There are some saints who have undergone spiritual discipline and attained perfection, but their objective is not the reform of the people. Such saints are prophets, but their prophethood follows from that of Mohammad. They are his brothers about whom there is reference in the following tradition, “I have a great regard for those of my brethren who will come after my death.” These people are prophet-saints. The prophethood of these saints, according to al-Jili, is institutional (tashr‘i) but that of nearness, propagation (of the message of the Holy Prophet), and enforcement of the divine Law. These prophet-saints receive their prophetic knowledge directly i.e. from the same source from which the prophets derive their knowledge.⁸⁶

Al-Jili draws a distinction between saint ship (walayah), prophecy of saint ship (nubuwwat al-wilayah), and prophecy of institution (nubuwwat al-tashri‘). Saint ship is a rank in which God reveals to a mystic His names and attributes through knowledge, state, and power and, thus, becomes his protector and friend (mutawalli). In the prophecy of saint ship, the perfect servant (al-‘abd al-kamil) is commanded by God to turn his attention to the

people so that he may reform them in the light of the divine Law towards a better moral and spiritual life. He who performed this task before Mohammad was an apostle (rasul) and he who undertook this work after him is his vicegerent, but in his missionary work he has no independent status; he is the follower of Mohammad, like such saints as Bayazid, Junaid, ‘Abd al-Qadir Jilani, ibn ‘Arabi, etc. He who enjoys an independent status and does not follow any other prophet belongs to the rank of prophecy of institution, but this has come to an end after the death of Mohammad.

Thus, saint ship represents a peculiar relation between the Lord and the servant, prophecy of saint ship is an aspect of the saint which is common between the Creator and the creature; prophecy of institution is an independent and permanent assignment, an apostleship is an aspect which refers to the relation between the (Lord’s) servant and the creatures.

A prophet is a saint as well as a prophet, but the aspect of his saint ship is superior to the aspect of his prophecy, though every prophet-saint is superior to a saint.⁸⁷ According to al-Jili, Mohammad is the final prophet because he did not leave any wisdom, guidance, knowledge, and secret unexplained. Whatever was necessary for the people to know and learn had been communicated by him. No Sufi saint can know or experience anything which was not experienced by him and, therefore, he cannot but follow him. “After Mohammad institutional prophethood came to an end.”⁸⁸

Psychology - Qalb

The term “heart” (qalb) is very often used by the mystics as the repository of the innermost secrets of divine knowledge. It is definitely not the physical organ of the human body but a symbolical term for the rational or spiritual aspect of man. Following ibn ‘Arabi, al-Jili identifies it with the spirit of God which, according to the Qur’an, was breathed into Adam (15:29).

The heart (qalb) is the eternal light which was revealed in the essence (‘ain) of existents (i.e. in Mohammad or the perfect man), so that God may see man through it. It is the centre of God’s consciousness and the circumference of the circles of all existents. It symbolizes that which is described in the Qur’an as the light (24:35). It reflects all the divine names and attributes and yet at times it directs its attention to some particular name and then becomes a complete reflection of it.

The true nature of the heart is divine and pure.⁸⁹ But due to animal passions sometimes it loses this purity which, however, can be recovered after a period of physical and spiritual training, the duration of which varies according to the degree of influence of the animal passions. Al-Jili holds that certain men of eminence subjected themselves to a rigorous mystic discipline as a result of which they received divine illumination as a right and not as a favour. In his support he quotes a verse of Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir Jilani who says, “I continued grazing in the fields of rida’ (submission to God’s will) and attained a rank which was the result not of God’s favour (but of my own efforts).”

Qalb is like a mirror to the realities of Being or it may be called the reflection of the universe. God says, “The sky and the earth do not contain

Me, it is only the heart of My believing servant which can contain Me.” This statement, according to al-Jili, proves that the heart is primary and the universe is only secondary.

God’s comprehension by the heart is of three kinds: (a) by knowledge. Heart alone is able to comprehend and know God as He is. Other things can and do know God either in one or other of His aspects, but heart alone can know him in all-comprehensiveness. (b) By observation (mushahahadah). Through this seeing (kashf) the heart observes the beauties of the face of Allah and enjoys the taste of His names and attributes. (c) By vicegerency. At this stage, man becomes a complete embodiment of divine names and attributes so much so that he feels his essence to be identical with divine essence. He then becomes God’s vicegerent.

Reason

There are three kinds of reason: the first intelligence (‘aql al-awwal), universal reason (‘aql al-kulli) and ordinary reason (‘aql al-ma‘ash). The first intelligence is the locus of the form of divine knowledge in existence and as such it is identical with the Exalted pen. It contains explicitly and analytically what is contained implicitly and synthetically in divine consciousness. It is the light of divine knowledge which became the first manifestation of the essence in the phenomenal world.⁹⁰

Universal reason is the luminous percipient in which those forms of knowledge are made manifest which is deposited in the first intelligence. Al-Jili rejects the view of those who regard universal reason as the sum of reasons of all rational beings, for reason are a unit and a substance.

Ordinary reason is a light which is judged and measured by the laws of reflection. Its sphere of activity is confined only to one of the several aspects of the universal reason; it has no access to the first intelligence which is beyond logical inferences and is the sphere where sacred revelation takes place. Ordinary reason has only one scale, i.e., of nature, while knowledge gained through ordinary reason is of limited scope, fallible, and is mostly of the nature of conjecture. He relates the three reasons as follows: the first intelligence is like the sun, universal reason is like water which reflects the rays of the sun, while the ordinary reason is like the reflection of water which falls on a wall.⁹¹

Judgment (Wahm)

The wahm of Mohammad was created by God from His perfect light and, therefore, it was manifested in the phenomenal world in a perfect form. Wahm is the strongest faculty possessed by man because it over-powers reason, reflection, and imagination. It has, thus, the greatest capacity of (intellectual) apprehension and preservation. It has power and influence over all existence. It is through it that an intellectual person is able to acknowledge God and worship Him. It is the light of certitude and anyone who is able to attain supremacy over it becomes the master of the two universes, terrestrial and spiritual. But he who is over-powered by it becomes subject to darkness and bewilderment.⁹²

Himmah is concentration of mind upon an object. It corresponds to what is usually called will or power of will. It is a very powerful faculty which,

according to al-Jili, is always busy in the contemplation of God. If anybody decides to attain a particular objective and concentrates his will upon its attainment, he is sure to succeed in his aim. There are two necessary conditions for success, (a) determination in thought about the possibilities of the success or otherwise of the objective and then a conviction about the result, and (b) concentration of all effort on its achievement. If anybody fails to manifest this type of activity, he has no chance of success. In the beginning one encounters great difficulties and hindrances but, once they are overcome, man is on the verge of conquest of his self as well as of the physical universe.

Al-Jili makes a distinction between will (himmah) and attention (hamm). The object of the former is God and the spiritual world, while that of the latter is the physical world and pursuits related to it. But for a mystic it is not proper to stay at the stage of attention for long, because after some time it becomes a hindrance to future progress.⁹³

Reflection (Fikr)

It is a key to the Unseen. According to al-Jili, there are two methods of approaching the Unseen: (a) pertaining to God, which is attained through divine names and attributes, (b) pertaining to the world which depends on realizing the true nature of man, all of whose aspects are ranged against the aspects of the Merciful. One of these aspects is reflection by which we can peep into the mysteries of the Unseen. When a man is able to attain perfection in the exercise of reflection, he sees spiritual objects in a physical garb.

This ascent ('uruj) is of two kinds: (1) One kind of ascent is achieved by traversing the path chalked out by the Merciful. The man who adopts it is on the straight path and attains creative powers. (b) The second kind of ascent is the "red magic" which is involved in thought and imagination and in which truth and falsehood are mixed together. It is the path of speculative thought which lands man in the morass of uncertainty and doubt.⁹⁴

But it does not imply that the exercise of reflection should be condemned outright. Al-Jili admits that reflection has the potentiality of leading men astray from the right path, but he also suggests certain principles by following which it is possible for men to benefit from the light of reflection and save themselves from its pitfalls and darkness. The first principle, according to him, is reason ('aql), which is in perpetual quest, as well as the acquired experience the veracity of which has been testified by men in their mystic life. The second is naql, i.e. knowledge gained through a study of the Qur'an and Tradition, by which a man comes to believe in the reality of the Unseen. But if a man refuses to follow these principles and gives himself over to purely discursive reason, he is sure to be led astray.⁹⁵

The Self (Nafs)

According to al-Jili, as the title of chapter 59 illustrates, self is the origin of Lucifer (Iblis) and other evil powers. But it does not imply that the origin of the self itself is evil, for, as al-Jili says, its origin is the spirit itself of Mohammad. "The self of Mohammad was created by God out of His own Self and the self of Adam was made a copy of the self of Mohammad."

Later on, he says, “Allah created the self of Mohammad from His own essence and as his essence is the unity of two contraries, two contraries emanated from Him.”

Satan was cursed for his act of disobedience but this curse, according to al-Jili, consisted in removing him from divine presence. The period of this separation is limited to the Day of Judgment after which he will be reunited with the divine presence. Thus, according to al-Jili, self is spiritual in origin and does not represent any evil power which is antagonistic to the forces of good. “The self is the inmost secret of the Lord and (a part of) His essence on account of which it has delights. It was created out of the light of attributes of Lordship and, therefore, possesses lordly qualities.” Al-Jili, therefore, identifies self with the soul which was breathed into Adam and enumerates the following five stages of the development of the soul on the path of spiritual progress:

1. The animal soul is an aspect of the soul which governs the body.
2. The evil-prompting soul (nafs al-ammarah) is that aspect by which the soul is engrossed in fulfilling the demands of passions and, thus, becomes indifferent to divine commandments and prohibitions.
3. The inspired soul is that aspect by which human soul is directed and guided by God to do good action.
4. The self-reproaching soul is that aspect by which man is engaged in subduing his inclinations and passions and in turning his attention to God.
5. The tranquil soul is that aspect because of which all evil inclinations are totally removed and man feels satisfied with God.

But beyond these five stages, there is a final stage where body is completely under the control of the soul and partakes of the knowledge of the Unseen and is able to fly over the earth, etc. At this stage man is characterized by God’s attributes and becomes identical with His essence.⁹⁶

Religion

A theory of life which is based on pantheism ends in a conception of religion which is universal. As the unity of Godhead is manifested in the multiplicity of divine names and attributes, so the basic urge of man to worship God takes various forms all of which are equally valid and right. He argues his case on the basis of certain verses of the Qur’an and traditions. He holds that all existent things are created for the purpose of divine worship. Everything by its state and activity, nay bit is very nature and attributes, actually does worship God and, therefore, all existents are servants or worshippers of God.

The forms of worship, however, due to differences in the nature of names and attributes, are different. Though humanity was originally and by nature one, yet due to differences resulting from the manifestations of diverse names, people adopted various pathways towards God - pathways which appeared right to the people and which God had decreed for them; for none follows a path except that which he wish them to follow and all paths are undoubtedly paths leading to Him as the following verse of the Qur’an indicates, “There is no living creature but He has it in His control.” (11:56).

Death is the extinguishing of the vital heat, while life is the soul’s concentration on the body. The life of the body is maintained only so long

as the soul continues to look at it. After death, the soul assumes a bodily form appropriate to it in accordance with the place it occupies. Some mystics wrongly deny resurrection of the body. Al-Jili believes on the basis of his personal experience and observation that bodies along with souls shall be resurrected.⁹⁷

The stage intermediate between death and resurrection (barzakh) is an incomplete and non-permanent stage of life after death. It is a world of fantasy. There the people will meet with the forms appropriate to their actions. If a man had been doing good actions, he would experience different forms and shapes of these actions which would carry him progressively to better states. Similarly, an evil-doer would experience torments which will gradually increase in their intensity.

Al-Jili enumerates eight different levels of paradise the last of which, called the lauded station (maqam al-mahmud), and is meant for none but Mohammad. It is the paradise of the essence. Similarly, he describes seven different grades or levels of hell.

But after giving a graphic description of hell and heaven, al-Jili denies their existence as separate localities. As the epiphanies of the Lord, they are on an equal level; the inmates of hell will receive tidings of punishment as the people of paradise will receive tidings of reward.⁹⁸ Hell is nothing but the natural darkness which is fire.⁹⁹ In the 59th chapter he discusses in detail the nature of Iblis and his manifestations and yet he asserts that Iblis is not an individual; it is only the personification of the evil aspect of man's nature.¹⁰⁰

He tries to explain away the usual significance and nature of fire in hell. God will create in the people thrown into hell the power to bear punishment and, thus, this punishment will change into pleasure.¹⁰¹ But even then this so-called punishment in hell will not last forever.

Al-Jili thinks that the beatific vision is the manifestation of God's tajalli and His nearness is not confined to the people of paradise or the so-called next world. Every individual, here in this life and in life after death, whether he is placed in hell or in paradise, continually receives God's tajalli; as a matter of fact, his existence is all due to it.¹⁰²

According to al-Jili, God's will is absolutely free from external restraints; His actions are not determined by causes and conditions.¹⁰³ Man, on the other hand, according to him, is completely determined in his action.¹⁰⁴ He says that revealed books demand obedience, while people as a matter of fact act as they are determined by their nature. Freedom of choice (ikhtyar) is attributed to them only formally so that God's way to man may be justified.¹⁰⁵

God's decree, according to al-Jili, is of two kinds. One is unchangeable and in conformity with the demands of the divine attributes and as such is not subject to change. The other kind of decree is that which takes place according to the law of nature as demanded by the inherent capacity of the existents. Decrees of the latter type sometimes do not come to pass due to the contingent character of the things of the world.

Al-Jili subscribes to the doctrine that Being as Being is good and evil is only relative and apparent. With regard to the Real, there is no distinction

between good and evil, for everything without any distinction is the manifestation of the divine beauty and is as such good. Evil or defect in the phenomenal world is only due to certain relations. Fire is evil for a person who is burned but is good for the insect that lives in it and gets nourishment from it. In short, there is nothing in this world which is absolutely evil.¹⁰⁶

Al-Jili holds that what is called sin or disobedience is, in one respect, obedience between God's will and His command as enunciated by ibn 'Arabi. Sometimes an action takes place in full conformity with God's will, though His command may be against its occurrence. In such a situation man is disobedient with regard to His command but obedient with regard to His will. This point of view affects al-Jili's treatment of Satan's role. God rebuked him for his disobedience but he neither repented nor bewailed nor tried to seek forgiveness, for only that comes to pass which is according to God's will.

Al-Jili enumerates seven stages in spiritual progress. The first is what he calls Islam which covers five principles: declaration of God's unity and Mohammad's prophethood, prayer, fasting, poor-tax and pilgrimage.

The second stage is faith (iman). It is the first manifestation of the world of the Unseen and implies heart's acceptance of the truth thus revealed. It is something different from reason. Faith is not belief in a fact arrived at through discursive reasoning but acceptance without rational argumentation. Light of faith is superior to the light of reason. Kalam (scholastic theology) was invented to defend religion against disbelievers and innovators (ahl al-bid'ah). It never helps in producing faith in a person.

The third stage is called piety (salah) which results in good actions. But the motive is desire for divine rewards and safety from punishment. A person at this stage leads a life of obedience to the laws of the Shari'ah for the sake of his self.

The fourth stage is called ihsan where one observes the effects of divine names and attributes. Such a person does good actions not for the sake of his own self nor for rewards, but for his love for God.

The fifth stage is martyrdom (shadadah) which is of two kinds. The lower grade represents the death of a person in an epidemic or on a journey or in the battle-field for a righteous cause. The higher grade of martyrdom is to see the Real in every existent.

The sixth stage is called siddiqiyah which is signified by the mystic saying, "He who knows his self knows the Lord." This stage has three different planes. The first is faith through knowledge or reason ('ilm al-yakin). The second is faith through personal experience and mystic kashf ('ain al-yaqin). The third is true and perfect faith (haqq al-yaqin). The mystic who has attained this stage of siddiqiyah passes through all these planes of faith. In the first, he sees the Unseen and is able to observe with the light of faith those secret realities which are not open to the common people. Here he attains fana' and then reaches the stage of baqa' where he receives the tajalli of all divine names one after the other. He perceives the essence through names. This is the final plane of 'ilm al-yaqin.

In the next plane, i.e. of 'ain al-yaqin, he receives illumination from the divine attributes one by one until he feels himself one with the Real in Its

aspect of attributes. He progresses gradually until names and attributes lose their significance for him. He attains gnosis of the essence and through it he is able to understand the operation of names and attributes. He now knows the essence through the essence. Thus, he reaches the third and the highest plane, i.e. haqq al-yaqin, which is the first step in the seventh stage of nearness (qurb).

Here man is able to manifest in his person different attributes of the Real, though this manifestation cannot be total and absolute. A person who is able to bring a dead man to life, for instance is manifesting a particular attribute of God, though in a limited form. He stands in nearness to God. The first step in this stage is the station of friendship where he is able to create through the word “Be” (kun) after the manner of God. In the words of a tradition, “God becomes the ears by which he hears, the eyes by which he sees, the tongue by which he speaks, the hands by which he holds, the feet by which he walks.” The second step in this stage is the station of love where the lover and the beloved become one and where the one represents the other. The last step in this stage is the station of khitam where the individual is characterized by the essence (haqiqah) of the Real. This station is beyond the reach of ordinary mortals.

C. Jami

‘Abd al-Rahman Jami (817 - 898/1414 - 1492), a famous poet and great scholar, was the follower of ibn ‘Arabi. His book, Lawa’ih (Flashes), is an exposition of the doctrine of the unity of Being. In the preface he states that this doctrine is the result of mystic experience of several eminent saints, but his role is that of a mere interpreter, for he has not undergone or experienced any mystic trances. He has only put in words what others had experienced at first hand.¹⁰⁷

His statement of the theory follows the logical definition of the word “existence.” Existence (or Being) is sometimes used as a universal concept which in logic is called “secondary concept” (ma‘qul-i thaniyyah) and has no objective reality corresponding to it but which attaches itself to the quiddity (mahiyyah) of a thing mentally. Taking Being in this sense, several critics have raised an objection against ibn ‘Arabi’s state that God is the Absolute Being. According to them, abstract existence having no objective reality cannot be said to be the source of external reality. Jami, therefore, tries to defend ibn ‘Arabi by saying that Being or existence has another sense.

When pantheists use the word “Being” (wujud), they refer to reality which exists by itself, and on which depends the existence of other beings. As a matter of fact, none exists except He and all objective existents are His modes.¹⁰⁸ But the truth of this statement, according to Jami, is verifiable not so much through reason as through mystic experience and intuition. The Absolute Being is called God who is the source of all that exists and yet is above all multiplicity. He transcends all manifestations and is unknowable.

Essence, pure and simple, is completely without any determinations and is above the distinctions of names, attributes, and relations. It is only when this essence descends towards manifestation that attributes such as knowledge, light, and existence makes their appearance. The essence is

above all determinations but it is only when God is viewed by our human finite intellect that He is said to possess attributes.

Following ibn 'Arabi he rejects the Ash'arite theory of divine attributes according to which attributes subsist in and are co-eternal with God, and yet are neither identical with or different from Him. In "Flash" (La'ihah) 15, Jami explains that attributes are distinct from the essence in thought but are identical with it in fact and reality. God is knower due to the attribute of knowledge, powerful due to the attribute of power, active due to the attribute of willing, etc. There is no doubt that as these attributes are different from one another with regard to their content, they are similarly distinct from the essence. But in reality, they are all identical with the essence in the sense that in Him there is no plurality of existence.

The Ultimate Reality, i.e. God, is the ground of everything that exists. He is one so that multiplicity cannot affect Him. But when He reveals Himself in multiplicity of forms and modes, He appears to be many. These distinctions of one and many, however, are only subjective. God and the world are two aspects of the same reality. "The universe is the outward (expression) of God and God is the inner (reality) of the universe. Before manifestation the world God and God after manifestation is identical with the world." As a matter of fact, reality is one, and the dual aspects of God and the world are only our ways of looking at it.¹⁰⁹

The nature of things in the universe in relation to the Absolute is like modes which Jami, following 'Arabi, calls shu'un; they have no existence or reality in themselves and are mere adjectives of the One Being.¹¹⁰ These modes are included in the Absolute as qualities in here in a substance or as a consequent follows from its ground - as half, third, and fourth, and other fractions are related to the integer; these fractions are potentially included in the integer one and become explicit only when repeated.¹¹¹

It is clear that the theological sense is not the actualization of the hidden potentialities of the Creator, but the production of individuals and things which, through deriving their existence from this source, yet enjoy self-determination and independence to some extent. According to Jami, Creator and creatures are two aspects of the same reality.

This subjective determination, according to Jami, has two stages. In the first stage called martabah-i 'ilmi, these existents appear in divine knowledge in the form of archetypal ideas (a'yan-i thabitah). In the second stage called rank of the physical world (martabah-i 'ain), they acquire the attributes and properties of external existence. "In short, there is nothing in the external world except one reality which appears to be many on account of being clothed in diverse modes and attributes."¹¹²

As essence, the Real is beyond all knowledge; neither revelation nor reason can help anyone to comprehend it. No mystic saint can ever claim to experience Him as such. "His highest characteristic is the lack of all characterization and the end of all knowledge about Him is bewilderment."¹¹³ The first stage of the descent is ahadiyyah which is a bare unity devoid of all modes and relations. When it is conditioned by these modes, it is called al-wahdiyyah where the Real characterized by manifestation, etc. It is at this stage that he assumes the attributes of being

the Creator and Sustainer and is characterized by life, knowledge, and will. It is at this stage also that the existents first appear in the consciousness of God as the objects of His knowledge, but they do not involve multiplicity in the One.

At a later stage these objects of God's knowledge are clothed in existence and they assume multiplicity. They all exhibit in varying degrees some of the divine names and attributes.¹¹⁴ But in spite of all these manifestations and splitting of the One into multiplicity, the unity remains unimpaired. It causes no change in the essence or in its attributes. "Although the light of the sun illuminates at once the clean and the unclean, yet it does not affect the purity of its light."¹¹⁵

Though the one essence is interfused in all existents, its presence in them does not mean that everything is equal in this respect. There are differences of degree due to the power of receptivity of each thing. No doubt God and the world are two aspects of the Real, yet God is God and the world is the world. "Every grade of Being is determined according to its rank. If you ignore this distinction, you become an infidel."¹¹⁶

In ethics Jami follows the usual pantheistic tradition and advocates full-fledged determinism. As God is the essence of all things and is the inward aspect of the world, all actions that are usually ascribed to man should, as a matter of fact, be attributed to the Real. But if man is so determined, then how to account for the evil? Jami here again follows ibn 'Arabi. It is true, he says, that all actions of men are God's, yet it is not proper for us to attribute evil to God, for Being qua Being is absolute. According to him, therefore, evil has no positive content; it is privative content; it is privative, lacking something which should have been there. Take, for instance, the case of cold. There is nothing evil in it as such, but with reference to the fruits which it does not allow to ripen, it becomes evil.¹¹⁷

The ultimate goal of man should be not only fana', passing away of consciousness, but fana'-i, passing away of the consciousness of having attained the state of fana'. At this stage, an individual loses not only awareness of self but also awareness of this "non-awareness of self." Then, according to Jami, faith, religion, belief, or kashf (mystic knowledge and experience) all become meaningless.¹¹⁸

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Notes

1. Gulsham-i Raz, Question 12.
2. Ibid., Q. 2.
3. Ibid., Q. 1.
4. Ibid., Q. 2.
5. Ibid., Q. 10.
6. Ibid., Q. 9.
7. Ibid., Q. 4.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., Q. 11.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. 'Abd al-Karim al-Jili, al-Insan al-Kamil, Urdu translation by Fadal Miran, Sufi Printing and Publishing Company, Pindi Bahauddin, p. 4. All references to al-Insan al-Kamil are to this Urdu translation.
13. Ibid., p. 30.
14. Ibid., pp. 30 - 32.
15. Ibid., p. 27. He says that Being is of two kinds. One is Pure Being and that is the divine essence, the other is related to non-Being and that is the phenomenal world.
16. Ibid., p. 39.
17. Ibid., p. 44.
18. The Qur'an (28:88) is usually translated as "Everything is liable to destruction except His Face." But al-Juli interprets the word wajhahu pantheistically and translates it as "its (i.e. thing's) essence," thereby implying that one reality subsists in all multiplicity; *ibid.*, p. 36.
19. Ibid., chapter 62, para. 1.
20. Ibid., chapter 2, pp. 69 - 70.
21. He quotes several Qur'anic verses (25:85, 49:53, etc) to prove this point; *ibid.*, p. 156. See also p. 145.
22. Ibid., pp. 67 - 68.
23. Ibid., pp. 33ff.
24. Ibid., pp. 120 - 21.
25. Ibid., pp 214 - 15.
26. Ibid., pp. 216 - 17.
27. Ibid., p. 48 - 49.
28. Ibid., p. 47 - 52.
29. Ibid., p. 58.
30. He refers to the Qur'an verse (45:13) in which the words jami' 'an minhu are interpreted by him to mean as "all (created) from His own self."
31. He refers to the Qur'anic verse (46:3) for the phrase bi al-Haqq which is interpreted by him to mean that everything was created out of Haqq, i.e. Haqq served as matter for the world.
32. Al-Insan al-Kamil, p. 60.
33. Ibid., p. 61.
34. Ibid., p. 116.
35. Ibid., p. 96.
36. Fusus al-Hikam (Urdu translation, Lucknow, 1927), p. 172. See Affifi, The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyid Din-Ibnul 'Arabi, Cambridge, 1939, p. 152.
37. Fusus, pp. 155, 272; Affifi, op. cit., 31.
38. Al-Insun al-Kamil, pp. 96 - 100.
39. Affifi, op. cit., p. 156.
40. Al-Insan al-Kamil, pp. 101 - 04.
41. Ibid.,p. 105.
42. Ibid., pp. 105 - 06.
43. Ibid., pp. 127 - 33.

44. Ibid.,pp. 129 - 30.

45. In a certain sense, he argues, a'yan al-thabitah can be called eternal. God is eternal and His knowledge must also be eternal. As objects of God's knowledge, a'yan al-thabitah must of necessity be eternal. And yet, he adds, in their essence, they are hadith. Because huduth is an actual existential fact (amr al-'aini) and qidam only a logical determination (amr al-hukmi), al-Jili prefers to call a'yan hadith rather than qadim. Al-Insan al-Kamil, p. 132

46. The verse is as follows: "He said to (the heavens) and to the earth, 'Come both, willingly or unwillingly.' They both said, 'We come willingly.'"

47. Al-Insan al-Kamil, pp. 107 - 09

48. Al-Insan al-Kamil, pp. 109 - 11.

49. Ibid., p. 92.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid., p. 64.

52. Ibid., pp. 65 - 66.

53. Ibid., p. 64 - 66.

54. Ibid., p. 92.

55. Ibid. pp. 54 - 55.

56. See Affifi, op. cit., p. 24, footnote 1. Also p. 114 where He-ness is identified with 'Ama'.

57. Al-Insan al-Kamil, p.122.

58. Ibid. p. 124

59. Ibid., pp. 56 - 57.

60. Ibid., p. 140.

61. Ibid., pp. 71 - 74.

62. Ibid., pp. 75 - 78.

63. Ibid., pp. 79 - 90.

64. Ibid., p. 93.

65. Ibid. p. 92.

66. Ibid., p. 4.

67. Ibid., p. 8.

68. Ibid., p. 17,

69. Ibid., pp. 260 - 61.

70. The terms "length" and breadth" were first used by Jallaj for lahut (divinity) and nasut (humanity) and later employed by ibn 'Arabi and al-Jili to denote the two aspects of the essence.

71. Al-Insan al-Kamil, pp. 253 - 54.

72. Ibid., p. 262.

73. 'Arsh, according to ibn 'Arabi and al-Jili, signifies universal body. "It is the theatre of majesty, the locus of tajalli and a characteristic of essence and is known as the place of that essence - a place which is devoid of all (spatial) reference." Ibid., pp. 171 - 72.

74. Kursi, the Footstool under the divine Throne, "signifies the tajalli of all (divine attributes of action. The divine activity in manifesting the realities of the universe looks first of all to kursi. At this stage the effects of contradictory attributes are manifested in detail and the Word of god (divine amr) comes into existences." Ibid., p.

75. Ibid., p. 262

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78. "The Exalted pen means the first individualization of the creatures analytically. First, the khalq is individualized in the divine consciousness generally and without differentiation, at the stage of 'arsh, its being is synthetic and logical; at the (third) stage of kursi, khalq is manifested analytically. At the (fourth) stage of the Pen, its existence is differentiated. In the first three stages, this manifestation (of khalq) was in the Unseen (i.e.

in God), while in the fourth stage, its manifestation is made objective.” Ibid., p. 174. See also p. 200, “The source of knowledge of the first intelligence and of the Exalted Pen is the same light. When it is referred to creatures, it is called the first intelligence, and when it is related to Haqq, its name is the Exalted pen.

79. Al-lauh al-mahfuz, according to al-Jili, stands for the universal soul. Ibid., p. 176.

80. Ibid., pp. 261 - 62.

81. Ibid., pp. 263 - 64. Cf. ibn ‘Arabi: “Only two beings rightly call themselves God: God Himself who in His books and the perfect man like Bayazid.” See Affifi, op. cit., p. 78.

82. Al-Insan al-Kamil, p. 93.

83. Ibid., p. 153. Al-Jili distinguishes between saint ship and prophethood as follows: “When Adam was sent down to the earth, he was made a prophet, for prophethood means legislation (tashr‘) and imposing obligation (taklif) which pertain to this earth. While in paradise Adam was a saint, nfor it is the place of miracles and observation and this is saint ship.” Ibid.. p. 308.

84. Reference is to the Qur’anic verse (17:1), “Glory be to Him who carried His servant (‘abdihi) by night from the Holy Mosque to the Remote Mosque.

85. Al-Insan al-Kamil, pp. 319 - 20.

86. Ibid., pp. 320 - 21.

87. Ibid., p. 144. The qualifying word “institutional” implies that prophet of the other is still possible and, thus, on p. 320 he explicitly says that nubuwwat al-wilayah will continue.

88. “Names and attributes form the nature of the heart.” Ibid., p. 193. he argues from the Qur’anic verse (95:4), “We indeed created man in the fairest mould.”

89. “From the first intelligence which is referred to as the Principle of Mohammad, God created Gabriel. Thus, Mohammad in this sense becomes the father of Gabriel and the source and ground of the whole universe. The First Intelligence is called al-Ruh al-Amin (the Truthful Spirit) because it is the storehouse of divine knowledge and its protector.” Ibid., p. 200.

90. Ibid., pp. 197 - 200.

91. Ibid., pp. 200 - 06.

92. Ibid., pp. 206 - 10.

93. Al-Jili relates that he himself was submerged in this path of speculative philosophy and this was due only the spiritual influence of his teacher, al-Jabarti, who was staying with a group of mystics in Zabid in 779/1377 at the house of one Shihab al-Din Ahmad. Ibid., pp. 212 - 13.

94. Ibid., pp. 210 - 14.

95. Ibid., pp. 292 - 93.

96. Ibid., pp. 272 - 73.

97. Ibid., p.239.

98. Ibid., 224

99. Ibid., p. 243.

100. Ibid., p. 239

101. Ibid., 134

102. Ibid., Chaps. 17, 18.

103. Ibid., p. 34. He argues, like other Muslim pantheists, from the Qur’anic verse (97:96), “Allah had created you and what you make,” interpreting ta’malun as “what you do.”

104. Ibid., p. 108.

105. Ibid., p. 114.

106. Lawa’ih, Nawal Kishore Press, Lucknow (India, 1936, p. 4

107. He subscribes to ibn ‘Arabi’s doctrine that the universe is nothing but accidents, all pertaining to a single substance, i.e., the Ultimate Being. He tries to give rational arguments in its support. See Lawa’ih 18 and 26.

108. Lawi’ih 13, 14.

109. La’ihah 25.

110. See La’ihah26 where Jami tries to explain certain statements of ibn ‘Arabi as discussed in Fass al-Shu’aibiyah.

111. La’ihah 19.

112. La’ihah 18.

- 113. La'ihah 24.
- 114. La'ihah 17. See also La'ihah 24, where the idea of One's descent is further elaborated.
- 115. La'ihah 20.
- 116. La'ihah 23.
- 117. La'ihah 30.
- 118. La'ihah 8 and 9.

Chapter 44: Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi

A. Life and Studies

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, better known as Mujaddid Alf Thani, was the son of Sheikh ‘Abd al-Ahad Makhdum, who was a devout Muslim always anxious to derive spiritual enlightenment from saints. Sheikh ‘Abd al-Ahad Makhdum met Sheikh Allah Dad at Ruhtas and Sayyid ‘Ali Qawam at Juanput. He learned a great deal from both and then returned to Sirhind and lived there until his death in 1007/1598. A great master of all the branches of contemporary knowledge, he taught the prevalent textbooks on philosophy and religion to his students extensively. He was also an acknowledged authority on jurisprudence.

Besides, he taught mysticism to those who were eager to learn it, using ‘Awarif al-Ma‘arif and Fusus al-Hikam as his texts. He was an ardent reader of ibn ‘Arabi and was an authority on his teachings. He acknowledged ibn ‘Arabi’s superiority in philosophy and spiritual insight, but he never followed him if he found him deviating from the Sunnah. He was such an ardent and close follower of the Holy Prophet and his teachings that he never left a sunnah (tradition) unpracticed. He loved the devotees of Khuwaja Baha’ al-Din Naqshband of Bukhara called the Naqshbands,¹ and his son inherited this love and devotion to them from him.

Sheikh Ahmad was born in 971/1563 at Sirhind. His name was Ahmad and his surname was Badr al-Din. From his father’s side, he descended from the Caliph ‘Umar. In his early childhood he was sent to a school where in a short time he learned the Holy Qur’an by heart. Then for a long time he was taught by his father. Later he went to Sialkot and there covered some more courses under the guidance of Kamal Kashmiri. He also studied some works on Hadith from Ya‘qub Kashmiri, a great scholar of the time. By the young age of 17 he had mastered a great deal of Islamic sciences and had begun teaching them to others.

He visited Agra where he met some great men of learning including Abu al-Faidi. After some time he accompanied his father to Sirhind. On his way home, he was married to the daughter of a noble named Sheikh Sultan of Thanesar. On his return to Sirhind he stayed with his father and through his help established spiritual relationship with the Qadriyyah and Chishtiyyah schools of mysticism. Through the training received from his father, he learned the fundamentals of Sufism. In his studies too he had been greatly influenced by his father. He could not go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in his father’s life-time, although he yearned to do so. He was anxious to serve his father during his life and could not leave him alone.

After his father’s death in 1007/1598 he started on this long cherished pilgrimage. On his arrival at Delhi, he heard of the reputation of Khuwaja Baqi Billah as a saint from a friend, Maulana Hassan. He went to him promptly and was well received. The Khuwaja inquired of him about his intended pilgrimage and then wished him to stay with him for a week or so. He was greatly impressed by the spiritual attainments of the Khuwaja that he made up his mind to become his disciple. The Khuwaja was very fastidious in taking anyone as his disciple but he immediately accepted the Mujaddid as his follower and focused his entire attention upon him. The

Mujaddid's heart became the seat of the praise of Allah and he made rapid progress in spiritual knowledge. Under the Khuwaja's guidance he was able to complete his Naqshbandi training in a few months. He was warmly congratulated and was invested with a gown as a symbol of the completion of his training. He went back to Sirhind and began to teach people. After the Khuwaja's death he used to go to Delhi at the 'urs² of the late chief.

B. The Shari'ah

An important period of his life is that between 1028/1618 and 1032/1622. One year of this period was spent in the prison of Gwalior and the other three with the Emperor Jahangir and his army. His increasing popularity aroused the jealousy of his rivals who poisoned the ears of the Emperor and reported him to be dangerous both to the Emperor and the State. The Emperor had faith only in the ascetics and hermits. He could not tolerate a widely popular Sufi in his land. Perhaps Asaf Jah and some other nobles had a hand in this intrigue against the Mujaddid. The matter was worsened still by his refusal to bow before the Emperor on the ground that it was against the tenets of Islam, with the result that he was imprisoned at Gwalior. He was released a year later, but he had to stay for a further period of three years with the army as a detenu. Two years before his death he was allowed to go to his home at Sirhind. There he died on the morning of the 28th Safar 1034/10th December 1624.

Some hold that the Sheikh's release was due to the fact that the Emperor had at last become his disciple and had repented of his action of the previous year, but others hold that the above view was not borne by facts.

It was the crying need of the time that there should appear a man who might have the boldness to oppose the worship of the Emperor by refusing to bow before him, and, thus revive the true spirit of Islam and the extirpate heresy. He fearlessly faced the displeasure of an absolute monarch and chose to go into imprisonment rather than renounce his own beliefs and principles. He stood firm as a rock against the tide of the Mughul heresy introduced by the Emperor's father, Akbar the Great. He is called the Mujaddid because he started the movement of purifying Islam and restored its traditional orthodoxy. His courageous stand against anti-Islam practices resulted in a religious renaissance in India.

The method adopted by him to achieve his purpose was equally bold. He trained groups of disciples and sent them to all the Muslim countries and to the various cities of India to propagate what he regarded as the spirit of Islam. He especially asked them to make people realize the importance of the Sunnah and prepare them to counteract the forces of heresy and to observe and to make others observe the tenets of Islam. His letters to the great men of the Muslim world was given wide publicity. In them he discussed problems connected with Islam and its revival. He pressed the people to follow the Sunnah rigidly and to uproot heresy. He brought numerous noblemen and courtiers to his fold, and in this way tried to change the attitude of the Emperor and his Court.

The Mujaddid strictly adhered to religious practices and sanctioned by the Holy Prophet and was very hard upon those who coined excuses to

violate them. He was an authority of Fiqh and Tradition. His knowledge was encyclopedic and he was endowed with critical insight in matters of religion. His views on mystical revelation and illumination, pantheism, pre-destinarianism, sectarianism, and Sufism are very important. Sheikh Ahmad's reforms can be easily divided into three categories: (1) call to the Muslims to follow the Sunnah and discard heresy (bid'ah), (2) purification of Islamic mysticism (Sufism) from the practices and thoughts which had crept into it through non-Muslim influences and (3) great emphasis on the Islamic Law.

1. Heresy and the Mujaddid's Opposition to It

Heresy implies an innovation. The 'ulama' (theologians) had divided it into two categories, namely, the good innovation (bid'at-i hasnah) and the bad innovation (bid'at-i sayyi'ah). The Mujaddid says he can find no beauty, benefit or light in either. In many of his letters he is at pains to tell his correspondents that all heresy is reprehensible. He quotes many sayings of the Holy Prophet in denouncing it. He symbolizes every kind of heresy with dust, dirt, and pitch darkness and regards it as misleading. Those who practice heresy do so for lack of foresight and insight. The Holy Prophet said that heresy misleads people and uproots the Sunnah itself. When a heresy creeps into religion, it deprives the believers of traditional practice. He was of the opinion that Islam is complete in itself; heresy is a useless appendage of it.

Even if it appears right, it is in fact a blot on their fair face of Islam. Any approval of a heresy or disavowal of the completeness of Islam. In the course of time, the Sunnah would disappear, and heresy would prosper. Respect shown to an upholder of heresy is to deal a blow to Islam. Heresy is a cutting axe to religion and the Sunnah is a guiding star. To strengthen Islam heresy must be uprooted. "May it please the Lord," said he, "to show the 'ulama' that no heresy is good."

2. Reforms in Sufism and the Nature of Sufistic Perfection

"If the contemporary Sufis are just, they should not follow their leaders but the Sunnah. They should never uphold heresy on the pre-text that their Sheikhs did so."³ If a heresy appears in the guise of an inspiration, it is immediately accepted by the people as a long lost truth. For the long conversations and commentaries of the Sufis had been tending away from the religious law (Shari'ah) and a time came in the history of Sufism when the Sufis began to proclaim that Sufism and the religious Law were poles apart. They did not show the respect that the law deserves. They regarded it as formal and ineffective and, as a result, religion and its values suffered much at their hands, though very few knew the harm that was being done. This attitude of the Mujaddid elicited an unqualified praise from Iqbal for him. Speaking of him he says, "He was the guardian of the Muslim faith in India whom God had given a timely warning."

The Mujaddid said, "The Sheikhs who in their state of insensibility (sukr) praise infidelity and induce men to wear the Brahmanical thread⁴ are to be excused because they are not themselves. Those who follow them consciously in these matters are not to be excused because they do so while

they have their senses.”⁵ The rectitude of speculative knowledge depends on its being in concord with theology, and the smallest departure from it is insensibility. According to him, someone asked Khuwaja Naqshband to define the Sufistic institution. He replied that the ultimate end of Sufism is achieved when the rational knowledge becomes revelational or inspired, and the abstract becomes concrete. He did not say that we should seek something over and above the revealed law. The non-essentials that a Sufi meets on his way to Sufistic perfection lose their importance when he reaches his destination. The Law alone is then seen as real. The Prophet received it through a messenger but the Sufis get it by direct inspiration from God.⁶

The Caliph ‘Umar was highly incensed when he was told that Sheikh ‘Abd al-Kabir Yamani was of the view that Allah has no omniscience. He did not attribute this remark to the Sheikh’s insensibility or unconsciousness. He rather thought it to be an infidelity, even if it was committed by the Sheikh with a view to being denounced by the world,⁷ as public denunciation was considered by some Sufis to be contributive to Sufistic perfection. “The true aim of Sufistic institution is to attain sound faith, which depends upon spiritual tranquility without which salvation is impossible. When this tranquility is reached, the heart becomes unconscious of everything but God.”⁸

3. Significance of the Shari‘ah

The divine law is connected with the soul and the spiritualization of the soul depends upon obedience shown to it alone. The Sufi learns this after his perfection.⁹ While still on their way to Sufistic perfection, many Sufis flounder on this mysterious road. One should never lose sight of the divine Law whenever one’s beliefs and deeds are involved.¹⁰ The Naqshbandi Sheikhs have sub-ordinated revelation to the divine Law (Shari‘ah) and with them intuition and inspiration are subject to the divine decrees. Ecstasy should not be given priority to the divine Law. The Naqshbandis are never influenced by the senseless and exaggerated discourses of the Sufis. They never uphold ibn ‘Arabi’s fass¹¹ against the explicit verses of the Qur’an (nass).¹²

The light of God which is revealed on occasional flashes to others is to them constantly illuminating. Everything but His name is erased from their hearts, and even if they try for ages they can think of nothing but Him.¹³ The touchstone of the Sufistic revelations and intuitions should be the commentaries of the Sunnite theologians, for even the adherents to heresies and all those who go astray regard the Holy Qur’an and the Sunnah together as the fountainhead of their beliefs. They misinterpret them only because of their perverted mentalities.¹⁴ The Sufistic discourse which is congruous with the Sunnite interpretations is agreeable, while that which is otherwise is not. Upright Sufis never transgress the limits set by the divine Law even in their ecstatic discourses, dealings, and philosophies. Whenever a Sufi in his ecstasy or transport opposes the Law, his revelation is a mirage. It should be interpreted and explained correctly.¹⁵ Perfection comes through meek submission to God, which implies submission to His Law. This is the best of faiths in the eyes of the Lord.¹⁶

You can tell an imposter from a sincere believer by their respective attitude to the divine Law. A truly faithful Sufi never transgresses the Law in spite of his insensibility and ecstasy. Despite his claim, “I am the True One,” Mansur Hallaj used to offer five hundred rak‘at¹⁷ every morning in submission to God even while he was chained in a prison cell. It is as difficult for an imposter to observe the tenets of the Law as to remove the Mount Caucasus from its place.¹⁸

According to the Mujaddid, the only duty performed by the theologians (‘ulama’) is to issue decrees while it is the people of Allah (saints) who do the real work. An attempt at internal purification is to enable one to observe the divine tenets, one who is busy only in internal purification to the extent of neglecting the divine Law is an infidel and hence his revelations and intuitions are like those of an obstinate sinner. The way of uprightness is through divinity and the sign of the real internal purification is the sincere observation of and submission to the divine Law is an infidel and hence his revelations and intuitions are like those of an obstinate sinner.

The way of uprightness is through divinity and the sign of the real internal purification is the sincere observation of and submission to the divine Law. The restoration of the Sunnah and the obligatory prayers is the best of worships and will be rewarded in heaven.¹⁹ The Naqshbandi devotees dislike the mystical revelation that contradicts the Law and denounce the senseless wrangling of the Sufis. They do not like dancing and listening to music. They do not like loud recital of God’s name for He is supposed to be ever with them. With them guidance and discipline depend upon one’s submission to and acknowledgement of the prophetic institution; it has nothing to do with external trappings such as the cap or the genealogy of the Sheikh as is the case with the other sects.²⁰

C. Existential or Experiential Unity

C. Existential or Experiential Unity (wahdat al-Wujud or wahdat al-Shuhud)

In order to understand the rift somehow created between Islam and Sufism one must ponder over the philosophical aspect of pantheism. Pantheism was the real bane of Islam. The Mujaddid knew its fallacy and he was one of those who denounced it vehemently. He based his stand on the training he had received from his father and his Sheikh, Khuwaja Baqi Billah. The State of pantheism was revealed to him shortly after he had adopted the Naqshbandi way of approach to reality. He was anxious to understand the mysticism of ibn ‘Arabi. The light of God and of His attributes dawned upon him and this, according to ibn ‘Arabi is the ultimate end of Sufism.

For years he kept thinking that he had reached the state in which he had realized the ultimate, but all of a sudden this state vanished. Then he came to realize that union with God is only experiential and not existential; God is not and cannot be one with anything. God is God and the world is world. All that the Sunni theologians said in this respect was true. As the Mujaddid had loved pantheism much in the earlier stage of his life, he was rather uneasy at this change. Yet, with the new revelation, the veil was lifted and the reality appeared to him in its true form. This world is merely a mark of the

existence of its Creator, and it merely reflects the various attributes of the Lord. It does not consist of these attributes. A pseudo revelation, he thought, like erroneous deductions in religious matters, may not be denounced, but it must not be followed, lest others be misled.

With the followers of ibn ‘Arabi, pantheism is the final stage of Sufistic perfection, while in reality it is nothing but one of the states experienced by every devotee. After the devotees have passed this preliminary state, they walk on the right Path. Khwaja Naqshband says that all that is heard or seen or known is a veil. It must be negated with the word “none” (la). “I had accepted pantheism,” says the Mujaddid, “as it was revealed to me and not because I was directed to it by someone else. Now I denounce it because of the right revelation of my own which cannot be denied, although it is not compulsory for others to follow...”²¹ The presence of the One means that the Sufi sees nothing except the One. The pantheist acknowledges the presence of the One in everything and thinks all besides it as nothing, yet the very same non-entity is regarded by him as the incarnation of the One.

Pantheism is not at all essential, because sure knowledge is possible without it, and sure knowledge does not entail the denial of the existence of others. The sight of the One is in no way a denial of the existence of the others. The prophets never preached pantheism, nor did they ever call the pluralists infidels. They invited people to the oneness of Being. No prophet ever preached that creation is an incarnation of the Creator. Their aim was to inculcate faith in the One Lord who is unique and has no like.²²

D. Revelation and Intuition

Only the Qur’an and the Sunnah are to be trusted. The duty of the theologians is simply to interpret these fundamental sources and not to add anything to them. The mysticism of the Sufis and their revelations and inspirations are to be accepted only if they conform to them, otherwise they are to be rejected. The promise of God is to unveil Himself to His good people in the hereafter and not here. The revelations and “lights” of which the Sufis are so proud are nothing but their own mental projections and fantasies in order to console themselves.

The open sight of God is absolutely impossible to people in this world. “I am afraid the beginners would be discouraged if I were to point out the drawbacks of these revelations and ‘lights,’ but if I remain silent, the true and the false shall remain undistinguished. I insist that these ‘lights’ and revelations must be judged with reference to the revelation of God on the Mount of Sinai, when Prophet Moses prayed for the sight of Him. Who can bear the sight of Him?”²³

“Abundance of miracles is not the sign of a devotee’s spiritual superiority. A person who has no miracle to his credit may possibly be superior to others in certain respects. Sheikh Shaihab al-Din Suhrawardi says, “Miracles are a boon from God to render the faith firm, but the man who has been gifted with a firm faith does not require them; it is enough for him that his heart praises and remembers Him.”

Miracles can be divided into two categories. Those of the first category comprise the transcendental knowledge of God and His attributes. These are beyond the sphere of rational inquiry and are revealed only to a few of His

favourites. The second category is concerned with revelation about creation and information concerning this universe. Unlike the former, even imposters can have a share in the latter. The people having miracles of the first category have more chances to reach God than those having miracles of the second, but to the common man, the latter are more acceptable.”²⁴

Ibn ‘Arabi is reported to have said that some pious devotees were ashamed of their miracles at their death-beds. Why should they have been so if the miracles were the only true touch stone of a pious devotee’s superiority? Numerous saints are unaware of their position and status but as they are not prophets they do not need the awareness of their position. Sainly men can invite people to the religion of their prophet without miracles. Their real miracle is to purify the souls of their disciples. The soul being immaterial, they have to turn their attention away from materialism. These people even without miracles are the sureties of peace and prosperity in tis world.

The distinction between a true and a false devotee is that the former adheres strictly to the Law, and the latter adheres to his own whims. The man whose company inspires you to be more attentive to God is a true devotee.²⁵ Not even a prophet is safe from the evil designs of the devil. If a devotee is tempted by Satan he should judge his inspiration by its accord to the tenets of the religion of his prophet. If anywhere the divine Law is silent and the Satan’s “inspiration” cannot be proved right or wrong, the “inspiration” should be regarded as questionable. The divine tenets are silent in matters which are superficial, and, therefore, may neither be accepted nor rejected.

Sometimes, without any attempt on the part of the Satan to mislead us, we have false inspirations as in dreams. These false inspirations ar the creations of our own fancy.²⁶

E. The Religious Law

According to the Mujaddid, religious Law has three aspects: knowledge, actions, and fidelity. To acquire these aspects of the law it is necessary to win the pleasure of God which excels all blessings. Sufism and Gnosticism help in purifying one’s soul by completing the important aspect of infidelity. They have no end in view but this. Ecstasy, “intoxication,” and “illumination” are by-products of Sufism. They are not its ends. They are merely fantasies and projections in order to please the beginners. After passing these on his way, the Sufi has to surrender to the divine will, which is his real destination. One among thousands achieves pure fidelity. Blind men take the by-products for the principle articles and are, therefore, deprived of the truth. A Sufi has to experience these states before his acquisition of the truth.²⁷

The Mujaddid himself experienced these intermediate states for years, and ultimately achieved the goal of fidelity. Those who think the Law superficial and regard gnosis as the right Path are misled. They are content with the states, the means and ignore the end.²⁸ The straight Path is the path of the Holy Prophet whose guidance the best. Internal purification completes the external and is not contradictory to it. When we submit devoutly to God’s beloved, the Holy Prophet, we become His beloved.²⁹

Submission to the Prophet's tradition (Sunnah) is the real bliss, while opposition to it is the cause of all disasters. Hindu sadhus or ascetics undergo much privation but all in vain, for it is not in accordance with the true Law. The most that such ascetics can achieve is some material gain which is transitory. The devotees of the religion Law are like dealers in diamonds who work less but gain more.³⁰

On the completion of a Sufi's life, real pleasure is derived from the performance of obligatory prayers, while in the beginning non-obligatory prayers are more pleasant.³¹

The states of ecstasy, gnosis, and "illumination" are good if they are subservient to the law; otherwise, they are misleading. If not weighed in the balance of the Law, they are worthless.³²

The Sufistic conduct helps one to abide by the divine Law. It controls one's lower passions and undermines their influence. It is neither antagonistic nor equivalent to the religious Law. It is rather subservient to it.³³

Some people are punctilious in the observance of the form of Law, but they ignore its intrinsic truth and worth and regard salvation as their only aim. Some people achieve the truth but assert that they have achieved it through their own effort and not through the help of the divine Law and not of the spirit of it. Either group is ignorant of its intrinsic virtues and is deprived of the divine guidance. True theologians alone are heirs to the prophets.³⁴

Those who regard a saint (wali) superior to a prophet are senseless and are not fully aware of the attributes of prophethood which is superior to saint ship (wilayah) in all respects.³⁵

The Mujaddid was a great religious enthusiast. The movement that he started in religion is still continued by his followers in various parts of the Muslim world. His heritage is indispensable for a modern reconstruction of religious thought in Islam. He was a Sufi but he did not think of Sufism as the sole aim of life. For him it was merely a means to an end, the end being complete and unconditional adherence and fidelity to the Qur'an and the Sunnah. For an essentially just estimate of his teachings one must consider him with reference to his times. His books are a valuable record of his practice and thought. He gave us a treatise on Sufistic perfection, but the best of him is found in three volumes of letters. The total number of letters in all these volumes is 535. With some exceptions, these are arranged in their chronological order. Five of his letters have been lost. They prove beyond doubt that the encyclopedic knowledge he had, and make a pleasant and enlightening reading.

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Notes

1. Devotees of Khuwaja Baha' al-Din Naqshband of Bukhara are called the Naqshbandis.
2. 'Urs, a gathering to celebrate the death anniversary of a holy man.
3. Maktubat-i Mujaddid, Book 2, Letter No. 23.
4. A thread worn by the Brahmans around the neck.
5. Maktubat-i Mujaddid, Bok 1, Letter No. 23.
6. Ibid., Letter No. 30.
7. Ibid., Letter No. 100.
8. Ibid., Letter No. 161
9. Ibid. Letter No. 172.
10. Ibid., Letter No. 220.
11. Fass, reference to Fusus al-Hikam by ibn 'Arabi.
12. Nass, an explicit verse of the Qur'an.
13. Maktubat-i Mujaddid, Book 1, Letter No. 243.
14. Ibid., Letter No. 286.
15. Ibid., letter No. 289.
16. Ibid., Book 2, letter No. 42.
17. A rak'at is the unit of a formal Islamic prayer and consists of praying in four different positions, standing, kneeling, sitting and falling down in adoration. Each prayer consists of several units.
18. Maktubat-i Mujaddid, Book 2, Letter No. 95.
19. Ibid., Letter No. 87.
20. Ibid., Book 1, Letter No. 221.
21. Ibid., Letter No. 31.
22. Ibid., Letter No. 272.
23. Ibid., Letter no. 217.
24. Ibid., Letter No. 293.
25. Ibid., Book 2, Letter No. 92.
26. Ibid., Book 1, Letter No. 107.
27. Ibid., Letter No. 36.
28. Ibid., Letter No. 40.
29. Ibid., Letter No. 41.
30. Ibid., Letter No. 114.
31. Ibid., Letter no. 137.
32. Ibid., Letter No. 207.
33. Ibid., Letter No. 210.
34. Ibid., Book 2, Letter No. 18.
35. Ibid., Book 1, Letter No. 251.

Part 4: The “Philosophers”

Chapter 45: Jalal al-Din Dawwani

Chapter 46: Ibn Khaldun

Chapter 47: The School of Ispahan

Chapter 48: Sadr al-Din Shirazi

Chapter 45: Jalal al-Din Dawwani

A. Life and Works

Mohammad bin As‘ad Jalal al-Din was born in 830/1427 at Dawwan in the district of Kazarun, of which his father was the Qadi. Having received early education from his father and then from Mahjwi al-Ari and Hassan bin Baqqal, he studied theology under Muhyi al-Din Ansari and Hammam al-Din at Shiraz, where he ultimately became professor at the Madrasat al-Aitam. In a short time he became famous for his knowledge and learning, attracting students from far and wide. It was in recognition of his literary and academic fame that he received admission into the Cour of Hassan Beg Khan Bahadur (Uzun Hassan), the then Turkish ruler of Mesopotamia and Persia. He ultimately rose to the eminent position of the Qadi of the Court, which position he retained under Sultan Mantiq Ya‘qub as well. He died in 907/1501 or 908/1502, and he was buried in his native village Dawwan.¹

Tusi revived the tradition of philosophical disciplines during the Mongol period; Dawwani did the same during the Ottoman period. Whereas the former gave a fresh impetus to the study of ibn Sina by writing commentaries on some of his works and by defending him against his detractors, the latter on his Hayakil-i Nur and elaborating his illuminative philosophy (hikmat-i ishruq) in his own works. Both are revivalists, but they differ in their approach to the truth. The one is a true Avicennian, the other a faithful Suhrawardian. Brockelman has enumerated 70 of his extant works,² of which the important ones are listed below:

1. Sharh ‘Aqa’id-i ‘Adudiyah, Istanbul, 1817.
2. Sharh Tahdhib al-Mantiq wa al-Kalam, 1264/1847.
3. Al-Zaura, Cairo, 1326-1908.
4. Risalah fi Ithbat al-Wajib al-Qadimah wa-al-Jadidah.
5. Risalah fi Tahqiq Nafs al-Amr.
6. Risalah fi Ithbat al-Joauhar al-Mufariq.
7. Risalah fi ‘Adalah.
8. Risalah fi-Hikmah.
9. Sharh al-Hayakil.
10. Anmudhaj al-‘Ulum.
11. Al-Masa’il al-‘Asr fi al-Kalam.
12. Akhlaq-i Jalali, translated into English under the title of The Practical Philosophy of the Mohammadan People, by W.F. Thomson, London, 1839.

B. Ethics

Dawwani was commissioned by Sultan Hassan Geg to revise the ethical treatise of Tusi with the express aim of “correcting and completing” it from the illuminative (ishraqi) point of view. The structure of Akhlaq-i Jalali is basically the same as that of Akhlaq-i Nasiri, but in the execution of the work Dawwani has artistically ornamented it with the Qur’anic verses, precepts of the Prophet and his Companions and the moving utterances of the mystics. He not only abbreviated and simplified Tusi’s treatise but also amplified and elaborated it at places in the light of the philosophy of illumination; besides he added much by way of literary adornment.

Following ibn Miskawaih, Tusi regards ultimate happiness (sa'adat-i quswa) as the summum bonum of life. His concept of ultimate happiness because of its reference to the heavenly (qudsi) element is intrinsically different from the Aristotelian concept of happiness. Dawwani goes a step further and identifies the moral with the religious ideal. It is with reference to God intended vicegerency that the Qur'an distinguishes right from wrong, evaluates knowledge and appreciates power; therefore, vicegerency of God (khilafat-i ilahi) and not ultimate happiness should be the inspiring ideal of the "noblest position of man in the universe as determined by God and not by man himself, which is that of the vicegerency of God.

What entitles man to this high office of responsibility? Dawwani finds the answer in a saying of the Caliph 'Ali. Man, according to this saying, occupies a middle position between the angels and the brutes. The former have intellect without desire and ire. They have no temptations, nor freedom of choice; being perfect by nature, they are above morality. The latter, on the other hand, have desire and ire without intellect, and thus, being incapable of controlling their irrational impulses, are below morality. Man has both.

He can, however, rise above the angels by sub-ordinating desire and ire to intellect, and can also sink below the brutes if desire and ire enslave his intellect. The brutes can be excused for want of intellect, but not man. The excellence of man's perfection is enhanced by his natural temptation and deliberate resistance to evil; the angels have been spared the painful processes of conflict, deliberation, and choice. Thus, man alone is a free, responsible and, therefore, moral being, and his right to the vicegerency of God is established on this very ground.³

How is this vicegerency to be accomplished by man? Quoting the Qur'anic verse, "Whosoever gains wisdom, verily he gains great good." Dawwani holds that mature wisdom (kikmat-i balighah) is the royal road to this exalted position. By mature wisdom, being a happy blend of theory and practice is essentially different from the Socratic dictum: Knowledge is virtue. The Greeks were interested in ascertaining the speculative principles of morals; the practical aspect of ethics was quite alien to their temperament.

Mature wisdom can be acquired through intellectual insight as well as through mystic intuition. Both the philosopher and the mystic reach the same goal through different ways. What the former "knows," the latter "sees," there being complete harmony between the findings of the two.

Influenced by the Qur'anic doctrine of moderation⁴ no less than the Aristotelian doctrine of the mean, Dawwani holds that the mean constitutes the good in all matters. But it is determined not by "reason" and "prudence," as held by Aristotle, but by the divine Law. Reason can at best determine the form of morality, the content whereof must come from the divine Code. Since the path of moderation is difficult to tread, Dawwani has identified it with the bridge over hell (pul sirat) - a bridge which is narrower than a hair and sharper than a sword.

Moral struggle pre-supposes that all dispositions (khulq), whether innate or acquired, are capable of modification and change. Constant instruction

and discipline and punishment, as evidenced by experience, can change the wicked into the virtuous. By these means the evil is greatly reduced, if not completely eradicated. And since a person does not know beforehand that a particular evil disposition would resist all attempts to modify and change it, it is in consonance with the dictates of both reason and religion that he should exert his utmost for its modification.

To Plato, virtue was the moderation of human nature as a whole. Aristotle assigned to each virtue the place moderation would give it. Be he could go no further than this. The Greeks “systematized, generalized, and theorized,” but the accumulation of positive knowledge based on patient, detailed, and prolonged observation was altogether “alien to their temperament.” This weakness of the Greek genius was removed by a rather practical and penetrating mind of the Muslims,⁵ who classified ethics as a “part of practical philosophy.” With ibn Miskawaih, the first Muslim moralist, the emphasis shifted from broad generalizations to individual differentiation and specification of virtues. He not only determined seven, 11, 12 and 19 species⁶ of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice respectively - the four cardinal virtues of Plato - but also developed an attractive theory of the causes and cures of mental diseases, a process which culminated in al-Ghazālī with a shift from an intellectual to a mystic outlook.⁷

Ibn Miskawaih had worked out the details of Plato’s theory of virtue, but with Tusi the problem was that of improving and completing the Aristotelian theory of vice. He emphasized for the first time that deviation from the equipoise is not only quantitative but also qualitative, and, thus, added perversion (rada’at) as the third generic cause of vice⁸ to the Aristotelian excess and deficiency of a state. Tusi also set the seal of completion on practical philosophy by including domestics and politics in his ethical treatise in order to meet the deficiencies of the ethical work of ibn Sina (Kitab al-Taharat) and of that of Farabi. Lastly, Tusi revolted against the ascetic ethics of al-Ghazālī. Asceticism, for him, is the negation of moral life, for man is by nature a social being as is indicated by the word for man in Arabic, insan (associating), and body is not an obstacle but an instrument of the soul for attaining the perfection it is capable of.⁹

Nevertheless, he recognizes asceticism as a necessary stage in the development of mystic consciousness, of which he has had no personal experience. Inspired by the illuminative philosophy of Shihab al-Din Maqtul, Dawwani finds complete harmony between philosophy and mysticism. What the mystic “sees,” the philosopher “knows,” and the latter “knows,” the former “sees.” He, therefore, gave a Qur’anic bias to the ethics of Tusi.

C. Politics

Following Tusi, Dawwani too has used Siyasat-i Mudun more in the sense of the science of civics than in the modern sense of politics. The origin, function, and classes of society and the need of a government headed by a just king are the same for Dawwani as for Tusi. Monarch is held to be the ideal form of government, in which king is the second arbitrator of justice, the first being the divine Law. After reproducing the general

principles of distributive and corrective justice from Akhlaq-i Nasiri, Dawwani adds ten moral principles of his own, which ought to be observed by a king in order to ensure efficient administration of justice.

In the first place, the king should invariably consider himself to be the aggrieved party while deciding a case, so that he may not wish for the aggrieved what is abhorrent to him. Secondly, he should see that the cases are disposed of quickly, for justice delayed is justice denied. Thirdly, he should not indulge in sensual and physical pleasures which ultimately bring about the ruin of a State in their wake. Fourthly, royal decision should be based on clemency and condescension rather than on rashness and wrath. Fifthly, in pleasing people he should seek the pleasure he should seek the pleasure of God. Sixthly, he should not seek the pleasure of the people by displeasing God. Seventhly, he should render justice if decision is left to his discretion, but forgiveness is better than justice if mercy is begged of him. Eighthly, he should associate with the righteous and lend ears to their counsels. Ninthly, he should keep everyone to his rightful place and should not entrust high office to the low-born people. Lastly, he should not be content with personal abstention from injustice, but should conduct the affairs of the State that none under his authority is guilty of this offence.

D. Metaphysics

Like Tusi and others, Dawwani's cosmology consists of the gradual emanation of ten intellects, nine spheres, four elements and three kingdoms of nature. The active intellect, the intellect of the sphere of the moon, bridges the gap between the heaven and the earth.

Quoting the Prophet's saying that intellect is the noblest of all the created things, Dawwani identifies the first intellect ('aql-i awal) with the original essence of Mohammad. It conceives the idea of all things past, present, and future, just as a seed potentially contains roots, branches, leaves, and fruit. The spheres which are stationary in nature, but changeable in qualities, control the destiny of the material world. Fresh situations come into being through the revolutions of the spheres, and every moment the active intellect causes a new form into existence to reflect itself in the mirror of elemental matter. Passing through the mineral, vegetative and animal states, the first intellect finally appears in the form of acquired intellect (aql-i mustafad) in man, and, thus, the highest point having coalesced with the lowest, the circle of being is completed by the two arcs of ascent and descent.

The first intellect is like the seed which sprouted into twigs, branches, and fruit, reverts to its original form of unity possessing collective potentiality. This circular process takes the form of motion (harkat-i wada'i), in growing bodies of increasing or decreasing their magnitude, and in the rational soul that of the movement of thought. All these motions are, in fact, shadows of the divine motion proceeding from God's love for self-expression, which in mystic terminology is called the flashing of Self upon Self.¹⁰

Dawwani's metaphysical treatise, al-Zaura is a critical evaluation of Kalam and of the teachings of the spiritual leaders, the philosophers, and the mystics, from the illuminative (ishraqi) point of view. He fully appreciates the utility and importance of the first three disciplines but takes serious

notice of the inconsistency with Islam of some of the issues raised by them. He believes that philosophy and mysticism both ultimately lead to the same goal, yet he cannot shut his eyes to the eminence and superiority of the latter over the former. Mysticism, in his view, is free from doubt and uncertainty because it is due to divine grace and is, therefore, nearer to prophethood.¹¹

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3. *Akhlaq-i Jalali*, p. 24.
4. *Qur'an*, 2:190, 5:2.
5. Briffault, *The making of Humanity*, p. 192.
6. *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq*, pp. 15 - 20.
7. *Mazan al-'Amal*, pp. 83 - 91.
8. *Akhlaq-i Nasiri*, p. 114.
9. Ivanow, *Tasawwurat*, p. 92.
10. *Akhlaq-i Jalali*, pp. 258 - 59.
11. *Al-Zaura*, p. 116.

Chapter 46: Ibn Khaldun

A

Ibn Khaldun wrote no major work in fields accepted in the Muslim philosophic tradition or which he considered to be the proper fields of philosophic investigation - logic, mathematics, physics, and metaphysics - politics, ethics, and economics.¹ Consequently, he was not regarded by his contemporaries, or by subsequent Muslim students of philosophy, as a philosopher (failssuf) in the sense in which al-Farabi, ibn Sina, and ibn Rusd were identified as such. Nevertheless, both his contemporaries and later Muslim students of history and society were aware that ibn Khaldun had made the most significant contribution to these specialized fields through his undertaking a scientific investigation of them.

It was, however, the enhanced interest in the study of history and society in modern times which led to the devotion of increased attention of ibn Khaldun's thought, to the recognition of his rank as a major Muslim thinker, and to the judgment that he was equal, if not superior, to the other well-known Muslim philosophers. This was in part the result of the higher prestige, and of the peculiar theoretical importance, which history and the sciences of society (as compared to the theoretical part of traditional philosophy) have come to enjoy in modern times.

But the more important reason for the singular interest in ibn Khaldun in modern times lies in the conclusions of his investigations in history and society. To the moderns, these conclusions appear to be more scientific than either the conclusions of the legal investigation of Muslim jurists or the politico-philosophic investigations of Muslim philosophers. Perhaps on the analogy of the revolt of modern science against traditional philosophy, and especially of modern political philosophy and social science against traditional political philosophy, it has been assumed that ibn Khaldun must have attempted a similar, or parallel, revolt against traditional Muslim philosophy in general, and against traditional Muslim political philosophy in particular.

Because of its important implications for the understanding of ibn Khaldun's thought, this crucial assumption deserves critical examination. The larger context of the present work seems to warrant an inquiry into the precise relationship between ibn Khaldun's new science and the Muslim philosophic tradition. This relationship has been for the most part viewed in the perspective, and under the influence, of the modern philosophic and scientific tradition. In the present work, in contrast, the reader comes to ibn Khaldun through the preceding Greek and Muslim philosophic tradition, which ibn Khaldun knew and in relation to which he can be expected to have taken his bearing.

The reader, thus, must be shown, on the basis of ibn Khaldun's conception of philosophy and science, and of his conception of the relation between his new science and the established philosophic science, whether he was in fundamental agreement with that tradition (in which case it must be shown what the specific character of his contribution to that tradition was), a new, but a novel doctrine.

That this procedure is the sound historical procedure is usually admitted. But what has not been seen with sufficient clarity is that, in addition to providing the proper historical perspective for the understanding of ibn Khaldun's thought, it is of fundamental importance to elicit the basic principles or premises of his new science, and thus contribute to the understanding of its true character.

B

Ibn Khaldun's place in the history of Muslim philosophy, and his contribution to the Muslim philosophic tradition, must be determined primarily on the basis of the "Introduction" (Muqaddimah) and Book One of his "History" (Kitab al-'Ibar).² That a work exploring the art of history, and largely devoted to an account of universal history,³ should concern itself with philosophy is justified by ibn Khaldun on the ground that history has a dual character: (a) an external (zahir) aspect which is essentially an account of, or information about, past events, and (b) an internal (batin) aspect. With respect to this latter aspect, history "is contemplation (theory: nazar) and verification (tahqiq), a precise causal explanation of things generated (ka'inat) and their origins (or principles: mabadi), and a profound science ('ilm) of the qualities and causes of events; therefore, it is a firm principle part (asl) of wisdom (hikmah), and deserves, and is well fitted, to be counted among its sciences."⁴

Whatever ibn Khaldun's position concerning the relation between wisdom and philosophy may have been (ibn Rushd, who was the last of the major Muslim Philosophers whom ibn Khaldun studied, considered that the two had become identical in his own time),⁵ he frequently uses the expressions "wise men" (hukama') and "philosophers" (Falasifah) interchangeably, and it is certain that he identifies the sciences of wisdom with the philosophic sciences.⁶ Furthermore, in his classification and exposition of the various sciences, he defines the basic characteristics of these sciences, enumerates them, and makes ample reference to the Greek and Muslim authors, who represent the specific philosophic tradition which he accepts as the tradition.

Ibn Khaldun's definition of the philosophic sciences is based on an emphatic and clear-cut distinction, if not total opposition, between the sciences which are natural to man as a rational being (therefore, he names them also "natural" [tabi'iyah] and "rational" or "intellectual" ['aqliyyah] sciences)⁷ and the legal, transmitted, or positive sciences based on the divine law, which are the special property of a particular religious community. In contrast, the philosophic sciences are "those which a human being can understand by (virtue of) the nature of his thought and the subjects, the problems, the ways of demonstration, and the modes of teaching to which he is guided by perception, until his contemplation and investigation lead him to understand the true from the false in as far as he is a human being possessing thought."⁸

The philosophic sciences are classified into four fundamental sciences or groups of sciences: logic, mathematics, physics, and metaphysics or the divine science.⁹ This is followed by a concise history of these sciences (especially among the ancient Persians, the Greeks and the Muslims) which

emphasizes (a) the relation between the rise and development of these sciences, and cultural development and prosperity, and their decline subsequent to cultural disintegration, and (b) the anti-philosophic attitude of the divine laws and religious communities, which led (especially in cases where sovereigns adopted this attitude, or religious orthodoxy was able to determine the type of learning pursued in the community) to deserting the philosophic sciences.¹⁰

The philosophic sciences reaching the Muslims were those of the Greeks.¹¹ Of the Greek philosophic schools ibn Khaldun mentions specifically those of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, and also the commentators of Aristotle, i.e. Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius, and others. Aristotle is singled out as “the most well-grounded of them in these sciences.”¹² Muslims recovered these sciences from the disuse to which they had fallen among the Byzantines, and after a period of searching for, acquiring, and translating the works preserved among the latter, Muslim scholars studied these Greek philosophic sciences, became skilled in their various branches, reached the highest level of proficiency in them, and surpassed some of their predecessors.

Although they differed with Aristotle on many issues, they generally recognized him as the foremost teacher (Mu'allim-i Awwal). Of Muslim philosophers, ibn Khaldun mentions by name al-Farabi, ibn Sina, ibn Bajjah, and ibn Rushd. He indicates the decline of the philosophic sciences in Western Islam after the disintegration of cultural life in that region, and refers to reports concerning the then flourishing state of these sciences in Persia and eastward, and their revival and spread in Western Europe.¹³

Thus, there seems to be little doubt that when ibn Khaldun says that the study of the internal aspect of history is to be made one of the sciences of wisdom, he does not simply mean that it deserves a systematic, rational, and scientific study in general. What he means is much more specific and precise. The study of the internal aspect of history, if it is to be properly scientific, must be recognized as a significant part of, and is to be pursued as belonging to, one of the philosophic sciences or one of a group of the philosophic sciences (of the Socratic school)¹⁴ epitomized in the works of Aristotle and also in those of the Muslim philosophers who belonged to that school and concentrated primarily on the exposition of the works of Aristotle.

C

To which of these sciences or groups of sciences does the investigation of the internal aspect of history belong? To answer this question, a fuller statement of the character and principles of this investigation is needed. Ibn Khaldun first formulates what this investigation is to comprise, and how it is to be conducted through a critique of Islamic historiography and the examination of the causes of the errors of historians in the “Introduction,” in which he illustrates the distinction between the external and internal aspects of history and establishes that these errors are primarily due to the ignorance of the nature and causes of historical events, both in so far as these are permanent and homogeneous as well as in so far as they change and are heterogeneous

Then, in the first part of the introduction to Book One, the true character of history is said to be identical with “information about human association, which is the culture (‘umran) of the world, and the states which occur to the nature of that culture...(and) all that is engendered in that culture by the nature of (these) states.”¹⁵ The primary cause of errors in transmitting historical information (and, consequently, in writing an untrue account of history), thus, becomes ignorance of the nature of the states of culture.

The states of culture and what is engendered in them is considered to form a part of all engendered things, whether essences or acts, each of which inevitably has a nature specific to its essence and to its accidental states. “What the historian needs for examining historical reports, and for distinguishing the true from the false, is knowledge “of the matters of engendered [existents] and the states in existents”¹⁶ so as to be able to examine and determine the possibility or impossibility of the occurrence of the events themselves. Thus, the basic principles (i.e. the subject-matter, problems, method, and end) of a new investigation emerge, and are finally formulated as follows:

“The rule for distinguishing truth from falsehood in the [investigation of historical] information on the grounds of possibility and impossibility is for us to contemplate human association, which is culture, and to distinguish the states pertaining to its essence and required by its nature, what is accidental and need not be reckoned with, and what cannot possibly occur in it. If we do that, it would be for us a rule in distinguishing truth from falsehood in [historical] information, and veracity from lying, in a demonstrative manner admitting of no doubt. Then, if we hear about some states taking place in culture, we shall know scientifically what we should judge as acceptable and what we should judge as spurious. This will be for us a sound criterion by which historians will pursue the path of veracity and correctness in what they transmit. This is the purpose of this First Book of our work. It is, as it were, a science independent by itself. For it has a subject (namely, human culture and human association) and has [its own] problems (i.e. explaining the states that pertain to its essence one after the other).”¹⁷

We then have a seemingly independent science the subject of which is human association or culture, the problems of which are the essential states of culture, the method is that of strict demonstration, and the end is that it be used as a rule to distinguish the true and the veracious from the false and the spurious in historical reports. To which philosophic science or group of sciences does this science belong, and in what way could it be characterized as a firm and principal part of philosophy?

That it does not belong to the logical or the mathematical sciences needs little argument. Logic is defined by ibn Khaldun as “the science which makes the mind immune to error in seizing upon unknown problems [or questions] through matters already realized and known. Its advantage is in distinguishing error from correctness in the essential and accidental concept and judgments, which he who contemplates aims at in order that he may understand the verification of truth in generated [things], negatively and positively.”¹⁸ Logic is an organon of thought and a propaedeutical science making rules used in the contemplation of all generated things, and in

ascertaining the sound definitions of their essences and accidents. Since the subject and problems of the science of culture are said to belong to generated things, it will have to use the rules devised by the logical arts, but it is not itself concerned with the problems of how to achieve sound abstractions or how to distinguish them from those unsound.

It is only necessary to add here, first, that ibn Khaldun accepted, without reservation, Aristotelian logic as found in the logical writings of Aristotle (with the addition of Porphyry's *Isagoge*) and the commentaries of al-Farabi, ibn Sina, and ibn Rushd. Thus, logic for him deals with the mental forms abstracted from things and useful in the knowledge of the essences and the "truths" of things. Its central aim is demonstration or "the syllogism producing certainty," and "the identity of the definition and [the thing] defined," i.e., the subjects dealt with in the *Posterior Analytics* or "The Book of Demonstration."¹⁹ Ibn Khaldun doubts the validity of the attempts of Muslim dialectical theologians (*Mutakallimun*) who concentrate on purely formal syllogism and forgo the fruits of the works of the ancients in the field of material logic.²⁰

Secondly, ibn Khaldun repeatedly emphasizes that the science of culture must be a demonstrative science in the sense specified here, to the exclusion of dialectical, rhetorical, and poetic arguments which are based on commonly known and commonly accepted premises rather than on self-evident, necessary, and essential premises, or premises that are the conclusions of syllogisms based on such premises, as required by posterioristic logic.

As to the mathematical sciences, they are concerned with measurements or quantities, either theoretically, such as the study of pure numbers, or practically as applied arts. In the latter case, they are useful in the study of culture, since they acquaint us with the mathematical properties of things, such as the stars, which exercise an influence on culture, and form the bases of many of the crafts which are an important aspect of cultural life.²¹ But although the science of culture makes use of the conclusions of the mathematical sciences and is concerned with quantity as one of the categories of all generated things, its subject is not quantity as such, but the nature and causes of a specific generated thing which is culture.

This leaves us with natural sciences and metaphysics, or the sciences of natural and divine existents. Since the study of generated things, their natures, their states, and all that is engendered in them,²² is the specific subject of natural science or natural philosophy, the new science of that specific generated thing which is culture seems to form a part of natural philosophy and to belong to it by virtue of its subject. This statement must now be amplified by giving answers to: (a) why does the new science of culture deserve to be a natural science and counted among the natural sciences, and (b) how does ibn Khaldun establish it as a firm and principal part of natural philosophy?²³

D

Natural science is defined by ibn Khaldun as follows:

"Then [after logic], the contemplation among them [i.e. the philosophers] turns to: [a] the sensible, viz bodies of the elements, and those generated

from them (viz minerals, plants and animals), celestial bodies, and natural motions, or the soul from which motions emerge, etc. This art is named “natural science,” and it is the second of these (philosophic) sciences. Or [b] the contemplation turns to the matters that are beyond nature.”²⁴

This is explained further in the second and more elaborate definition supplied by ibn Khaldun in his own way:

“[Natural science] is the science which inquires about the body with respect to what adheres to it, viz. motion and rest. Thus, it contemplates the heavenly and elemental bodies, and what is begotten from them (man, animals, plants, and minerals), what is generated inside the earth (spring, earthquakes), in the atmosphere (clouds, vapours, thunder, lightning, and thunderbolts), etc, and the principle of motion in bodies, i.e. the soul in its various species in man, animals, and plants.”²⁵

Then he mentions the standard works on natural science. The physical parts of the Aristotelian corpus, which have been followed, explained, and commented on by Muslim authors, the most well-known and reliable of these being ibn Sina in the corresponding parts of three major works (Shifa’, Najat and Isharat), and ibn Rushd in his summaries of, and commentaries on, Aristotle’s works on physical sciences, with the difference that ibn Sina seems to disagree with Aristotle on many problems of natural science, while ibn Rushd remains in close agreement with him.²⁶

These statements point to a conception of the character and scope of natural science, and the order of its parts, which is not ibn Khaldun’s own, but one which was elaborated by ibn Sina and ibn Rushd on the basis of a tradition initiated in Muslim philosophy by al-Farabi, and which has a firm foundation in Aristotle’s own writings on nature. Following the scheme suggested by Aristotle, e.g. in the opening chapter of Meteorology,²⁷ these philosophers included within natural science or natural philosophy the works beginning with the Physics and ending with the De Anima and the Parva Naturalia, and arranged their objects, order, and rank, as follows: (1) the general or first principles of all natural existents or of all that is constituted by nature, or “the first causes of nature and all natural motion” (Physics), (2) the simple or primary parts of the world, or “the stars ordered in the motion of the heavens” (On the Heaven and the World), (3) the motion of the natural elements, or their generation and corruption, alteration and growth (On Generation and Corruption), and (4) the accidents and affections common to the elements (Meteorology).

Then follows the study of particular existents that are generated and corrupted: (5) the minerals which are the simplest and closest to the elements (On Minerals), (6) plants (On Plants), (7) animals (The Parts of Animals, etc.), and (8) the general principles of the soul and its parts (On the Soul), followed by the particular powers of the soul and the accidents existing in plants and animals by virtue of their possessing soul (Parva Naturalia).²⁸

According to this scheme, the science of the soul, which is the form of animal and plant bodies, falls within the scope of the science of nature, and the science of the intellect, which is one of the faculties of the soul, falls to the connection of nature to soul, and of soul to intellect, and the study of

these connections certainly did not mean, nor did it lead to, the reduction of one to the other. For the scheme was not merely a deductive one by which the more complex is deduced from the more simple or the particular from the general, but a methodological plan of investigation beginning with the general and simple and leading to the particular and complex, recognizing their substantial heterogeneity, and using observation, enumeration, and induction, to a greater extent than, and in conjunction with, syllogistic reasoning.

Furthermore, the study of soul and intellect leads the investigator to matters that are beyond nature, and that could no more be, strictly speaking, considered within the scope of a natural investigation, but in this case, these matters cannot claim the advantages enjoyed by natural investigation which are solidly based on human experience and perception. One could then perhaps speak with ibn Rushd of the possibility of delimiting the investigation of soul and intellect to what corresponds most to the manner of investigation conducted, and, thus, arrives at explanations similar in character to those given by natural science - taking this to be more fitting to the purpose of Aristotle.²⁹

But to grant the difficulties raised by this scheme does not alter the fact that both for Aristotle and the Muslim philosophers mentioned above, the inclusion of the study of soul and intellect within the general science of nature is legitimate. Consequently, the study of man and of all that concerns man is considered an integral part of the study of nature or of natural science. This does not hold true only for his body in so far as it shares common properties with all natural bodies, for the properties of generation and corruption which he shares with all composite things, and for the faculties of his soul which he shares with plants and other animals, but also for his specific differentiae as a rational being: his sociability and his association with others and co-operation with them in the development of the arts, his appetites and desires, his purposeful, organized social activity, his practical and theoretical intellect, and his ability to comprehend things through visions, dreams, and prophecy, and to use what he comprehends in ordering his political life. All such matters are dealt with in the science of the soul.³⁰

Human association or culture, as ibn Khaldun conceived it, is a natural property of man as a rational being. He intended to investigate its modes or states, the various accidents that occur in it, and its generation and corruption; and to develop this investigation into a full-fledged inquiry or science. Since the basis of man's sociability, and its primary manifestations, can legitimately fall within the scope of natural science, the elaboration of this natural property of man, and the investigation of the various aspects of social organization to which it leads man, can also legitimately belong to natural science and be counted as one of the natural sciences.

Whether the new science will in fact prove well-fitted to be considered a natural science, will of course depend on whether it will remain loyal to the method of investigation followed in the natural sciences. Ibn Khaldun was aware of the fact that the subject he intended to investigate had been studied in contexts other than natural science, notably in the Muslim legal sciences

and in the practical philosophic sciences. Thus, even if he had insisted on a science of human association or culture which had to be a part of philosophy or wisdom, he could have chosen to study it as a practical science.

The reason for not choosing this alternative will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.³¹ It is sufficient in the present context to insist that what he sought was a natural science of human association. He examined the works of Plato and Aristotle, and of Muslim thinkers, and found³² that they had not elaborated such a science before. Thus he set out to make good this deficiency in the natural sciences. But if he is to succeed in his effort, he must show unequivocally that the new science is indeed being firmly established on the foundation of natural philosophy.

E

The “History” was originally divided by ibn Khaldun into an “Introduction” (Muqaddiman) and three Books. The “Introduction” deals with the problem of history in general, Book One contains the new science of culture, Book Two contains the history of the Arabs and other peoples (except the Berbers) down to ibn Khaldun’s own time, and Book Three contains the history of the Berbers in Western Islam.³³

Muqaddimah is a technical term meaning “premise.” It can be generally defined as that upon which what follows depends and which does not itself depend upon that which follows.³⁴ It can be a general discussion or explanation introducing a subject, a book, or a science, the emphasis here being upon what needs to precede these rather than that upon which they strictly depend. In this sense the “Introduction” precedes the three Books and is a useful discussion clarifying the problems that are to follow. But this “Introduction” together with Book One came also be known as the Muqaddimahi, as an introduction to the last two books, or the historical account proper. This is a usage which is closer to the technical definition of the word, since, as ibn Khaldun explains, the writing of a correct historical account depends upon a prior understanding the science of culture.

The proper technical definition of muqaddimah, however, which is the specific definition used by logicians in the study of syllogism, induction, and analogy, is “that upon which the soundness of the proof depends, without an intermediary” or “a proposition made a part of syllogism or an argument.”³⁵ Such a premise should be veracious and properly related to the question or problem. It is of two kinds: (a) definitive (such as being primary, based on observation or experience, or on multiple authoritative reports, or being the conclusion of a syllogism based on such premises and (b) based on opinion (generally known or accepted notions, etc.)³⁶

These can be made the premises of a single syllogism or argument, or of a whole science. In this latter case, they are named the “premise(s) of the science” and are defined as those upon which the setting out upon the science depends, and upon which its problems depend.³⁷ Apart from the general usages mentioned above, ibn Khaldun uses muqaddimah in this specific “logical” sense,³⁸ and the first section of Book One, which treats “human culture in general,” is made up of six such premises. Since the new science “depends” upon the character of these premises, we must examine them in detail.

1. Association is Necessary for Man

Ibn Khaldun presents this premise or proposition as being the same as what the wise men express when they say that “man is ‘political’ by nature, i.e., he cannot dispense with association, which in their technical usage is the ‘polis’, and this is the meaning of culture.”³⁹ It is significant, however, that ibn Khaldun substitutes, here at the outset, “necessary” for “by nature” and his explanation of the first premise indicates that this substitution was deliberate on his part. For, the way he grounds the need for association in human nature is by explaining that, while the “animal nature” of human beings are the same as those of the rest of the animals (in that like them they cannot exist except through nourishment and self-defence), they are inferior to some animals in that the ability of a single human being cannot possibly be equal to meeting his needs for nourishment and self-defence.

Therefore, man associates with others and develops the arts and tools, and the social organizations, necessary for nourishing and defending himself, not because his specifically “human nature” is essentially superior to the rest of the animals, or because he needs these arts and tools and organization to satisfy his specifically human needs, but because his natural constitution is deficient for conducting a solitary life, and because without associating with others he remains helpless and unable even to exist.⁴⁰

Thus, ibn Khaldun, while purporting simply to “explain” what the philosophers meant by “man is political by nature,” in fact concentrates on those traits of man’s animal nature which render association a necessary condition for the very life and continued existence of man. Nevertheless, he emphasizes that this premise and its explanation as he presents them are also based on the conclusions of the investigation of animal and human natures conducted by the philosophers and confirmed by the investigation of the organs of the human body conducted by Galen - more specifically, that the “demonstration” of this premise was presented by the philosophers⁴¹ referring to the appropriate passages of *De Anima* and the commentaries of them.⁴²

On the surface, ibn Khaldun’s only object is to the attempt of the philosophers to “add” a rational proof of prophecy to their demonstration of the political nature of man, while in fact he seems also to object to the widening of the scope of the proposition in such a manner as to state that association is necessary for man’s well-being in addition to its being necessary to his existence. What he seems to indicate is that the study of human nature within the scope of natural science cannot demonstrate this proposition in this wider sense; therefore the science of culture must restrict itself to accepting the proposition in its narrower sense, susceptible to demonstration within natural science, only. In other words, according to him, the study of culture should be a sociological one without ethical extensions.

2. Distribution of Culture on Earth

This premise simply recounts what has already been explained by the wise men who have contemplated the states of the world relative to the shape of the earth, the generation of animals and of human species, and the inhabited parts of the earth; it is a summary of the geography of the seven

zones and the information available concerning the conditions prevailing in each.⁴³ Here, ibn Khaldun restates the various conclusions demonstrated in such parts of natural philosophy as the investigation of the nature of elements of generation and corruption, of minerals, and of localities of animals,⁴⁴ and completes them through such information as has been supplied by observation and authenticated multiple reports found in the works of astronomers, and, in particular, in the works of Greek and Muslim geographers like Ptolemy, al-Mus'udi, and al-Idrisi.⁴⁵ It is also in these works that the word 'umran, which ibn Khaldun used as a technical term indicating the subject of his new science, is most frequently encountered.

3. Temperate and Intemperate Zones and the Influence of the Atmosphere upon the Colour of Human Beings and many of their States

This premise is again based on the investigation of the nature of generated beings, and the nature of heat and cold and their influence upon the atmosphere and the animals generated in it, proving that the colour of human beings and many of their arts and modes of life are caused by atmospheric conditions.⁴⁶ The only specific authority he invokes here is ibn Sina's rajaz poem on medicine.⁴⁷ He refutes the errors of genealogists which he attributes to their inattention to the natural basis of such matters as colours and other characteristic traits.⁴⁸

Throughout, the emphasis is upon the natural (in contrast to the specifically human or the divine) basis of culture as a whole, for in addition to relatively, elementary things (such as colour and other bodily traits, and the manner of preparing food and housing), ibn Khaldun indicates the dependence of even the highly complex aspects of culture (such as the sciences, political authority, and whether there are prophets, religions, and divine Laws) upon the nature of the elements and their effects upon the atmosphere.⁴⁹

4. Influence of the Atmosphere upon the Habits of Character (akhlaq) of Human Beings

Ibn Khaldun indicates that the valid causal explanation of this premise has been established in the proper place in philosophy where gladness and sadness are explained as the expansion and contraction of the animal spirit, and are related to the more general premise establishing the effect of heat in expanding the air.⁵⁰ This completely natural explanation, founded on the properties of the elements, is made the basis of mirth, excitability, levity, etc. In contrast, the opinion of al-Mas'udi (copying Galen and al-Kindi), which attributes these habits of characters to the weakness or power of the brain, is considered inconclusive and undemonstrated.⁵¹

5. Effects of the Abundance and Scarcity of Food upon the Bodies and Habits of Character of Human Beings

The causal explanation of this premise is based on the investigation of the quantity of food and the moisture it contains in the various localities of animals, their action in expanding and contracting, and in increasing and decreasing the moisture of the stomachs of all animals, including human beings, and the effect of this upon the coarseness or delicacy of bodies, and

upon the habits of character of human beings, including their piety and religion.⁵² This natural causal explanation is based on experience and confirmed by the students of agriculture.⁵³

6. Classes of those who perceive the “Unseen” (ghaib) among Human Beings by Natural Disposition or by Exercise

6. Classes of those who perceive the “Unseen” (ghaib) among Human Beings by Natural Disposition or by Exercise⁵⁴

This premise is introduced in a discussion on prophecy and dream-vision which deals with (1) practical guidance as the aim of prophecy, and (2) the signs of prophetic mission: (a) the psychological state at the time of revelation, (b) good character prior to embarking upon the prophetic mission, (c) the call to religion and worship, (d) noble and pedigree, and (e) marvels and miracles. The difference between the dialectical theologians and the philosophers concerning how marvels and miracles take place through the power of God or through the power of the prophet himself. The philosophers assert the latter on the basis that “the prophetic soul, among them, has essential properties from which these invasions (of nature) (khawariq) emanate through his (i.e. the prophet’s) power and the obedience of the elements to him in this generation (of these invasions of nature).”⁵⁵

As distinct from this introduction, ibn Khaldun presents his own statement (qual) in which he sets down “the interpretation of the true meaning (haqiqah) of prophecy as explained by men of verification (muhaqqiqun),” and mentions the real meaning of soothsaying, dream-vision, etc. The verified interpretation which ibn Khaldun adopts as the basis for his explanation of the true meaning of these phenomena proves to be a summary recapitulation of the entire subject of natural science, i.e., the observable world (‘alam) and the observable effects of unseen powers, sensible bodies, the elements, the spheres, the generable (minerals, plants, and animals ending in man), and the human soul and its powers.

These powers are again arranged in an ascending order: (1) the active powers, (2) the apprehensive powers which include (a) external senses, (b) internal senses, i.e. (i) common sense, (ii) imagination, (iii) estimation, (iv) memory, and (v) the power of thought which the philosophers call the rational calculative (natiqah) power.

“They all ascend to the power of thought (intellect) the instrument of which is the middle hollow of the brain. It is the power by which take place the movement of deliberation and the turn toward intellection, the soul is moved by it (i.e. this power) constantly through the longing instituted in it (i.e. the soul) towards that (intellection), to deliver (itself) from the abyss of potency and preparedness which belongs to human (nature) and to come out into act in its intellection (with which) it makes itself like the Heavenly Spiritual Host and comes at the lowest rank of the Spiritualities when it apprehends without bodily instruments. Thus, it moves constantly and turns toward that (intellection).

It may pass over altogether from human (nature) and its form of spirituality to the angelic (nature) of the upper region, not by (any) acquiring (of something from outside), but by the original and primary natural disposition toward it which God has placed in it.”⁵⁶ On the basis of the

structure and nature of the observable world, and the structure and nature of the human soul, and on the basis of the natural powers inherent in the latter, ibn Khaldun proceeds to classify and explain the various types of the activity of the soul in relation to the unseen world.

Thus, ibn Khaldun's own explanation of the foundation and the true meaning of these phenomena can be seen to be indeed based on the explanations of the natural world, and of the nature and powers of the human soul, as presented by "most" philosophers. Like them, he considers all such activities to be grounded throughout in the natural properties of the human soul which, in turn is closely related to the human body and the world of generation, of the elements, of sensible bodies, and of their motion and rest.⁵⁷ All other explanations are the "guesses and conjectures" of those who are not well grounded in these matters or who accept them from those who are not such, and are "not based on demonstration or verification."⁵⁸

F

These, then, are the premises, and the only premises, of ibn Khaldun's new science of culture. Even a superficial examination of them reveals that they are all conclusions of inquiries undertaken by other sciences which are all natural sciences. The new science of culture, therefore, does not make a clear, a first, or a true beginning; it is not a pre-suppositionless science. It pre-supposes not only all the natural sciences that have provided it with premises, but also the validity of their principles, the soundness of their procedures and explanations, and the veracity of their judgments and conclusions.

The inquiry into the place of ibn Khaldun's new science of culture within the Muslim philosophic tradition thus indicates beyond reasonable doubt that (a) ibn Khaldun conceived of the new science as a philosophic science, and that by philosophy he understood the sciences originated by the Socratic school, and elaborated by Aristotle and his Muslim followers, (b) the new science falls within the general scope of traditional natural science or natural philosophy, and (c) more especially, all of its premises are drawn exclusively from the various natural sciences, and, thus, it is indeed firmly grounded in these sciences because it pre-supposes their conclusions, and builds itself on the firm foundation.

Ibn Khaldun's science of culture was conceived by him as a contribution to the established philosophic sciences within a limited field. The grounds for this science, or its basic premises, were already established by traditional natural science or natural philosophy. No philosopher before him had used these premises to develop a science of human association or culture based exclusively on them. The Greek and Muslim philosophers, with whose works on practical philosophy ibn Khaldun was acquainted, invariably found it necessary to proceed by utilizing other premises which could not claim the same solidity and demonstrable character as the premises provided by natural philosophy. Therefore, the understanding of the specific character of ibn Khaldun's contribution requires an examination of the relation between his new science of culture and traditional Greek and Muslim political philosophy. This will be attempted in Chapter 49 of this work.

Bibliography

The following list contains ibn Khaldun's surviving works (cf. above, n. 1). For a more detailed bibliography of editions, translations, and studies, cf. Walter J. Fischel, "Selected Bibliography" in F. Rosenthal's translation cited below, Vol. 3, pp. 485 - 512.

Kitab al-'Ibar (The History), ed. Nasr al-Hurini, 7 vols., Bulaq, 1284/1867; Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldun (Prolegomenes d'Ebn-Khaldoun), ed. E. M. Quatremere ("Notice et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliotheque du Roi et autres bibliotheques, publies par l'Institut Imperial de France," t. 16 - 18, premieres parties; also "Tirage a part des..."), Paris, 1858. The three volumes correspond to the Bulaq ed., vol. 1; The Muqaddiman: An Introduction of History, English tr. by Franz Rosenthal (Bollingen Series 43), 3 vols., Pantheon, New York, 1958; Les prolegomenes d'Ibn Khaldoun, French tr. by M. de Slane, 3 vols., Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1934 - 38; al-Ta'rij bi ibn Khaldun wa Rihlatuhu Gharban wa Sharqan (Auto-biography), ed. Mohammad ibn Tawit al-Tanju (Athar ibn Khaldun, vol. 1), Lajnah al-Talif, Cairo, 1370/1951; Lubab al-Muhassal fi Usul al-Din (Extracts from Fakh al-Din al-Razi's Muhassal), ed. P. Luciano Rubio, Editori Marroqui, Tetuan, 1952; Shafa' al-Sa'il li Tahsil al-Masa'il (Answers to Questions on Mysticism), MS No. 24299B, Dar al-Kutub, Cairo, edition in preparation by Tanji.

Notes

1. The summaries of "many" of the works of ibn Rushd, which he wrote as a young man (reported by ibn al-Khatib, cf. al-Maqqari, Nafh al-Tib, ed. Mohammad Muhyi al-Din 'Abd al-Hamid [10 vols., Cairo, al-Maktabat al-Tijariyyah, 1367/1947, vol. 8, p. 286]), may prove of value in corroborating the philosophic notions found in the "History." Ibn Khaldun himself did not evidently consider them of permanent value; they have not as yet been recovered and it is not known whether they have survived at all.

2. The Introduction and Book One are known together as the "Introduction" (Muqaddimah), cf. below p. 898. References in this chapter and in that on ibn Khaldun's Political Philosophy (cf. below, Book 4, part 6, Chap 49) are to the volumes, pages (and lines) of the Quatremere edition (Q) together with the corrections and/or additions supplied by the de Slane and F. Rosenthal in their respective French and English translations, both of which reproduce the pagination of the Quatremere edition on the margin. Cf. the Bibliography at the end of this chapter.

3. Cf. the account of the parts of the 'Ibar, below, p. 898.

4. Q 1, 2: 17 - 19.

5. Or that philosophic questions (i.e., the quest for wisdom) have become scientific logoi. Therefore ibn Rushd omits the well-known opinions and dialectical arguments found in Aristotle's works and does not enumerate the views current in his own time as Aristotle did, "because wisdom in his (Aristotle's) time had not become complete, and contained opinions of groups who were believed to be wise. But now that wisdom had become complete, and there being in our time no groups (merely) believed to be wise...the contemplation of these sciences must according to the mode in which mathematics is contemplated today. For this identical reason we must omit from them also the dialectical arguments." Ibn Rushd, Talkhis al-Sama' al-Tabi'i ("Paraphrase of the Physics"), MS. Cairo, Dar al-Kutub, Hikmah, No. 5, fol. 1 of Ahmad Fu'ad al-Ahwani, Talkhis Kitab al-Nafs (Paraphrase du "De Anima"), (Cairo, Imprimerie Misr, 1950), Introduction, p. 16; Kitab al-Sama' al-Tabi'i, (Hyderabad, Dairatul-Maarif, 1365/1945) pp. 2 - 3.

6. Cf., eg. Q. 2, 385:5, 3, 87:3 - 4 (where both wisdom and philosophy are used together in naming these sciences), 210.

7. Q. 2, 385, 3, 86 - 87.

8. Q. 2, 385:5 - 9.

9. There are three schemes according to which these sciences are enumerated. The four sciences or groups of sciences mentioned here appear in all of them. The order is that of the central scheme which divides the philosophic sciences into seven (mathematics, being subdivided into arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music) (Q. 3, 88:12 - 19). This scheme seems to emphasize the order in which, according to ibn Khaldun himself, these sciences follow one another. Consider the characterization of logic as that which comes first (muqaddam) - (note also the use of muqaddimah as "principle" or premise") - and of mathematics as "coming after" logic (ba'dahu). In the first scheme (logic, natural science [or] metaphysics, and mathematics), the order seems to be in accordance with the contemplation of these sciences as pursued among them ('indahum), i.e. among the philosophers (Q. 3, 87 - 88). The third scheme (mathematics, logic) gives a summary exposition of these sciences "one by one" (Q. 3, 88:19 - 20, 93ff.).

10. Q. 3, 88 - 92.

11. Cf. Q. 1, 62 - 63.

12. Q. 3, 90:14.

13. Q. 3, 90 - 93.

14. For the distinction among the various Greek philosophic schools (which had equally distinct groups of followers in Muslim philosophy), and of their different attitudes to divine Laws, cf. al-Shahrastani, *al-Milal w-al-Nihal*, ed. Ahmad Fahmi Mohammad, three volumes, Cairo, Maktabat al-Hussein al-Tijariyyah, 1367 - 68/1647 - 48, vol. 2, pp. 104 - 07, 231ff.

15. Q. 1, 56:6 - 13.

16. Q. 1, 57 - 58.

17. Q. 1, 61:7 - 19.

18. Q. 3, 87:5 - 9.

19. Q. 3, 108 - 12.

20. Q. 3, 112 - 16.

21. Cf. Q. 3, 87 - 88, 93 - 108.

22. Cf. above p. 893

23. See above, p. 890.

24. Q. 3, 87:9 - 15.

25. Q. 3, 116:12 - 17.

26.

Q. 3, 116 - 17. This judgment is based on ibn Sina's own statements and the accusations levelled against him by ibn Rushd.

27. *Meteorologica* 1, i. 338a, 20 - 39a, 9.

28. *Ibid.*, al-Farabi, *Falsafah Aristutalis* (The Philosophy of Aristotle), MS., Istanbul, Aya Sofia, No. 4833, fols. 34b ff; ibn Sina, "al-Nafs," *Shifa'*, 2, 6. "Psychologie d'Ibn Sina (Avicenne) d'apres son oeuvre *As-sifa*," ed. Jan bakos, Prague, L'Academie Tchecoslovaque des Sciences, 1956, pp. 7 - 8 (where he defends changing the order with respect to the soul and to treating it before plants and animals); al-Najat, 2nd printing, Cairo, 1357/1938, Part 2; 'Uyun al-Hikmah (*Fontes Sapientiae*), ed. Abdurrahman Badawi (Memorial Avicenne 5), Cairo, Institute Francais d'Archeologie Orientale, 1954, pp. 16 - 46; ibn Rushd, *Kitab al-Athar al-'Ulwiyyah*, Hyderabad, *Dairatul-Maarif*, 1365/1945, pp. 2 - 5; "al-Nafs," *op. cit.* pp 1 - 5.

29. "al-Nafs," *op. cit.*, p. 3.

30. Cf. the references given in note 42.

31. Below, Chap. 49.

32. To his surprise, for he expected to find such a science elaborated by them; and only they could have elaborated it.

33. Q. 2, 16

34. Al-Tahanawi, *Kashshaf Istilahat al-Funun* (A Dictionary of Technical Terms), Eds. M. Wajih et al. Calcutta, Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1853 - 62, pp. 1215:21, 1217:2 - 6.

35. Ibid., p. 1216:4ff. (Cf. Q. 1, 308:7 - 8, 345:30).
36. Ibid. p. 1216:20 - 1217:2.
37. Ibid., 1217:5 ff.
38. Cf. Q. 1, 71 - 78.
39. Q. 1, 68:14 - 16.
40. Q. 1, 69 - 72.
41. Q. 1, 68:14 - 16, 11 - 12, 72:3 and 7.
42. Cf. Q. 2, 368 - 71, where the same argument is present in connection with the practical intellect, with a similar reference to the philosophers. Aristotle, *De Anima*, 3, 4 - 7; ibn Sina, *Nafs*, pp. 198ff.; *Najat*, pp. 163 - 65; *Kitab al-Isharat w-al-Tanbihat* (Le livre de theorems et des avertissements), ed. J. Forgot, Leyde, E. J. Brill, 1892, pp. 134 - 37; 'Uyun, pp. 44 - 46; bin Rushd, *Nafs*, pp. 69 - 72.
43. Q. 1, 73 - 148.
44. Q. 1, 73, 75, 82 - 85, 88 - 89, 94 - 95.
45. Q. 1, 75, 82, 84 - 88, 92, 93. 97.
46. Q. 1, 48ff., 151, 153 - 54.
47. Q. 1, 153.
48. Q. 1, 151, 154.
49. q. 1, 149 - 59, 153 - 54.
50. Q. 1, 155 - 56.
51. Q. 1, 157.
52. Q. 1, 157 - 61, 165.
53. Q. 1, 164.
54. Q. 1, 165ff. The sections translated by D.B. Macdonald (*The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1909, pp. 43ff.) remain the most exact rendering of the Arabic text.
55. Q. 1, 170:8 - 9.
56. Q. 1, 176:9 - 18. Cf. Macdonald, op, cit. p. 57.
57. Q. 1, 181, 186 - 87, 190, 192 - 93.
58. Q. 1, 196, 203 - 04.

Chapter 47: The School of Ispahan

A. Introduction

It is one of the most curious aspects of the Western study of Muslim intellectual life that with one or two exceptions practically no serious research has ever been made into the spiritual and intellectual treasures of 12 Imam Shi'ism in any of the European Languages.¹ As a result, not only Westerners but even the Muslims whose contact with the Shi'ah world is mainly through Western sources have remained totally ignorant of the remarkable intellectual life which has persisted to this very day in the centres of Shi'ism, especially in Persia. Inasmuch as it was mostly in the Shi'ah world that much of the intellectual life of Islam, especially in the sciences and traditional wisdom (Hikmat),² took refuge after the seventh/13th century this ignorance has helped to strengthen the totally erroneous notion that Islam fell into complete decadence after the Mongol invasion.

Just as a closer study of the Muslim world at large will show that in art, government, Sufism and many other aspects of Muslim life there was anything but decadence until fairly recently, a study of the Shi'ah world will reveal that even in the sciences, philosophy, and gnosis the Muslims have, with one gap of a century and a half, continued to flourish up to the present century. It will reveal that just as Safawid art is one of the high points of Muslim art, so the intellectual life of Shi'ism in this period one of the apogees of Muslim history, producing sages like Sadr al-Din Shirazi, usually known as Mulla Sadra.

Perhaps one day histories of philosophy will not have chapters on Islam which end abruptly with ibn Rushd or possibly ibn Khaldun but will trace the chain to the present century and end once and for all the dangerous illusion that the present day Muslims are separated from their own tradition by centuries of Safawid Persia, where 12 Imam Shi'ism became for the first time a completely independent political and cultural entity, an entity which has dominated every phase of life in Persia ever since.

The coming to power of the Safawids in Persia is one of the most fascinating chapters of Muslim history and marks one of the instances in which the influence of Sufism upon the social and political life of Islam is felt directly. Beginning as a Sufi brotherhood which traced its lineage as well as its name to the great saint Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardibili,³ the Safawids soon developed into a well organized political unity for the first time since the fall of the Sassanid Empire.

The Sufi order continued under the spiritual direction of a series of descendants of Sheikh Safi, and its members in the ninth/15th century adopted a 12-sided red hat for which they became known as the qizil-bash (red heads). The order grew in power in the politically disorganized Persia of the ninth/15th century and under Isma'il (892/1487 - 930/1523 - 24) succeeded in defeating the local rulers and unifying the whole of Persia.

Shah Isma'il was crowned in Tabriz in 905/1499 marking the beginning of the reign of the Safawids which was to last over two centuries until in 1133/1720 the Afghans conquered Persia, sacked the Safawid capital at Ispahan and killed Shah Hussein, the last of the Safawid rulers. During this

wavering between these two orthodox perspectives of the Islamic revelation, became completely 12-Imam Shi'ah and Shi'ism, which had until now remained a minority creed, found itself as the official religio of an empire and had to face political and social issues it had never been forced to face before.⁴

No longer molested by an external force and face with a large number of practical social problems, Shi'ah theology, Kalam, which had always served as the walls of the citadel of the faith,⁵ lost much of its earlier vigour while jurisprudence, Fiqh, having to face new situations, became highly developed. More important for our purpose is the fact that the predominantly Shi'ah culture of Persia prepared the background for the flourishing of the doctrines of israqi gnosis (illuministic wisdom),⁶ philosophy, and the sciences. The efforts of the chain of sages after Khuwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi, who had kept the study of these subjects alive suddenly found the necessary environment for the development of this form of wisdom.⁷

We have connected this wisdom symbolically with the school of Ispahan, which spread throughout Safawid Persia as well as in Iraq, Syria, and India with which the Persians had very close contacts. The centres of its life were not only Ispahan, the Safawid capital, but also other cities like Shiraz, Kashan, Qazwin, and Tabriz. Furthermore, some of the most important figures like Sheikh Baha' al-Din Amili, and Sayyid Ni'matullah Jaza'iri, who played a vital role in the establishment of Shi'ism in Persia, were Arabs from Amil near Damascus and Bahrain, two centres which had been preserving the Shi'ah tradition for centuries.⁸

The Shi'ahs have developed the Ja'fari School of Law named after the sixth Imam, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, as well as theology (Kalam) and other traditional studies, namely, language, history, hadith and commentary upon the Qur'an, jurisprudence (Fiqh), principles of jurisprudence (Usul),⁹ theology,¹⁰ and Hikmat, this last being a combination of gnosis, theosophy, and philosophy which forms the main subject of our present study.

B. Hikmat

The form of wisdom which has survived until today in the Shi'ah world as Hikmat can neither be wholly identified with philosophy as currently understood in the West, not with theosophy which has unfortunately become identified in the English speaking world with pseudo-spiritualist movements, nor with theology.¹¹ As developed in the Safawid period and continued to the present day, Hikmat consists of several threads knit together by the matrix of Shi'ism.

The most important of these elements are the esoteric teachings of the Imams, especially as contained in the Nahj al-Balaghah by the first Imam 'Ali, the ishraqi wisdom of Suhrawardi which contains in itself aspects of ancient Persian and Hermetic doctrines, the teachings of the earlier Sufis, especially the gnostic doctrines of ibn 'Arabi, and the heritage of the Greek philosophers. It is, therefore, not too surprising if many of the treatises on Hikmat begin with logic and end with ecstasy experienced in the catharsis (tajrid) and illumination of the intellect. They contain as a necessary basis some preparation in logic which they share with the Peripatetics

(Masha'iyun), but instead of remaining bound to the plane of reason they use this logic as a springboard for their flight into the heaven of gnosis.

The group of sages who between the death of ibn Rushd, the so-called terminating point of Muslim philosophy, and the Safawids prepared the ground for the intellectual revival of the school of Ispahan are usually not much better known outside Persia than the Safawid sages themselves. They include a series of philosophers and scientists like Khuwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi, better known in the Western world as a scientist than a philosopher and theologian, Qutb al-Din Razi, Mir Sayyid Sharif Jurjani, Jalal al-Din Dawwani, and ibn Turkah Ispahani,¹² all of whom sought to reconstruct Muslim intellectual life through a gnostic interpretation of the writings of ibn Sina, Suhrawardi, and the Sufis, and who carried further the attempt already begun by al-Farabi, extended by ibn Sina in his Qur'anic commentaries, and carried a step further by Suhrawardi, to correlate faith (iman) with philosophy.¹³

The precursors of the Safawid sages include also a series of pure gnostics, both Shi'ah and Sunni, although this distinction is not essential in Sufism, who spread the doctrines of ibn 'Arabi, the Andalusian sage and the formulator of gnostic doctrines in Islam in the Eastern lands of Islam.¹⁴ These Sufis include Sadr al-Din Qunawi, Fakhr al-Din 'Iraqi, 'Abd al Razzaq Kashani, 'Ala al-Daulah Simnani,¹⁵ 'Abd al-Rahman Jami,¹⁶ and two others who are especially important in introducing the gnostic doctrines of ibn 'Arabi into the Shi'ah world, ibn Abi Jumhur and Mulla Haidar 'Ali Amuli.¹⁷ One must also mention another great spiritual leader, Maulana Jalal al-Din Rumi, whose influence has extended throughout Persia during the past seven centuries.

C. Major Figures of the School of Ispahan

To write down even the mere names and works of all the important authors of the Safawid period would in itself require a book because in nearly every field of religious science many notable figures arose during this period of great intellectual activity. In theology, jurisprudence, and related sciences it is enough to mention only a few names like that of Zain al-Din ibn 'Ali ibn Ahmad Jaba'i (911/1505 - 966/1558), commonly known as the second martyr (shahid-i thani) because of his having been put to death by the Ottomans, the author of numerous treatise which still form a part of Shi'ah religious education, 'Ali ibn 'Abd al-'Ali 'Amili known as Muhaqqia-i Karaki (d. 945/1538), the author of al-Najmiyyah in theology and many other treatises and commentaries, the two Majlisis, Mohammad Taqi (1003/1594 - 1070/1659), the author of Raudat al-Muttaqin, and his son Mohammad Baqir (1037/1628 -1110/1699), the greatest of the Safawid theologians and scholars to whom we shall turn later.¹⁸

As for the hukama', those who cultivated this particular form of wisdom which they called Hikmat, they include Sadr al-Din Shirazi, better known as Mulla Sadra, to whom a separate chapter has been devoted in the present work, Sayyid Ahmad 'Alawi, Mir. Damad's Sabziwari (d. 1090/1669), the commentator of the Isharat and the metaphysics of the Shifa', and the Dhakhirat al-Ma'afi, Rajab 'Ali Tabrizi (d. 1080?/1670), a thinker with nominalist tendencies and the author of Risaleh-i Ithbat-i Wujud, 'Abd al-

Razzaq Lahiji (d. 1071/1661), a student of Mulla Sadra and author of some of the most important books on Hikmat in Persian like the Guhar Murad, Sarmayeh-i Iman, and the Mashariq al-Ilham, glosses upon the commentary of Khuwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi upon the Isharat, and the commentary upon Suhrawardi's Hayakil al-Nur, and Qadi Sa'id Qumi (1049/1640 - 1103?/1692), a gnostic and theologian, the author of the Ara'inat, Kilid-i Bihisht, and a commentary upon the Athulujiyya attributed to Aristotle but now known to be a paraphrasis of the Enneads of Plotinus.

In addition to these authors, there are a few other major figures about whom we have chosen to speak somewhat more fully hoping that in this way we can depict the various aspects of the intellectual life of the Safawid period. These figures include Sheikh Baha' al-Din Amili, Mir Damad,¹⁹ perhaps the central figure in the school of Ispahan, Mir Abu al-Qasim Findiriski, Mulla Musin Fa'id Kashi, and the second Majlisi whom we have already mentioned.

If space had allowed, we would have also considered the purely Sufi writings like the commentary upon the Gulsham-i Raz by Mohammad Lahiji, which is one of the best books on Sufism in Persian, and the works by the masters of other Sufi orders like the Tuhfih'- by the Dhahabi sheikh, Sheikh Mu'adhdhin Khurasani.

Sheikh Baha' al-Din 'Amili

The most colourful figure of the Safawid period was without doubt Baha' al-Din 'Amili, better known as Sheikh-i Baha'i.²⁰ His father was the leader of the Shi'ah community of 'Amil and a student of Shahid-i Thani. After his teacher's death in 966/1559, he set out with his son towards Persia. Baha' al-Din, who was born in Baalbek in 953/1546, was then only 13 years old and well qualified to master the Persian language. In Persia he continued his studies in the religious sciences, poetry, and Hikmat and soon became the leading scholar of his day and the Sheikh al-Islam of Ispahan. Despite his nearness to the Court and necessary participation in the worldly life he was a gnostic and spent many of the last years of his life travelling with the dervishes and visiting various Sufi masters. He finally passed away in 1030/1622 while returning from Hajj.²¹

Sheikh Baha' al-Din was the leading theologian and jurist of his time and the leader of the 'ulama' of Ispahan. He was at the same time an outstanding Sufi, one of the best of the Safawid poets who revived the 'Iraqi style and wrote poetry in the tradition of Rumi and Hafiz, the leading architect of the Safawid period, whose masterpieces like the Shah mosque of Ispahan still stand among the summits of Muslim architecture,²² and the greatest mathematician and astronomer of his period.

In an age when the theologians, jurists, Hakims, natural historians, sophists, logicians, and Sufis were well-marked groups, sometimes in external conflict with one another, Sheikh-i Baha'i was respected by all these groups, from the wondering dervishes, the qalandars, to the Court 'ulama' each of which considered the Sheikh its own. His genius lay precisely in showing the nothingness of all sciences before divine gnosis, while at the same time having a mastery of each science. Yet each of

Sheikh-i Baha'i's writings has become a standard source of reference in its own field.

Some of his important works include Jami'i-i 'Abbasi on theology in Persian, Fawa'id al-Samadiyyan on Arabic grammar which is still in wide use, a treatise on algebra, the Khulasah fi al-Hisab,²³ several treatises on astronomy including the Tashrih al-Aflak, a treatise on the astrolabe, 'Urwat al-Wathqa, general Qur'anic commentaries, many works on various aspects of the Hari'ah, the Kashkul, a collection of Arabic and Persian writings which ranks among the most famous Sufi works, and a series of mathnawis like Bread and Sweet, Cat and Mouse, Milk and Sugar, and the Tuti-Nameh.²⁴

It is especially in the didactic poems, the mathnawas, that the particular genius of Sheikh-i Baha'i for expressing sublime truth in simple language and in witty anecdotes becomes manifest. In these poems his spirit is very similar to that of Maulana Jalal al-Din Rumi whom he follows in spirit as well as in form. In the long poem of The Cat and the Mouse in which the cat symbolizes exoteric and formal knowledge and the mouse esotericism, the theme is the danger of hypocrisy which the exoteric view always faces and the necessity in the religious and social structure for exoteric knowledge. Sheikh-i Baha'i also emphasizes throughout the work the supremacy of intellectual intuition over discursive knowledge. As an example we mention below the story of Mu'tazilite and a Sufi who appears in the guise of a madman named Buhlul.

During the reign of one of the Caliphs, a Mu'tazilite was chosen as the Imam of the mosque. One day Buhlul entered the mosque with a brick hidden under his dress and joined the congregation after the prayers to listen to the Imam's sermon. The Imam in the Mu'tazilite fashion mentioned that Satan is not harmed in hell because he is made of fire and since a thing cannot harm its own kind, the fire of hell cannot harm him. Upon hearing this, Buhlul became infuriated but held back his anger.

The Imam continued his sermon by saying that both good and evil are by divine consent. Again Buhlul became angry but once again succeeded in remaining quiet. The Imam added that on the Day of Judgment man would actually be able to see God. Upon hearing this, Buhlul took out the brick from under his dress, threw it at the Imam injuring his head and ran away. The Caliph raging with fury was about to call for Buhlul when he walked into the palace and without any greetings sat at the head of the Court. The Caliph asked him with great anger as to why he had attacked the Imam. Buhlul answered by pleading to the Caliph to give him permission to explain how by his act he had done nothing discourteous and when given permission addressed the bleeding Imam and said that since according to his own words a thing cannot harm its own kind, a brick cannot harm the Imam's head since both are made of clay.

Furthermore, he asked the Imam if he had felt any pain upon being hit on the head and if he could see the pain. Upon receiving the reply that Imam did not see the pain, Buhlul asked how a man could be unable to see pain, a creation of God, see the Creator. Finally, Buhlul added that since all acts are done through divine consent, God must have given consent to his throwing

the brick and so the Imam should not complain of an act to which God had consented. Upon hearing this, the Imam, the symbol of rationalism, had to remain silent before Buhlul, the symbol of intellectual intuition.²⁵

The writings of Sheikh-i Baha'i are also replete with passages about the nothingness of all human knowledge as against divine gnosis. For example, in the poem Nan wa Halwah (Bread and Sweet) he says:

Formal science is nothing but altercation,
It results in neither intoxication²⁶ nor contemplation.
It continually brings congelation to man's nature,
What's more, the Maulana²⁷ does not believe in it.
If someone tells thee that of thy life,
There remains with certainty but a week,
Thou in this one week will busy thy self
With which science, oh accomplished man!
There is no science but the science of love,²⁸
The rest is the deception of the wretched Satan.
There is no science but the Qur'anic commentary and Hadith,
The rest is the deception of the perverse Satan.
The mysteries will never become known to thee,
If thou hast for student a hundred Fakhr-i Razi.²⁹
All who do not love the face of the beautiful
The saddle and the rein are appropriate for them³⁰
That is, he who does not have love for the Friend,
Bring for him the saddle and the headstall.³¹
He who has not fallen in love with his beautiful Face,
Erase his name from the tablet of humanity.
A breast that is empty of the love of the Beautiful,
Is an old leather bag full of bones.
A breast if devoid of the Beloved,
Is not a breast but an old chest.
A heart which is empty of the love of that Beauty,
Count it as a stone with which the Devil cleans himself.
These sciences, these forms and imaginings,
Are the excrements of Satan upon that stone.
If thou allowest other than the science of love in thy heart,
Thou wilt be giving Satan the stone to clean himself.
Be ashamed of thyself, oh villain,
That thou carriest the Devil's cleaning stone in thy pocket.
Wash the tablet of the heart from the Devil's excrement,
Oh teacher, give also the lesson of love.
How long wilt thou teach the wisdom of the Greeks?
Learn also the wisdom of those who have faith.³²
How long with this jurisprudence and baseless theology,
Wilt thou empty thy brain? Oh exuberant one,
Thy life is spent in discussing conjugation and syntax,
Learn also a few words about the principles of love.
Illuminate thy heart with resplendent lights,
How long wilt thou lick the bowl of Avicenna?

The Lord of the universe, the King of this world and the next³³
Called the left-over of the believer a remedy, Oh grieved one,
But the left-over of Aristotle and Avicenna,
When has the illuminated Prophet called it a remedy?
Go rip thy breast in a hundred places,
And clear thy heart of all these stains.³⁴

Not only does Sheikh-i Baha'i suggest that man should not busy himself solely with formal science and that he should seek to reach the divine gnosis hidden in the revelation, but he also reminds man that he should not become so accustomed to his world as to forget his original home. It has been a constant theme of the gnostics throughout the ages that the spiritual man being a stranger in this world must take the perilous journey to return to his original abode.³⁵ In the same *Nan wa Halwah*, while commenting upon the Prophet's saying, "The love of the country comes from faith," he writes,³⁶

"This country is not Egypt, Iraq or Syria,
It is a city which has no name.
Since all these countries belong to this world,
The noble man will never praise them.
The love of this world is the source of all evil,
And from evil comes the loss of faith.
Happy is the person who, through divine guidance,
Is led in the direction of that nameless city.
Oh son, thou art a stranger in these countries,
How wretched art thou to have become accustomed to it!
Thou hast remained so long in the city of the body,
That thou hast completely forgotten thy own country.
Turn away from the body and gladden thy soul,
And remember thy original home.
How long wilt thou, oh victorious falcon,
Remain away from the sphere of the spirit?
It is a shame for those, oh artful one,
To shed thy feathers in this ruin.
How long, oh hoopoe of the city of Saba,³⁷
Wilt thou remain in estrangement with feet tied?
Seek to untie the cords from thy feet,
And fly where 'there is no space'".³⁸

Shekhi-i Baha'i was one of those rare falcons who, while outwardly in the midst of this world, had flown to the "land of nowhere." He did not write in the technical sense so much about the Hikmat as Mir. Damad or Mulla Muhsin Fa'id did, but he reached such a degree of spiritual realization above and beyond theoretical formulations that all of his writings are spiritually precious. Even his compositions in the various religious and natural sciences bear the perfume of his spirituality. His writings present a balance between the exoteric and the esoteric, the metaphysical and the cosmological, which serve as an example of what the relation between the various aspects of a tradition, might be and could be when the principal integrating influence of gnosis is present.

Mir Damad

One of the most influential figures of the Safawid School was Muhammad Baqir Damad, better known as Mir Damad. He and his student, Mulla Sadra, must be considered to be the greatest Hakims of the period. Being the grandson of Muhaqqia-i Karaki and descendant of a distinguished Shi'ah family, Mir Damad received the best education possible in all branches of learning. His most famous teacher was Sheikh Hussain ibn 'Abd al-Samad 'Amili, the father of Sheikh-i Baha'i, who later on became his most intimate friend and companion at the Safawid Court.³⁹ Mir Damad soon became a leading authority on Kalam, Hikmat, Fiqh and even in the occult and natural sciences.⁴⁰

In Ispahan he attracted numerous students to himself. His most famous disciples were Mulla Sadra, Sayyid Ahmad 'Alawi, the commentator of the *Shifa'*, Mulla Khalil Qazwini whose commentary upon the *Usal al-Kafi* is very well known in Persia, and Qutb al-Din Ashkiwari, the author of a universal sacred history and several philosophical and gnostic treatises.⁴¹ Mir Damad, more than anyone else, was responsible for the revivification of ibn Sina's philosophy and ishraqi wisdom within the context of Shi'ism and for laying the ground for the monumental work for Mulla Sadra. Mir Damad did much to revive what he referred to as the Yamani wisdom (*falsafih-i Yamani*), the wisdom of the prophets, in contrast to the more rationalistic philosophy of the Greeks.⁴² He has been entitled the Third Teacher (*Mu'allim-i thalith*) after Aristotle and Farabi.

The writings of Mir Damad, both in Arabic and Persian, many of which are incomplete, are written in a very difficult style which adds to the difficulty of understanding their contents. These writings include several treatises on Kalam, works on Fiqh like *Shari' al-Najat*, *al-Ufuq al-Mubin* on Being, time, and eternity, *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* on the relation between the created and the eternal, *Taqwim al-Imam* on Being, creation, and God's knowledge, several other major treatises on Hikmat including the *Qabasat*,⁴³ *Taqdisat*, *Jadhawat*, and *Sidrat all-Muntaha*,⁴⁴ several Qur'anic commentaries like *Amanat-i Ilahi*, commentaries upon the *Istihisar of Khuwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi* and the metaphysics of the *Shifa'*, the *Khalsat al-Malakut* on gnosis,⁴⁵ and a collection of poems in Persian and Arabic including the *Mushariq al-Anwar*, written under the pen name, *Ishraq*.

After a life-time spent in writing, teaching, and reading the Qur'an to which he was much devoted, and having prepared the ground for the whole group of sages, especially Mulla Sadra, who were to carry his ideas to their ultimate perfection, Mir Damad died on the way between Najaf and Karbala in Iraq in 1041/1631.

The thought of Mir Damad is marked by two features which distinguish him from the other Hikims of the period, the first the organization of his treatises and the second the notion of eternal creation, *huduth-i dahri*, which is the central and ever-recurring theme in his writings. As for the organization of his works, like the *Qabasat* and *Taqdisat*, it differs for the most part from that of the traditional Muslim books on philosophy and Hikmat which usually begin with logic and then proceed to natural philosophy (*tabi'iyat*), mathematics (*riyadiyyat*), and theology (*ilahiyyat*).⁴⁶

For example, in the Qabasat the ten chapters of the book concern the various meanings of creation and the division of Being, kinds of anteriority, multiplicity, appeal to the Qur'an and the Hadith, nature, time, and motion, criticism of logic divine omnipotence, and intellectual substances, chain of Being, and finally pre-destination.⁴⁷

The second marked feature of Mir Damad's exposition of Hikmat concerns the notion of time. It is well known that the question whether the world is created (hadith) or eternal (qadim) has been one of the major points of dispute between the philosophers and theologians in both Islam and Christianity as well as among the Greeks.⁴⁸ Mir Damad seeks a solution to this question by dividing reality into three categories: zaman or time, dahr, and sarmad; the latter two are kinds of eternity. This division is ontological and not just logical or theoretical.⁴⁹

The divine essence or ipseity (dhat) is above all distinctions and qualities; yet it is also the source of the divine names and attributes which are both one with the essence and yet distinct from it. This immutable relation between the essence and the attributes, which cannot be changed from either side, the attributes being a necessary determination (ta'ayyun) of the essence to Itself by Itself, Mir Damad called sarmad. It is an eternity in the absolute sense, above all contingencies. The names and attributes, which are the same as the archetypes, Platonic ideas, or the lords of the species (rabb al-nau') as the Ishraqis call them, in turn generate the world to change.

They are the immutable intelligences of this world, and each species in this world is a theurgy (tilism) for its archetype. The relation between the immutable archetypes and the world change is like the reflection of the moon in a stream of water in which the image of the moon remains unchanged while the substance in which it is reflected, i.e. water, flows on continually. This relation between the immutable and the changing Mir Damad calls dahr. Finally, the relation between one change and another is called time (saman), in the sense of quantity and measure of change as Aristotle had already described it.⁵⁰

Since the world was brought into being through the intermediate world of archetypes, its creation is dahri not zamani, i.e. the world was not created in a time which existed before the world came into being but with respect to a dahr which stands above the world.⁵¹ The creation of this world is, therefore, huduth-i dahri, ibda', and ikhtira' and not huduth-i samani, wad', and lakwin. Time has a reality in its own plane of being, but the world of dahr, the world of the archetypes, time does not even exist. Moreover, the changing physical world ('alam-i jismani) depends for its existence upon non-existence ('adam) in the world of archetypes.

While it exists in time (zaman), it is non-existent in dahr and has no share in the angelic mode of being, proper to the world of dahr, of which it is no more than coagulation. Likewise, the world of dahr, of the archetypes, is non-existent in the divine essence, in the world of sarmad (the eternal world). In the divine essence (dhat) there is neither dahr nor zaman, neither archetype nor body; God is alone in His majesty.⁵² Yet, dahr exists on its own level and zaman on its own. Sarmad is the cause of dahr and dahr the

cause of zaman,⁵³ so that ultimately the divine essence is the cause of all things, while in its essence nothing may even be said to exist.

The Jadhawat, the contents of which we will now briefly survey, is one of the works in which Mir Damad presents the complete cycle of his metaphysical ideas combined as usual with the Qur'anic text, the Hadith, and his own verse.⁵⁴ In the first judhwah or particle of fire, of which the word jadhawat is the plural, Mir Damad divides the "book of divine existence," of the chain of Being, into two parts, one in which there is an effusion or theophany (tajalli) away from the divine essence and the other in which there is a return to the origin: the first extending from the divine essence to prime matter or hyle and the other from the hyle back to the origin of all existence. Moreover, each chain is divided into a longitudinal (tulil) order and a latitudinal ('ardi) order.⁵⁵ The longitudinal order of the chain of effusion includes five essential degrees:

1. The degree of pure intelligences, the Victorial lights (anwar-i qahirah) the first member of which is the universal intellect ('aql-i kull), i.e. the first light to issue forth from the Light of lights (nur al-anwar).

2. The degree of heavenly souls (nufus-i falakiyyah), the governing lights (anwar-i mudabbirah), the first number of which governing the first heaven is called the universal soul (nafs-i kull).

3. The degree of the natural souls (nufus-i muntabi'ah) and the archetypes of the heavens, the planets, the four natures, the elements, and compounds.⁵⁶

4. The degree of bodily form (surat-i jismiyyah), i.e. the Aristotelian form, which is an extended substance and is of one species.

5. The degrees of hyle, from the matter of the highest heaven to that of the world of generation and corruption.⁵⁷

As for the longitudinal order of the chain of return to the divine essence, it too, includes five stages:

1. The degree of absolute body (jism-i mutlaq) and bodies comprising the elements and the heavens.

2. The degree of composed bodies which come into being from the combination of the elements and have a species of their own, e.g. minerals.

3. The degree of plants possessing the vegetative soul.

4. The degree of animals possessing the animal soul.⁵⁸

5. The degree of men possessing the intellectual soul which is of the same substance as the intelligences of the descending chain, above both of which there is nothing but the Truth (Haqq) Itself.⁵⁹

Each of these degrees, both in the descending and the ascending chains, have their several members that constitute the latitudinal extension of each degree.

The world of the intelligences (mujarradat) is called the world of the invisible (ghaib), or command (amr), or malakat, or intellect ('aql) or life (hayat), or light (nur), while the world of bodies is called the world of creation (khalq), vision (Shahadat), or dominion (mulk), or death (maut), or darkness (zulmat). Man's nature is composed of these two worlds in such a way that he contains the whole world in himself; he is the microcosm as the world is the macrocosm. His intellect is like the sun, his soul like the moon,

and his body like the earth, and as is the case with the heavens, man can also have an inner eclipse, i.e. the earth of his body can prevent the light of the sun of the intellect to shine upon the moon of the soul. The purpose of the two chains of descent and ascent is to bring into being man, who contains both the chains within himself and who can, therefore, ascend to heaven as well as descend to the lowest depths of existence.

The macrocosm is a conscious being whose head is the highest heaven, whose heart is the sun and whose other organs correspond with those of man. It is compared symbolically to a man whose head is pointed towards the North Pole, the right side towards the west, the face towards heaven, the feet towards the south, and the left side towards the east.

The totality of these degrees, the macrocosm and the microcosm together, is the book of God, in which each being is a word or rather a letter.⁶⁰ These words and letters are written by the divine Pen (qalam) which symbolizes the intellect. The Pen writes the truth of things upon the human soul which is called the isphabad light (nur-i isphabadi). More specifically, the Pen writes the truth of things upon the soul of the prophet who in turn “writes” the knowledge of things upon the soul of man and through the intelligences, upon the pages of creation and existence. The intelligences are not limited to the nine heavens, but as the Ishraqis have asserted, in number they equal the fixed stars in addition to the heavens and extend all the way down to the heaven of the moon. The intelligence of this heaven is called “the giver of forms” (wahib al-suwar) or the active intellect (aql-i fa‘‘al) which gives being as well as form to the sublunary region.⁶¹

The heaven of the fixed stars is the meeting place of the corporeal and intellectual lights, the boundary between formal and formless manifestation. This heaven has its own soul and intelligence but, in addition, each star in it is also a possessor of intelligence and a soul proper to itself. As to the other heavens, they also have their general intelligence and soul as well as particular intelligences and souls all of which cast their illuminations upon the sublunary region. The intelligence of the heaven of the sun is Gabriel whose grace is spread throughout the heavens and the earth.

Having considered the chain of Being, Mir Damad turns to a discussion of unity (tauhid) starting from “there is no divinity but God” (la ilaha illa Allah) to, “there is no being but He and no truth but He” (la maujudun illa Huwa wa la haqqun illa Huwa).⁶² For the real gnostic every being is nothing but Being. Mir Damad compares the relation of Being to existence with that of the number one to other numbers, which runs through all numbers without entering into them, which relation neither the soul nor the intellect can understand, yet its effect is felt everywhere.⁶³

The Divine Being by His essential unity encompasses all things; His unity is before, with, and after both dahr and zaman. His unity before dahr is the unity of His command, with dahr, the unity of the universal intellect, after dahr, the unity of the universal soul, unity with time (zaman) and unity of the elements and compounds.

As for the generation of multiplicity from unity, Mir Damad rejects the Peripatetic view of authors like ibn Sina who consider that the first intellect brings multiplicity into being by the three relationships possible for it:

necessity by something other than self, the intellection of the divine essence, and the intellection of its own essence. For Mir Damad just as the number of intelligences is unlimited so are there possible relationships beyond the number determined by the Peripatetics.⁶⁴ Likewise, the intelligences have a great many illuminations and effusions beyond the categories set forth by the Aristotelians, one intelligence being victorial (qahir) and the other passive and receptive (maqhur). Each heaven as well as each body, simple or composed, has its archetype (rabb al-nau-'-) in the world of divine command ('alam-i amr) which is changeless and is to its species what the soul of man is to his body.

Between the world of intelligences and the physical world there is an intermediary world, the so called eighth climate which Mir Damad, following the ancient Ishraqi sages calls hurqalya,⁶⁵ the world of separated imagination (khayal-i munfasil), or the purgatory (barzakh). Human imagination regarded as a gulf extending from this vast cosmic ocean. This world contains the forms or Platonic ideas of all physical bodies without being in a specific place. The mythical cities of Jabulqa and Jabulas⁶⁶ are located in it, and bodily resurrection on the Last Day, miracles, and the passage of great distances in a short time, all take place in this intermediary world which is a bridge to be crossed before reaching the spiritual world.

In order to cross this bridge and make the return journey through the ascending chain, man must become familiar with the divine names, especially the Great name (ism-i a'zam) which contains all the others. All the prophets and saints derive their being from these names, and the creatures are their effects. The spiritual world is called the world of invocation ('alam-i tasbih) because the realities of that world are the divine names. Man, therefore, can regain the world only by invoking the names and becoming unified with them.⁶⁷

The gnostic who has achieved this end sees the whole world through the intelligible world; in fact, he sees nothing outside the Divine. As long as man lives in this world no matter how much he has separated his soul from his body and achieved catharsis (tajrid), he is still in time and space. It is only when he dies and leaves the world of darkness for that light that he becomes completely free from the conditions of terrestrial existence of zaman, and it is only then that he enters into eternity (dahr).

The inner constitution of man forms a bridge between the worlds of time and eternity, the sensible and the intelligible. Man possesses four degrees of perception: sensation (ihsas), imagination (takhayyul), apprehension (tawahkum), and intellection (ta'aqqul), the degrees which stretch between these two worlds; on the one hand, it abstracts perceptions from the sensible world and, on the other, receives the illumination of the intelligible world which it clothes in the forms of sensible, i.e. words and names which are the external dress of truth.⁶⁸

Mir Damad echoes earlier Sufi and Pythagorean doctrines in assigning a particular significance to the numerical symbolism of letters. He writes, "The world of letters corresponds to the world of numbers, and the world of numbers to the world of Being, and the proportion of the world of letters to the proportion of the world of numbers and the proportion of the world of

numbers to the combinations and mixtures of the world of Being.”⁶⁹ He calls the sciences of the properties of letters and their combination divine medicine and says that letters have come into being from the conjunction of planets with the signs of the Zodiac, for example alif has come into being by Mars crossing the first degree of Aries. He establishes correspondence between the 28 letters of the Arabic alphabet and the equal number of the stations of the moon and works out this correspondence in great detail.⁷⁰

In establishing a relation between numbers, letters of the alphabet, and the heavens, Mir Damad, like many sages before him, seeks to point out the common ground between the book of revelation and the book of nature, as well as the relation between the sensible world and the intelligible world. In his writings it is quite clear that both metaphysics and cosmology are to be found in the esoteric (batini) meanings of the Qur’an and that through the understanding of the symbolism of letters and numbers and the sapiential exegeses of sacred books one can come to know not only the Qur’an which corresponds to the world of creation, the Qur’an-i tadwini, i.e. the logos or the reality of Mohammad (haqiqat al-Mohammadiyyah).

Mir Abu al-Qasim Findiriski

The third famous triumvirate of sages from Ispahan,⁷¹ Mir Findiriski, spent much of his life travelling outside Persia, especially in India where he was highly respected by most of the princes and where he made the acquaintance of many Hindu sages. He became well acquainted with Hinduism and even wrote a commentary upon the Persian translation of the Yoga Vasistha by Nizam al-Din Panipati, which is one of the major works on Hinduism in Persian. In the Muslim sciences he was a master in philosophy (Hikmat), mathematics, and medicine and taught the Shifa’ and the Qanun of ibn Sina in Ispahan where he died in 1050/1640.

The most interesting aspect of Mir Findiriski’s life is his complete detachment, even externally, from the world. As a Sufi, in spite of his having advanced very far upon the Path and having reached the state of pure contemplation and illumination, he mingled with the common people and wore the coarsest wool and yet he was one of the most respected men in the Safawid Court.⁷² His manner resembled that of the Hindu Yogis with whom he had had so much contact. He was a real man among men and one of the most striking Sufis of his time. While completely detached from the world and even from purely formal learning, he composed several important treatises including one on motion (al-harakah), another on the arts and sciences in society (sand‘iyyah), the book on Yoga already mentioned, Usul al-Fusul on Hindu wisdom and a history of the Safawids.

Moreover, he, like Mir Damad and Sheikh-i Baha-i, was an accomplished poet showing the development in him of the gnostic element which is the only possible common ground between traditional philosophy and poetry. The most famous of his poems is a qasidah, based upon that of Nasir ibn Khursau Dehlawi, which is one of the best known poems on Hikmat in Persian. It has been taught and commented upon many times since its composition, the more famous commentaries on it being those of Mohammad Salih Khalkhali and Hakim ‘Abbas Darabi. Because of the importance of this poem in summarizing some of the basic elements of

Hikmat as it was revived during the Safawid period, English translation of some of the verses is given below.

“Heaven with these stars is clear, pleasing, and beautiful,
Whatever is there above has below it a form.⁷³

The form below, if by the ladder of gnosis

Is trodden upward, becomes the same as its principle.
No outward apprehension can understand this saying,
Whether it be that of an Abu Nasr or of an Abu ‘Ali Sina.⁷⁴
If life were not an accident under this ancient heaven,
These bodies would be forever alive and erect.
But whatever is an accident must first have a substance,
The intellect is our loquacious witness to this claim.
If one can obtain these qualities⁷⁵ form the sun,
The sun is itself light and shines upon all things while keeping the unity.

The intellect form which is endless and immortal

Of the life of the universe, I say that if thou knowest the relation of the soul and the body,

In the heart of every particle, then life becomes both evident and hidden.
God has placed seven heavens above us,
And seven others on the other side of the world in the life to come.
Thou canst reach heaven by their means,
Be true and walk the straight path for there is no falsehood there.
He who worships the world, the door of heaven will never open to him,
The doors will not open even if he stands before them.
He who is annihilated in Him finds eternal life,
He who is busy with himself, his affair is doubtless a failure.
The jewel is hidden in the mysteries of the ancient sages,
Only he who is wise can discover the meaning of these mysteries.
Pass beyond these words for they are forsaken by the people of the

world,

Find the Truth and tread its path, if thou art righteous.
Whatever is outside the essence will do thee no good,
Make thyself harmonious whether it be today or tomorrow.
The Being that is pure has no limit or description,
It is neither outside of us, nor with us, nor without us.

A beautiful thought is only beneficial when combined with virtuous deeds,

A thought with virtuous action is competent and beautiful.
To talk of goodness is not like doing good,
The name of sweetmeat on the tongue is not like sweetmeat itself....
In this world and the next, with the world and without it,
We can say all these of Him, yet He is above all that.
The intellect is a ship, passion a whirlpool, and knowledge the mast,
God is the shore and the whole cosmos the sea.

The shore is reached with certainty; the sea of the possible has become the necessary...⁷⁶

How good it would be if the sages before us had said everything completely,

So that the opposition of those who are not complete⁷⁷ would be removed.

Desire keeps the soul in bondage in this world,

While thou hast desire, thy feet are tied.

Each wish in this world is followed by another wish,

The wish must be sought beyond which there is no other.”

Mir Findiriski occupied himself not only with metaphysics and the theoretical sciences but also with the sciences of society, of traditional society in which the social structure itself has a direct bearing in metaphysical principles. In this treatise on arts and sciences (sana‘iyyah),⁷⁸ he distinguishes¹² vocations or arts and sciences in society depending upon the subject with which each one deals. The subjects of the arts and sciences he enumerates are as follows: (1) The subject is universal and the discussion concerns knowledge as well as action from both of which there comes only good, (2) the subject is universal and the discussion concerns both knowledge and action from both of which there comes evil, (3) the subject is universal and the discussion concerns knowledge from which there comes only good, (4) the subject is universal and the discussion concerns knowledge from which there comes evil, (5) the subject is universal and the discussion concerns action from which there comes only good, and (6) the subject is universal and the discussion concerns action from which there comes evil.

To this list Mir Findiriski adds a series of arts and sciences the subject of which is no longer universal. These include: (7) those arts and sciences the subject of which is particular and the discussion concerns knowledge and action from which there comes only good, (8) the subject is particular and the discussion concerns knowledge and action from which there comes evil, (9) the subject in particular and the discussion concerns only knowledge from which there comes only good, (10) the subject is particular and the discussion concerns the knowledge from which there comes evil, (11) the subject particular and the discussion concerns only action from which there comes only good, and, finally (12) the subject is particular and the discussion concerns only action which there comes evil.⁷⁹

The first 12 categories listed above concerns the prophets, saints, and sages, the most exalted of men, who maintain the order of the universe, there being a prophet for each cycle of history and each people. The second concerns those who oppose the prophets and sages, those who are the deniers of truth, and the sophists and agnostics who are the lowest of men. The fourth class is the opposite of the first, i.e., the enemies of Hikmat and theology, of those who, seeing differences in the expressions of the various sages, have denied the one truth which lies behind the diversity.⁸⁰ The fifth category is that of the jurists (juqaha’) who cultivate the practical sciences, and the sixth is that of their opposites like Mazdak,⁸¹ who concern themselves only with their bodies and remain oblivious of the order of both this world and the next.

The last six categories concern particular arts and sciences. The first of them, or the seventh in our list, is that of professionals in particular arts, like

physicians, engineers, and astronomers, and the eighth is that of their opposites, i.e. those who misuse each of these arts. The ninth category is like the particular sense of an organ of the body and concerns people who have only a theoretical knowledge of various arts and sciences, like music, medicine, or the principles of jurisprudence. The tenth is its opposite and in it are included those who make a false claim to know those sciences theoretically. The 11th category concerns arts and sciences which are limited to a particular subject and the 12th its opposite which concerns the rejection of these same arts and sciences.

In this classification we can already see the hierarchic structure of society at the top of which stand the prophets and saints in whom knowledge and action are combined, below them the hukama' and the theologians, then those concerned with practical arts and the particular sciences. The nobility of a vocation in each case depends upon the nobility of the subject-matter treated. Likewise, the degree of degradation of a person or group depends upon the truth that has been denied, the higher the degree of a truth, the baser is he who denies it. The categories outlined by Mir Findiriski reflect the hierarchy within Hikmat itself. In both cases the religious sciences, like theology, and the wisdom of the prophets and saints above all the other categories.

Mulla Muhsin Faid-i Kashi

Mohammad ibn Shah Murtada ibn Shah Mahmud, better known as Mulla Muhsin or Faid-i Kashi, is the most famous of the sages of the generation following that of Mir Damad, Sheikh-i Baha'i, and Mir Findiriski. Born in Kashan in 1007/1600, he spent some years at Qum and then went to Shiraz to complete his studies with Mulla Sadra whose daughter he later married. He also studied with Mir Damad and Sheikh-i Baha'i but was more closely associated with Mulla Sadra. Just as Mir Damad produced a series of outstanding students, the best known of whom was Mulla Sadra - the greatest of the Safawid Hakims to whom we shall turn in a separate chapter - Mulla Sadra in turn produced a galaxy of famous students among whom Faid-i Kashi and Mulla 'Abd al-Razzaq Lahiji, both his sons-in-law, are the most important.⁸²

The genius of Mulla Sadra consisted largely in unifying the three perspectives of formal revelation of shar', purification of the soul leading to illumination (kashf), and rational demonstration (falsafah) into a single universal vision in which all these paths lead to the same truth. All of his followers sought to preserve the unity established by their master, each emphasizing some one aspect of it. For example, later sages like Qadi Sa'id Qumi, Mulla 'Ali Nuri, and Aqa 'Ali Zunuzi sought to correlate revelation and reason, and Aqa Mohammad Bidabadi and Aqa Mohammad Rida' Qumshih, reason and gnosis. Others continued the path trodden by Mulla Sadra himself and emphasized the harmony of all the three paths mentioned above. Mulla Muhsin Faid and Haji Mulla Hadi Sabziwari, the most famous Persian thinker of the last century, belong to the last group. Mulla Muhsin's writings display a harmonious integration of reason, revelation, and gnosis with lesser emphasis upon reason. He succeeded perhaps more than anyone

else in the Shi'ah world to bring about a complete harmony between Law and spiritual life, Shari'ah and Tariqah.

In many ways Mulla Muhsin may be considered to be a Shi'ah Ghazālī, not only because of his pre-occupation with harmonizing the exoteric and the esoteric views, but also for his treatment of a spiritualized ethics which forms the requirements for the following Path. He even re-wrote the well-known Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din of Ghazālī under the name of al-Mahajjat al-Baida' fi Ihya' al-Ihya', substituting traditions (Hadith) from the Shi'ah sources for those from the Sunni ones given by Ghazālī.⁸³

The writings of Mulla Muhsin both in Arabic and Persian are too numerous to mention here.⁸⁴ Among the more famous, one may name Haqq al-Yaqin, 'Ain al-Yaqin, and 'Ilm al-Yaqin on Hikmat, al-Safi, al-Wafi, and al-Shafi on Qur'anic commentary and Hadith, Mafatih al-Sharaya' on jurisprudence, al-Tathir on ethics, Jala al-'uyun, Zad al-Salik, and Kalimat-i Maknunah on Sufism, numerous treatises on esoteric meaning of acts of worship, on various invocations, on particular sciences including astronomy, selections from and commentaries on the Rasa'il on the Ikhwan al-Safa, the Futuhat al-Makkiyyah of ibn 'Arabi, and the Mathnawi of Jalal al-Din Rumi, and a large collection of poems consisting mostly of verses of Sufi inspiration. His works both in poetry and prose have remained very popular in Persia and ethical and social teachings have attracted particular attention in the past decades.

Mulla Muhsin's thought marks the final integration of Hikmat into Shi'ism. Hikmat in Persia had been moving in this direction for many centuries from the time of al-Farabi and ibn Sina. Suhrawardi Maqtul took the decisive step in regarding knowledge as personal illumination by the heavenly guide or "guardian angel." Mulla Sadra following him made the universal intellect the criterion of knowledge. Mulla Muhsin took a further step in this direction in identifying this intellect with the Shi'ah Imams, in whom the light of Mohammad (al-nur al-Mohammadiyyah) is manifested and who are called the innocent (ma'sum) intellects.⁸⁵ Only by union with them, with the pure intellects, can one gain ultimate knowledge.

One of the important treatises of Mulla Muhsin, in which gnosis, Hikmat and Shar' are blended in characteristic fashion in the Kalimat-i Maknunah written in a mixture of Arabic and Persian.⁸⁶ It treats a complete cycle of theoretical gnosis so that its discussion gives a fair example of the totality of Mulla Muhsin's general perspective.

The work begins by assuring the reader that there is no way of reaching the essence of the Truth because the Truth encompasses all things. Everything is its manifestation, but only the elite (khwass) know what they see. Being is like light, but since its opposite does not exist in this world as in the case of light which stands opposed to darkness, one cannot come to know it so easily. God is hidden because of the excess of His light, no veil can cover Him because every veil is a limitation and God is above all limitations.⁸⁷ Being is the Truth which subsists by Itself, while everything else subsists by consisting only of a reflection of Being itself.

The divine attributes and names are identical with the divine essence, while in themselves they are distinct. Likewise the forms of all beings in the

divine intellect, i.e., the quiddities or essences, the mahiyat or a‘yan al-thabitah,⁸⁸ are in one respect identical with and in another distinct from essence. Each being subsists by one of the divine names and its very existence consists in the invocation of that name. The archetype, a‘yan al-thabitah, have two aspects; on the one hand, they are hidden and Truth is manifest, and on the other, Truth is the mirror in which they are reflected, in which case truth is hidden and they are manifest. These two aspects correspond also to two states of contemplation: one of Truth (Haqq) and the other of creation (khalq). The perfect gnostic contemplates both mirrors, he sees the cosmos as a mirror in which Truth is reflected, and his own essence as a mirror in which both the cosmos and Truth are reflected. Mulla Muhsin advises the sage to take a further step in eliminating himself also so that there remains nothing but Truth.⁸⁹

Mulla Muhsin follows certain earlier Sufis in considering the world to be re-created at every instant,⁹⁰ so that its continuity is only apparent. The real continuity is “vertical,” i.e. between Truth and its manifestations, not “horizontal” and “substantial,” i.e. between parts and instances of the created world. The world is like a flowing stream which, although apparently a continuous and subsistent body, changes at every instant and a new particle coming to take its place.

The creation of the world or the effusion of unity into multiplicity does not take place immediately but through the divine names, each creature being the theophany (tajalli) of a particular name. The name Allah is the supreme master (rabb al-arbab) of all the names of theophany of which is the universal man (al-insan al-kamil). Although the stages in which creation comes into being are numerous, Mullah Muhsin names five degrees which mark the main steps. In the first degree is the divine essence which is above all distinctions and determinations; in the second are the names which are the manifestations of Truth in the world of divinity, uluhiyyah, in the third are the divine acts and world of spirits which are the manifestations of Truth in the world of Lordship, rububiyyah, in the fourth is the world of “ideas” and imagination (khayul)⁹¹ which is the manifestation of Truth in the world of varying forms, and in the fifth is the world of the senses which is the manifestation of Truth in determined forms.⁹² Everything in the physical world has its archetype in the world of imagination, while everything in the world of lordship is a form of one of the divine names, each name an aspect of the divine essence.

Man alone among creatures is able to cast aside these veils and reach the divine origin of things. He has a particular soul brought into being with his body, which soul is independent of matter, and also a universal soul which exists before the body and is manifested only in the spiritual elite. Moreover, man has a vegetative soul consisting of the faculties of attraction, repulsion, digestion, growth, and retention originating in the heart, a sacred rational soul (nafs-i natiqah-i qudsiyyah) with the faculties of meditation (fikr) and invocation (dhikr), and the universal divine soul (nafs-i kulliyyah-i ilahiyyah), not possessed by all men, with the faculty of reaching the station of annihilation (fana’) in the Divine.⁹³

The goal of each man should be to awaken the potential faculties within him until all the accidental obstacles are removed and he becomes identified with the universal man, the theophany of the supreme name. Then he will be able to contemplate Absolute Being and thereby fulfil the purpose of all creation and sustain the whole universe.

The universal man is either a prophet or a saint. Absolute prophethood (nubuwwat-i mutlaq) is the supreme station, the perfect “form” of unity, the first pen, and the Pole of Poles, qutb al-aqtab, upon which all the prophets and saints depend. The inner (atin) dimension of this prophecy is absolute sainthood (wilayat-i mutlaq). Mulla Muhsin identifies absolute prophethood with the light of Mohammad, and absolute sainthood with the light of ‘Ali. The prophethood of all prophets depends upon absolute prophecy as the sainthood of all saints depends upon absolute sainthood. Prophethood began with Adam and found its completion in Prophet Mohammad. Sainthood will reach its completion gradually until it culminates in the 12th Imam, the Mehdi. Absolute prophethood is the treasure of all possible perfections and the whole cosmos in the expansion and manifestation of its inner qualities.⁹⁴

Gnosis and illumination are themselves the fruit of the tree of prophethood. Mulla Muhsin insists that the source of Hikmat was originally the sacred spirit of the prophets; this wisdom, however, was misunderstood and misinterpreted by men of the later period, i.e. the Peripatetics and other later schools of Greek philosophy, and was revived only in the light of the revelation of the Prophet of Islam and his family. He who wishes to be initiated into it must, therefore, seek the aid of the prophets and saints and this can be achieved only by invocation and meditation and the purification of the heart. Only he who has trodden this path and become a true Hakim can be considered the real heir to the saints and the prophets.⁹⁵

Mulla Mohammad Baqir Majlisi

One cannot terminate a study of the intellectual life of the Safawid period without mentioning the two Majlisis, father and son, especially the son Mohammad Baqir who stands as one of the outstanding figures of the period. The first Majlisi, Mohammad Taqi (1003/1594 - 1070/1659), was one of the students of Sheikh-i Baha’i and an outstanding theologian and Sufi of his time.⁹⁶ His son, the second Majlisi (1037/1628 - 1110/1699), however, surpassed his father in fame and power and became the most dominant figure of Shi’ism. Having studied with his own father, Mulla Khalil Qazwini and Mulla Muhsin Faid, he in turn became the master of over a thousand disciples including Sayyid Ni‘matullah Jaza’iri, well known for his many writings, especially the account of his own life as a student.

The second Majlisi is especially famous for revivifying the various branches of the Shi‘ah sciences and for assembling the writings of the earlier doctors of Shi‘ism and prophetic hadith into encyclopaedias which have henceforth become the main reference for all who undertakes religious education in the Shi‘ah madrasahs. The most important and famous of these is the Bihar al-Anwar summarized in the Safinat al-Bihar of Sheikh ‘Abbas Qumi, the lithographed edition of which occupies 24 volumes: Haqq al-Yaqin in Usul, Hayat al-Qulub, a commentary upon the Mir’at al’Uqul, a 12 volume commentary writing career enters into purely intellectual (‘aqli)

questions and treats of many essential religious subjects, especially eschatology and the conditions before the appearance of Mehdi, from an intellectual rather than a purely “confessional” point of view.⁹⁷

Of special interest in the religious life of Persia is Majlisi’s opposition to Sufism and even the denial that his own father, the first Majlisi, was a Sufi.⁹⁸ Furthermore, supported by the Court and many of the theologians and doctors, he opposed the intellectual method of the Hakims and philosophers with the result that both the Sufis and the Hakims fell into disgrace and had a lot of difficulty in official religious circles. The dynasty which had begun as the extension of Sufi order ended by opposing all Sufism and gnosis itself. It was not long after the death of the second Majlisi in fact that the Safawid dynasty itself fell before the Afghans, and Ispahan, the historic as well as the symbolic centre of this period of great intellectual activity was sacked and its libraries burnt.

D. Conclusion

This form of wisdom or Hikmat, some features of which we have sought to outline here, did not die with the termination of the Safawid dynasty. In the 13th/18th century Sufism was revived in Persia by Ma’sum ‘Ali Shah and Shah Tahir Dakani, two Ni’matullahi masters sent by Rida’ ‘Ali Shah from the Deccan to Persia. It was persecuted for a period but began to expand with the establishment of the Qajars. Likewise, the school of Hikmat continued through the students of Mulla Sadra and others from one generation to another until it produced Sheikh Ahmad Absai’i, the founder of the Sheikh movement,⁹⁹ Haji Mulla Hadi Sabizwari, and several other outstanding figures in the Qajar period, the light of whose teachings has not yet disappeared from the horizon of Persia. One can hardly understand the intellectual life of Islam in its totality without taking into account this last major period of Muslim intellectual activity, lasting from the Safawid period to the present, to the understanding of which we hope this chapter will serve as an introduction and as an incentive for further exploration.

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Notes

1. A few authors like Gobineau, Donaldson, and E. G. Browne have touched upon certain aspects of Shi'ism in their writings. The only European author, however, who has delved with serious intention into the Shi'ah intellectual world is Henri Corbin, who during the past 20 years has done much to introduce the rich heritage of Shi'ism, especially as it has developed in Persia, to the Western world.

2. For the meaning of this word which denotes wisdom refer to the chapter on Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi Maqtul.

3. Sheikh Safi (647/1249 - 735/1334), one of the most important of Shi'ah Sufi saints, is still greatly respected by the Sufis, his tomb in Ardibil has remained until today an important place of pilgrimage. Being the disciple of Sheikh Zahid Gilani he was already a significant figure in his own day as testified by the biographical works like the Safwat al-Safa' by ibn Bazzaz, and Rashid al-Din Fadl Allah's letters to the saint and to the governor of Ardibil in his Munsha'at-i Rashidi. See also E. G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, vol 4, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1924, Chap. 2.

4. For a history of the Safawid period, see E. G. Browne, op. cit., vol 4; L. Lockhart, The Fall of the Safawid Dynasty and the Afghan Occupation of Persia, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1958, and the traditional sources of which some of the more important include the Safawat al-Safa' by ibn Bazzaz, Ahsan al-Tawarikh by Hassan Baik Rumlu, Zubdat al-Tawarikh by Mohammad Muhsin ibn 'Abd al-Karim, and the universal history Nasikh al-Tawarikh by Mriza taqi Sipih.

5. The purpose of theology is to protect the truth of a revelation against false reasoning; its role is, therefore, defensive. It is the shell which protects the inner spiritual life, not that life itself. If there were no danger of rationalism and false reasoning, there would be no need for theology. We, therefore, see theology coming into being with rationalistic philosophy, and where there is no tendency toward rationalism, there is no theology as this word is currently understood.

6. For a discussion of the meaning of ishraqi wisdom, refer to the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtul.

7. The reason why the pre-Safawid sages of Persian like 'Ali Turkah Ispahani and ibn Abi Jumhur as well as the Safawid authors themselves have been neglected in the Western world, is that the quality of their wisdom is primarily gnostic ('irfani) like that of Sheikh al-Akbar Muhyi al-Din ibn 'Arabi by whose doctrines they were all influenced, that like him they can be understood neither by the rationalistic philosophers nor by the mystics as they have come to be understood since the Renaissance.

8. For the name of some of these Arab Shi'ah scholars, see E. G. Browne, op. cit., vol. 4, Chap. 8.

9. The science of Usul as an independent science has grown into monumental proportions only in the past few centuries reaching its height in the hands of Sheikh Murtada Ansari, the famous doctor of the Qajar period, who only a century ago made Usul into a science matching Kalam in its logical subtleties.

10. Shi‘ah theology reached its height in the seventh/13th century in the hands of men like Khuwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi and ‘Allamah-i Hilli.

11. See the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtul. Generally, Hikmah in Arabic or Hikmat in Persian means wisdom in addition to the particular sense given to it as a divine science.

12. For the series of commentators and expositors of ishraqi wisdom, see the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtul.

13. It is unfortunate that in books treating of the relation between faith and reason in Islam like A. J. Arberry’s *Revelation and Reason in Islam*, London, 1957, most of these authors are not taken into serious consideration.

14. For an account of the doctrines of ibn ‘Arabi, see T. Burekardt (Tr), *La sagesse des prophetes*, Paris, 1955; also idem, *Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*, tr. M. Matheson, Sh. Mohammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1959, which is an excellent general introduction to ibn ‘Arabi’s school of Sufism. See also Corbin, *L’imagination creatrice dans la souflame d’Ibn ‘Arabi*, Flammarion, Paris, 1958, which contains some useful chapters on his ideas and their spread in the east.

15. See S.M. Sadr, *Sheikh ‘Ala al-Daulah Simnani*, Danish Press, Teheran, 1334/1915.

16. This great Persian Sufi poet and sage has written several well-known summaries of ibn ‘Arabi’s doctrine including the *Lawa’ih* translated by Whinfield and Qazwini, Luzac & Co., London, 1928, the *Asha’at al-Lama’at*, and the *Naqd al-Nusus*.

17. The *Kitab al-Mujli* of ibn Abi Juhur and *Jami’ al-Asrar* and *Jami’ al-Haqa’iq* of Mulla Haidar ‘Ali Amuli are among the most important sources of Shi‘ah gnostic doctrines.

18. The best traditional sources for these earlier Shi‘ah authors are the *Raudat al-Jannat* of Mohammad Baqir Khunsari, lithographed edition, Teheran, 1306/1888; *al-Dhari‘ah* of Agh Buzurg Tihrani, al Gharra Press, Najaf 1355/1936 on; the *Tarikh-i Alam Ara-yi Abbasi* of Iskandar Baig Munghi, Teheran, 1334/1915; and of more recent composition the *Raihanat al-Adab* of Mohammad ‘Ali Tabrizi, Sa‘di Press, Teheran, 1331 - 33 Solar; the *Qisas al-‘Ulama’* of Mirza Mohammad Tunikabuni, Islamiyyah Press, Teheran, 1313 Solar; *Fihri-i Kutub-i Ihada’i Aqa-yi Mishkat* by M.B. Danish Puzhuh, University Press, Teheran, 1335/1916; see als H. Corbin, “Confession extatiques de Mir Damad” in the *Melanges Louis Massignon*, Institut Francais de Dames, Damas, 1955, pp. 331 - 78.

19. See Corbin, op. cit., pp. 333ff.

20. His name should not in way be connected with the heterodox Baha’i movement of the 13th/19th century.

21. For an account of the life and works of Sheikh-i Baha’i, see *Tarikh-i ‘Alam Ara-yi ‘Abbasi*, pp. 155 - 57; also Naficy, *Ahwal wa Ash‘ar-i Farsi-i Sheikh-Baha’i*, Eqbal Press, Teheran, 1316/1898.

22. Sheikh-i Baha’i is said to have built a bath house name Gulkan which had always had hot water without any fuel being used in it. When it was pulled down, people discovered a single candle burning under the water tank.

23. This book on mathematics which helped greatly in reviving the study of the mathematical sciences in Persia was a standard text-book for centuries and has been commented upon several times and translated into Persian by Mohammad Amin Najafi Hijazi Qumi and into German by G. H. F. Nesselmann who published the text and the translation in Berlin in 1843. Sheikh-i Baha’i revived the study of mathematics and astronomy in Persia after 100 years of neglect, having himself learned these sciences in Herat.

24. For a list of the nearly 90 works attributed to him, see his *Kulliyat-i Ash‘ar-i Farsi*, ed. M. Tauhidiput, Mahmudi Press, Teheran, 1336/1917, pp. 42 - 45.

25. *Ibid.*, pp 164 - 66.

26. Intoxication symbolizes ecstasy and spiritual union.

27. Maulan Jala’i al-Din Rumi is commonly referred to as Maulawi in Persian. This verse refers to Maulawi’s well-known rejection of rationalism in favour of gnosis. (The leg of rationalist is a wooden leg...).

28. Love symbolizes gnosis or the science which comes through contemplation and illumination rather than analysis and discursive thought.
29. Reference is to the famous theologian Imam Fakhr al-Din Razi.
30. This verse is in Arabic and is repeated immediately with only a little change in Persian.
31. That is, he is like a beast of burden.
32. Reference is to the wisdom of the Sufis are contrasted with that of the Greeks, the Hikmat-i Imani and the Hikmat-i Yunani.
33. The Prophet Mohammad (upon whom be peace).
34. Sheikh-i Bhah'i, Kulliyat..., pp. 18 - 19.
35. This theme appears in certain Hermetic writings, the Acts of Thomas, the Grail story, as well as in Islam in the visionary narratives of ibn Sina and many of Suhrawardi's gnostic tracts like Qissah Ghurbat al-Gharbiyyah; see H. Corbin, *Avicenne et le recit visionnaire*, Institut Franco-iranien, Teheran, and A. Maisonneuve, Paris, 1952 - 54, vol. 1, chap. 3, and Suhrawardi, *Oeuvres philosophiques et mystiques*, vol. 2, Institut Franco-Iranien, Teheran, and A. Maisonneuve, Paris, 1954, Prolegomene by H. Corbin.
36. Sheikh-i Baha-i, Kulliyat..., p. 23.
37. A city in the south of Arabia with which the name of the Queen of Sheba is associated.
38. La makan, meaning beyond the world of cosmic manifestation. Suhrawardi refers to this point which is the top of the cosmic mountain Qaf, as na kuja abad; see Suhrawardi, "Le bruissement de l'aile de Gabriel," tr. H. Corbin and P. Kraus, *Journal Asiatique*, Juillet-Sept., 1935, pp. 41 - 42.
39. For an account of the life and writings of Mir Damad, see M. Tunikabuni, *Qisas al-'Ulmaa*, pp. 333 - 35; *Raihanat al-Adab*, vol. 4, pp. 117 - 21; *Raudat al-Jannat*, pp. 114 - 16; *Tarikh-i 'Alam Ara-yi 'Abbasi*, pp. 146 - 47; *Danish Pazhuh, Fihrist...*, Vol. 3, 1, p. 152 and the good Introduction of his life and thought by Corbin, "Confessions extateiques de Mir Damad," pp. 340ff.
40. It is said that he had a lot of interest in the life of the bees and had accumulated a good deal of observational data about them.
41. For an account of these and other students of Mir Damad, see H. Corbin, op. cit., pp. 345 - 46.
42. The "Yamani philosophy" means the wisdom revealed by God to man through the prophets and through illumination; Yaman (Yemen) symbolizes the right or oriental (Mashriqi) side of the valley in which Moses heard the message of God. It is, therefore, the source of divine illumination in contrast to the Occident, the source of Peripatetic philosophy, the Occident symbolizing darkness and being on the plane of philosophy, i.e. rationalism. See. H. Corbin, *Le recit d'initiation et l'hermetisme en Iran*," *Eranos Jahrbuch*, vol. 17, 1949, pp. 136 - 37. For the symbols of the orient and Occident in ishraqi wisdom see the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtul.
43. This major work has been commented upon several times. One of its most curious commentaries is that of Mohammad ibn 'Ali Rida ibn Aqajani, one of the students of Mulla Sadra; it runs over a thousand pages.
44. These last two works are among the important books on Hikmat in Persian, the others being in Arabic. Some manuscripts attribute Sidrat al-Muntaha to Mir Damad's student, Sayyid Ahmad 'Alawi, although in the *Jadhawat Mir Damad* refers to this work as being his own. In any case it is a product of his school.
45. For a translation and discussion of this work, see H. Corbin, op. cit., pp. 350ff.
46. See for example the *Shifa'* or *Najat* of ibn Sina and the *Kitab al-Mu'tabar* of Abu-Barakat al-Baghdadi. In some cases as in the *Danish Nameh-i Ala'i* of ibn Sina and many later ishraqi writings, the book begins with metaphysics and then proceeds to natural philosophy in the manner of Plato rather than Aristotle.
47.
See Mir Damad, *Qabasat*, Sheikh Mahmud Burujirdi, Shiraz, 1315/1897.

48. For a general discussion of this question, see L. Gardet, *La pensee religieuse d'Avicenne*, J. Vrin, Paris, 1951, pp. 38ff, and A. K. Coomarasawany, *Time and Eternity*, Artibus Asiac, Ascona, 1947, Chap. 4.

49. Mir. Dmad, *Qabasat*, pp. 1 - 10.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

51. Mir Damad argues that time itself is the measure of the movement of the heavens and a condition for the existence of this world so that one cannot speak of a time before the creation of the world; *Qabasat*, p. 20.

52. For a comparison and affinity of these ideas with those of ibn 'Arabi, see *La sagesse des prophets*, Chapters One and Two.

53. In presenting this view of creation, Mir Damad draws heavily on earlier writings from Plato's *Timaeus* and the so-called *Theology of Aristotle* to the *Shifa'* of ibn Sina and the *Kitab al-Mu'tabar* of Abu al-Barakat. In each case he also criticizes the view of the previous writers who considered the world either to be eternal in itself or created in time from outside. Mir Damad's *Risalah fe Madhhab Aristatalis* is devoted to a discussion of the difference between the views of Plato and Aristotle on the question time and eternity drawing on Farabi's *Kitab Jam' bain al-Ra'yain*. Mir Damad's treatise is published on the margin of the *Qabasat*, pp. 140 - 57.

54. The *Jadhawat* (Bombay, lithographed edition, 1302/1884, pp. 203) begins with a poem in praise of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib the first lines of which are as follows:

Oh herald of the nation and the soul of the Prophet,
The ring of thy knowledge surrounds the ears of the intelligences.
Oh thou in whom the book of existence terminates,
To whom the account or creation refers
The glorified treasure of the revelation,
Thou art the holy interpreter of its secrets.

55. Suhrawardi also divides the angelic world into the longitudinal and the latitudinal orders, a division the influence of which upon Mir Damad is easy to discern. On the question of angelology the Safawid sages remained faithful to the ishraqi scheme combined with that of ibn Sina. See the chapter of Suhrawardi *Maqtul*.

56. The natures refer to the warm and cold, wet and dry, and the elements to the four traditional ones, fire, air, water and earth.

57. Mir Damad and Mulla Sadra, unlike Aristotle and his followers, posit some form of matter in every degree of formal manifestation.

58. Mir Damad mentions that there are 1,400 species of animals, 800 belonging to sea and 600 belonging to land.

59. *Jadhaudat*, pp. 2 - 13.

60. *Ibid.*, pp. 13 - 18.

61. *Ibid.*, pp. 18 - 28..

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 28ff.

63. In discussing *tauhid*, Mir Damad draws not only on ibn Sina and Suhrawardi but even on the *Nahj al-Balaghah* of the first Shi'ah Imam, the *Sahifah-i Sajjadiyyah* of the fourth Imam and other Shi'ah sources. He regards Pythagoras as the Imam of the Seitic sages (*Hukama-i Sami*) and one who received his wisdom through revelation. This view going back to Philo is held among the great majority of the Muslim sages and historians of philosophy.

64. *Jadhawat*, pp. 38ff.

65. This intermediary region plays an important role in the thought of Mulla Sadra and even more in the writings of Sheikh Ahmad Asha'i, the founder of the *Sheikhis* who still survive in Kerman.

66. These are two famous mythical cities through which initiates pass in their journeys and they appear often in initiatic narratives in Persian.

67. *Jadhawat*, pp. 54 - 63.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 103. In the same work, p. 92, the last part of which is wholly devoted to the important traditional Muslim science of *jafr*, he considers numbers to be the principles of beings, the illumination from the intelligible world, the "Michael of the degree of

existence” and adds that if a person acquires all the knowledge of numbers he will gain complete knowledge of the physical world. This view is very close to that of Pythagoras and his school. See Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, Book 5. In both cases number is not just the quantity of modern mathematics, but a “personality,” an entity which possesses a definite qualitative aspect. For the notion of the Pythagoreans, see H. Keyser, *Akroasis*, Verlag Gert Jatje, Stuttgart, 1947.

70. For a profound study of this subject as developed before Mir Damad, see S. T. Burckhardt, *La cle spirituelles de l’astrologie musulmane d’apres Ibn ‘Arabi*, Editions Traditionelle, Paris, 1950.

71. The other two are Sheikh-i Baha-i and Mir Damad who were close friends of Mir Findiriski and shared with him the respect and honour of the Safawid Court. For an account of the life of Mir. Findiriski whose complete name is Mir Abu al-Qasim ibn Mirza Baik Husain Findiriski, see *Raihanat al-Adab*, vol. 3 pp. 231 - 32.

72. The story is told of him in most biographies that one day Shah ‘Abbas, trying to admonish him for mixing with the common people, said, “I hear some of the leading scholars and sages have been attending cock-fights in the bazaar.” Mir Findiriski, knowing that the remark was meant for him, replied, “Your majesty, rest assured, I was present but I saw none of the ‘ulama’ there.” See *Riyad al-‘Arifin*, p. 276.

73. The text of this qasidah and the commentary by Khalkali have been published in Teheran, lithographed edition, 1325/1907. This verse means the celestial archetypes of Platonic ideas and their earthly reflections or shadows.

74. Reference is to Farabi and ibn Sina, the two early masters of masha’i philosophy in Islam.

75. “Qualities” means multiplicity of forms which become evident only when light shines upon them.

76. The later Muslim authors following ibn Sina divide reality into the Necessary Being (*wajib al-wufud*), the possible being (*mumkin al-wufud*) and the being that is impossible (*mumtani‘ al-wujud*).

77. All the arguments begin because each side considers only one aspect of the Truth. But those who are “complete,” that is, have a vision of the totality of the Truth, never enter into arguments.

78. Mir Findiriski, *Raisaleh-i Sand‘iyyah*, Sa‘adat Press, Teheran, 1317 Solar.

79. *Ibid.*, pp. 13 - 54.

80. Mir Findiriski adds that all the Greek philosophers before Aristotle were saying the same thing in different languages and that if one is instructed in the secrets (*rumuz*) of Hikmat, Hindu wisdom, and the Theology of Aristotle (i.e. the *Enneads* of Plotinus), all the different expressions will have the same meaning for him.

81. Mir Findiriski mentions Mazdak as the person who by a false interpretation of the Avesta preached the communization of women and property. He also mentions Carmathians (*Qaramitah*) as belonging to this group.

82. Mulla-i Lahiji, known as Fayyad author of several important treatises on Hikmat in Persian and Arabic mentioned already, deserves a separate study as one of the major figures of this period. There are brief accounts of him in E. G. Browne, *op. cit.*, vol 4, pp. 408 - 09, 435. See also the introduction by Sayyid Mohammad Mishkat to the new edition of *al-Mahajjat al-Baida‘*, vol. 1, Islamiyyah Press, Teheran, 1380 Solar, in which the significance of Faid’s doctrines and in particular the present work on ethics is discussed.

83. See Mulla Muhsin Faid-i kasha, *al-Mahajjat al-Baida‘ fi Ihya‘ al-Ihya‘*, four volumes, Islamiyyah Press, Teheran, 1380 - 81 Solar, in which in ten sections he deals with Sufi ethics based on Shi‘ah sources but following closely the model of *Ihya‘*.

84. The *Raihanat al-Adab*, vol. 3, pp. 242 - 44, mentions 120 works by him. For the account of Mulla Muhsin’s life and writings, consult also *Qisas al-‘Ulama‘*, pp. 322 - 33, and *Riyad al-‘Arifin*, pp. 388 - 89.

85. Mulla Muhsin Faid, *A‘inih-i Shahi*, Musawi Press, Shiraz, 1320/1902, p. 5.

86. *Kalimat-i Maknunah*, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1316/1898. Henceforth, our reference to this work will be to this edition.

87. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

88. For an explanation of these terms see Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Being and Its polarisation," *Pakistan Philosophical Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 2, October 1959, pp. 8 - 13. In the general discussion among the Hakims as to whether these essences (or Being) are principal, Mulla Muhsin sides with the school of isalat-i wujud, the principality of Being, and considers the mahiyat to be the accidents of Being. This question has been dealt with in the chapter of Suhrawardi Maqtul.

89. *Kalimat-i Maknunah*, pp. 31ff. Mulla Muhsin describes these stages also as the 'ilm al-yaqin, in which one "sees" nothing but the divine essence names, and acts; the 'ain al-yaqin, in which one "sees" nothing but the essence and names, and the haqq al-yaqin in which there remains only the divine ipseity.

90. See T. Burckhardt, *Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*, pp. 64ff.

91. This term should not be taken in its negative connotation; it has a positive meaning in Sufi cosmology and marks an intermediate stage between the sensible world and the spiritual world. See H. Corbin, *Imagination creatrice...*, Chap. 2.

92. *Kalimat-i Maknunah*, p. 61.

93. *Ibid.*, pp. 74 - 75.

94. *Ibid.*, pp. 167ff.

95. *Ibid.*, pp. 214 -19.

96.

Raihanat al-Adab, vol. 3, pp. 460 - 62. The *Mar'at al-Ahwal-i Jahan Numa'* by Ahmad ibn Mohammad Baqir Ispahani Bihbahani is devoted to his life and works.

97. For the writings and life of the second Majlisi, see *Raihanat al-Adab*, vol. 3, pp. 455 - 60; *Danish Pazuh, Fihrist...* vol. 5, p. 1137. The *Faid-i Qudsi* by Mirza Hussain Nuri is devoted completely to his life and writings. Majlisi wrote 13 Arabic and 55 Persian books with altogether occupy nearly a million and a half lines.

98. He devoted a treatise, the *'Itiqadat*, to rejecting Sufism.

99. Sheikh Ahmad is responsible for the last important religious movement within Shi'ism and should be studied separately as a founder of a particular sect. The leaders of this sect called the Sheikhs claim to have knowledge of all things, and so each of them from the time of Sheikh Ahmad to the present has composed a large number of treatises on all the sciences., For a list of the works of Sheikh Ahmad and other leaders of the Sheikhs, see Abu al-Qasim ibn Zain al-'Abidin ibn Karim, *Fihrist-i Kutub-i Marhum- Ahsu'i wa Sa'r-i Mashayikh-i 'Izam*, two vols. Sa'adat Press, Kerman, 1337,Solar.

Chapter 48: Sadr al-Din Shirazi

Sadr al-Din Shirazi (Mulla Sadra)¹

A. Life and Works

The intellectual activity revived in Persia during the Safawid period, some features of which we have discussed in previous chapters, “The School of Ispahan,” found its culmination in Sadr al-Din Shirazi known to his compatriots as Akhund Mulla Sadra and to his disciples as simply Akhund or as Sadr al-Muti’allihin, i.e. the foremost among the theosophers. This figure, about whom the whole intellectual life of Persia has revolved in the past three and half centuries and who is one of the major expositors of Islamic intellectual doctrines in the Shi’ah world, has remained until today almost completely unknown outside Persia, even in other Muslim countries. Many have heard of his name, and nearly all travellers to Persia since the Safawid period, who have been interested in the intellectual life of the country, have recognized his importance have been impressed by his fame,² yet no one outside a group of his disciples in Persia, who have kept his school alive until today, has done justice to his doctrines in presenting them to the world at large.

Mulla Sadra, whose complete name is Sadr al-Din Mohammad, was born in Shiraz in about 919/1571,³ the only son of Ibrahim Shirazi. A member of the famous Qawam family of Shiraz, Ibrahim held the post of a vizier and was a powerful political and social figure in his native city. The young Sadr al-Din exhibited his exceptional intelligence from childhood and was given the best possible education in Shiraz.

Having completed his early studies, he became intensely interested in the intellectual sciences (al-‘ulum al-‘aqliyyah), especially metaphysics, and, therefore, left Shiraz for Ispahan which was at that time the capital and major seat of learning in Persia. In Ispahan he studied first with Baha’ al-Din ‘Amili, learning the transmitted sciences (al-‘ulum al-naqliyyah) from him and later with Mir Damad who was his most famous master in the intellectual sciences.⁴ Within a few years he became himself a recognized master in all the branches of formal learning especially in Hikmat⁵ in which he soon surpassed his own teachers.

Not satisfied simply with formal learning, Mulla Sadra left the worldly life in general and retired to a small village named Kahak near Qum where he spent 15 years in asceticism and purification of his soul until, as he claims in his introduction to the Asfar, he became endowed with the direct vision of the intelligible world. He now came to “see” through illumination (ishraq) what he had previously learned theoretically from books.

Having reached both formal and spiritual perfection, Mulla Sadra returned once again to the world. Meanwhile, Allahwirdi Khan, the Governor of Shiraz, had built a large madrasah and invited Mulla Sadra to return to Shiraz as the head of the new school. Akhund accepted the offer and returned to his native city, making the school of Khan the major centre of intellectual sciences in Persia.⁶ He remained there until the end of his life spending the last period of his terrestrial existence entirely in teaching and writing.

Despite his extreme piety which is shown by the fact that he made the pilgrimage to Mecca seven times on foot - he died in Basrah in 1050/1640 during the seventh journey - Mulla Sadra was often molested by some of the exoteric 'ulama' who could not accept his gnostic interpretation of the doctrines of the faith and who denounced him publicly on more than one occasion. It was only the influence of his powerful family that made it possible for him to continue his teaching activities.

Mulla Sadra's life, then, can be divided into three distinct periods: the period of childhood and schooling in Shiraz and Ispahan, the period of asceticism near Qum at the end of which the composition of the *Asfar* was begun, and the period of teaching and writing which represents the result and fruition of the other two periods. His life is itself the testimony of one of the main aspects of his wisdom, that in order to be effective theoretical knowledge must be combined with spiritual realization.

The writings of Mulla Sadra, nearly all of which were composed in the last period of his life, are almost without exception of great merit and have been among the main sources from which the later generations of theologians, philosophers, and gnostics have drawn their inspiration. All his writings concern religious sciences or metaphysics, theodicy or *Hikmat*,⁷ and are in a very clear and fluent style making them more easily understandable to the reader than the writings of his predecessors like Mir. Damad.⁸ Since Mulla Sadra's writings are nearly completely unknown outside Persia, we take this opportunity to list the works which, according to the leading living authorities and the best historical evidence, were written by him.⁹

The works dealing with metaphysics and intellectual sciences include: *al-Asfar al-Arba'ad*, *al-Mabda' w-al-Ma'ad*, *Sirr al-Nuqtah* (possibly not authentic), *al-Shawahid al-Rububiyah*, his most lucid and masterly work, *al-Hikmat al-'Arshiyah*, glosses upon the *Hikmat al-Ishraq* of Suhrawardi Maqtul, commentary (sharh) upon the *Hidayah* of Athiri,¹⁰ glosses upon the metaphysical parts of *ibn Sina's Shifa'*, *Fi Ittihad al-'Aqil w-alMa'qul*, *Fi Ittisaf al-Mahiyyah w-al-Wujud*, *Fi Bad' Wujud al-Insan*, *Fi al-Tasawwar w-al-Tasqid*, *Fi al-Jabr w-al-Tafwid*, *Fi Huduth al-'Alam*, *Fi Hashr*, *Fi Sarayan al-Wujud*, *fi al-Qada' w-al-Qadar*, *Fi Tashakhkhus*, *al-Masa'il al-Qudsiyyah*, *Iksir al-'Arifin*, *al-Waridat al-Qalbiyyah*, *al-Qawa'id al-Malakutiyyah*, *Hall al-Mushkilat al-Falakiyyah*, introduction to *'Arsh al-Taqdis* of Mir Damad, *al-Mazahir*, glosses upon *Rawashih al-Samawwiyyah* of Mir Damad, *Khalq al-A'mal*, *Kasr al-Asnam al-Jahiliyyah*, *al-Mizaj*, *al-Ma'ad al-Jismanim*, *Tanqiyah in logic*, diwan of poems in Persian, and answers to various questions on philosophy.

The works that are primarily concerned with the religious sciences include the Qur'anic commentary: *Mafatih al-Ghaib*, *Asrar al-Ayat*, commentary upon a large number of the verses of the Qur'an, commentary upon a few prophetic Ahadith fi Imamah, glosses upon the Qur'anic commentary of Baidawi, glosses upon the Khwaja Nasir al-Din al-Tusi and upon Qushji's commentary upon the *Tajrid* (of doubtful authenticity), glosses upon the commentary of the Lum'ah, commentary upon the *Usul al-*

Kafi of Kulaini, one of the four major sources of Shi'ah Law,¹¹ Mutashabih al-Qur'an, and a Persian treatise called Sih Asl on the soul and its destiny.¹²

Mulla Sadra composed also several quatrains in Persian, a few of which are mentioned in the traditional sources and some appear in his own handwriting on the first page of his commentary upon the Hidayah.¹³ They deal mostly with the Sufi doctrine of the unity of Being (wahdat al-wufid), which may be considered to be the central theme of Mulla Sadra's doctrinal formulations. For example, in one of the quatrains he says,

The Truth is the spirit of the universe and the universe of the body,
And the orders of the angels are the senses of the body,
The heavens, elements, and compounds are its organs,
Lo! Unity is this, and the rest nothing but rhetoric.

In dividing the writings of Mulla Sadra into the intellectual and the religious ones, we do not in any way wish to imply that these two categories are completely separated in his view. On the contrary, one of the major achievements of Mulla Sadra consisted in uniting and harmonizing religion and the intellectual sciences. All of his works, even in philosophy, are replete with the Qur'anic verses in support of his conclusions, and all of his religious works, even the Qur'anic commentaries, are full gnostic and intellectual interpretations. One can only say that some of Akhund's writings are concerned more with religious questions and others more with intellectual ones.

Likewise, among the above-mentioned works some are more gnostic in character and others are presented in a more discursive language, although they all bear the fragrance of gnostic doctrines. Among writings which are of a more gnostic vein one may mention al-Shawahid al-Rububiyah, al-'Arshiyah, Asrar al-Ayat, and al-Waridat al-Qalbiyyah, and among those which are presented in a more discursive language are the Sharh al-Hidayah and the commentary upon the Shifa'.

Without a doubt the most important work of Mulla Sadra is the Asfar al-Arba'ah. It is comparable in dimension and scope to the Shifa' and the Futuhat al-Makkiyyah and in a way stands midway between the Peripatetic encyclopedia of ibn Sina and the compendium of esoteric sciences of ibn 'Arabi. The title of Asfar itself has been the cause of much difficulty to the few Orientalists who are acquainted with the book. The word Asfar is the broken plural for safar meaning journey as well as sifr meaning "book" from the Hebrew sefer. So it was that Gobineau considered the work to be a series of four books."¹⁴

Both views are, however, erroneous. Actually, asfar means journeys but not the account of travels in the ordinary sense of the word as Gobineau understood it to be. As Mulla Sadra himself mentions in his introduction to the book, the Asfar consists of the following four stages or journeys of initiatic realization (suluk): (1) the journey of the creature or creation (khalq) towards the Creator or the Truth (Haqq), (2) the journey in the Truth with the Truth, (3) the journey from the Truth to creation with the Truth, and (4) the journey with the Truth in the creation. This monumental work is, therefore, an account of the stages of the journey of the gnostic, systematized in a logical dress.

In content, the first book of the Asfar deals with Being and its various manifestations, the second with the simple substances, i.e. the intelligences, souls, and bodies and their accidents including, therefore, natural philosophy, and the third with theodicy, and the fourth with the soul, its origin, becoming and end. All these topics are treated in detail taking into account the voluminous.¹⁵ In a sense, this vast opus is the culmination of a thousand years of contemplation and thought by Muslim sages as well as the foundation of a new and original intellectual perspective which issues forth from within the matrix of the Muslim tradition.

B. Sources of Mulla Sadra's Doctrines

According to Mulla Sadra, there are two forms of knowledge: that derived from formal instruction (al-'ilm al-suwari) and that which comes from intellectual intuition (al-'ilm al-ladunni). The first is acquired in school with the aid of a teacher, and the second based upon a greater degree of certainty than the first, is the science possessed by the prophets and saints through the purification of the soul and the catharsis (tajrid) of the intellect.¹⁶ There are then, according to this view, two sources for Mulla Sadra's ideas, one formal and in a sense historical, i.e. manifested in history before him, and the other spiritual and invisible. Regarding this second source, which may be called his "guardian angel" or "hidden Imam," the source of all inner illumination, we have little to say except to emphasize its importance in Mulla Sadra's view.

It was the first category that we are primarily concerned here. There are five principal elements which are clearly detectable in the new analysis brought about by Mulla Sadra; they are also found, though less explicitly, in the doctrines of the Safawid sages before him. These elements include the philosophy of Aristotle and his followers, the doctrines of the Neo-Platonic sages, especially Plotinus whose Enneads the Muslims considered to be a work of Aristotle, the teachings of ibn Sina, the gnostic doctrines of ibn 'Arabi, and the principles of the Islamic revelation, especially the more esoteric teachings of the Prophet and the Shi'ah Imams.¹⁷

Among these sources the last two are of particular importance. Mulla Sadra created a new school of Hikmat, on the one hand, by putting the intuitions of the gnostics and especially of ibn 'Arabi and his followers into a logical dress and, on the other hand, by drawing out the philosophical and metaphysical implications of the teachings of the Imams especially as contained in the Nahj al-Balaghah, creating thereby for the first time what may be called a distinctly Muslim school of Hikmat based especially upon the inspired doctrines which form the very basis of Shi'ism.

Mulla Sadra, like Suhrawardi, held in great esteem the pre-Socratic philosophers and sages of Greece, both historical and mythological, and regarded Thales, Anaximander, Agathedemon, Empedocles, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle as the last group of sages in the ancient world to have possessed wisdom in its entirety. He, like many other Muslim Hakims, considered Greek philosophy not to have started with Aristotle but to have ended with him and believed all the later Greek sages to have been masters of various arts and sciences other than metaphysics.¹⁸

For Mulla Sadra, therefore, Greek philosophy was essentially the wisdom of the Hebrew prophets inherited, systematized, and later in part forgotten by the Greeks, a wisdom which was integrated into the Muslim intellectual perspective and brought to full fruition in the light of the Islamic revelation. That is why Mulla Sadra wishes to reject some aspects of the teachings of either the Peripatetics or the Illuminationists he appeals so often first to the Qur'an and the Hadith and then to those fragmentary sayings of the pre-Socratic philosophers with which the Muslims were acquainted.

C. Mulla Sadra's Method and the Characteristics of His School

The particular genius of Mulla Sadra was to synthesize and unify the three paths which lead to the Truth, viz. revelation, rational demonstration, and purification of the soul, which last in turn leads to illumination. For him gnosis, philosophy, and revealed religion were elements of a harmonious ensemble writings. He formulated a perspective in which rational demonstration or philosophy, although not necessarily limited to that of the Greeks, became closely tied to the Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet and the Imams, and these in turn became unified with the gnostic doctrines which result from the illuminations received by a purified soul.¹⁹

That is why Mulla Sadra's writings are a combination of logical statements, gnostic intuitions traditions of the Prophet, and the Qur'anic verses. Through the symbolic interpretation of the sacred text he demonstrated the gnostic quality of the esoteric meaning of revelation and through intellectual intuition he made rational and discursive thought subservient to the universal truths of gnosis. In this fashion he achieved that synthesis of science and revelation in the light of gnosis and in the general perspective of Islam towards which Farabi and ibn Sina - the latter particularly in his Qur'anic commentaries - had aimed and which Ghazli, Suhrawardi and the whole chain of sages extended from the Saljuq to the Safawid period had sought to achieve from various points of view.²⁰

In metaphysics or, more generally speaking, Hikmat itself, Mulla Sadra is credited with founding the third major school of Muslim "philosophy," the first two being the Peripatetic school, the greatest exponent of which in the Islamic world was ibn Sina, and the Illuminationistic or ishraqi school founded by Suhrawardi Maqtul.²¹ Mulla Sadra adopted certain principles from each school as, for example, the hylomorphism from the Peripatetics and the gradation of Being and the celestial archetypes from the Illuminationists. Moreover, he added certain principles drawn from the teachings of the Sufis like ibn 'Arabi such as the continual becoming of the substance of the world and unity of Being which had never appeared as principles of any school of Hikmat and were never systematized in the logical language of the Hakims before Akhund's time. That is why Mulla Sadra is often credited with founding a new and original form of wisdom in the Muslim world is usually called al-Hikmat al-Muti'aliyyah as distinguished from al-Hikmat al-Masha'iyah (Peripatetic philosophy) and al-Hikmat al-Ishraqiyyah (Illuminationist theosophy).²²

D. Division of the Sciences

Before discussing the basic features of Mulla Sadra's doctrines it is useful to consider his conception of the relation of the sciences to one another and especially the meaning and significance accorded to Hikmat. In the introductory chapter of the *Asfar*, he divides the sciences, following the Peripatetics, into theoretical wisdom consisting of logic, mathematics, natural philosophy, and metaphysics and practical wisdom consisting of ethics, economics and politics.²³

In the treatise *Iksir al-'Arifin*, he outlines a somewhat more complete and in a way more original division of the sciences.²⁴ According to this scheme, the sciences ('ulum) are either of this world (*dunyawi*) or of the other (*ukhrawi*). The first is divided into three categories: the science of words ('ilm al-aqwal), the science of acts ('ilm al-af'al) and the science of states of contemplation or thought ('ilm al-ahwal or afkar).

The science of words comprises the sciences of the alphabet, word-construction, syntax, prosody, poetics, and the meanings of terms in logic. The science of acts consists of what belongs to various material objects from which the arts of weaving, agriculture, and architecture come into being, what is of a higher degree such as the art of writing, the science of mechanics, alchemy, etc, what belongs to providing a living for the individual and the society from which the sciences of family, law, politics, and the Shari'ah are created, and, finally, what belongs to the acquisition of spiritual and moral virtues and the casting away from evil from which the "science of the path" ('ilm al-tariqah), i.e. Sufism, comes into being. As for the science of thought, it consists of the sciences of logical demonstration, the science of arithmetic, the science of geometry including astronomy and astrology, and the sciences of nature including medicine and the various sciences dealing with minerals, plants, and animals.

The sciences of the other world which are not accessible to the ordinary intelligence of men and are not destroyed with the death of the body include the knowledge of angels and intellectual substances, the knowledge of the Preserved Tablet (*lauh al-mahfuz*), and the knowledge of the Exalted Pen (*al-qalam al-a'la*), i.e. of the divine decree and of the first determination of the divine essence which Mulla Sadra, following the earlier Sufis, calls also by the name of the reality of Mohammad (*al-haqiqat al-Mohammadiyah*). These sciences also include the knowledge of death, resurrection, and all that pertains to life hereafter.²⁵

Among the pursuits with which man can occupy himself in this life, none stands in as exalted a position as Hikmat the divisions of which we have outlined above. And among its branches none is as important and principled as metaphysics or the science of the principle of things, so that this branch of knowledge alone is often considered worthy of being called Hikmat. Mulla Sadra defines this science as "coming to know the state of the essence of beings as they are, to the extent of human capacity" or " a man's becoming an intellectual world (microcosm) corresponding to the objective world (macrocosm)," or, to quote still another definition, "the comprehension of universals and catharsis from the world of matter."²⁶

The above definitions imply that Hikmat is a purely intellectual form of knowledge in which the knower himself undergoes a certain transformation

in the process of knowing and his soul becomes a mirror in which the cosmic hierarchy is reflected. With such a conception then it is no wonder that Mulla Sadra spent so much of his life in teaching and writing about Hikmat only and regarded all the other sciences as its subsidiaries.

E. Principles of Mulla Sadra's Doctrines

In discussing the basic principles of Hikmat as understood and expounded by Mulla Sadra, we have chosen to mention those major principles of his thought which distinguish him from his predecessors and which are the characteristic elements of his metaphysics. The doctrines of the Peripatetic and Illuminationistic schools as well as the ideas of ibn 'Arabi and his followers form the common background for the metaphysics of Mulla Sadra.

There are four topics in each of which Mulla Sadra has departed from earlier philosophical perspectives and which form the principles of his whole intellectual vision. These four subjects concern (1) being and its various polarizations, (2) substantial motion or the becoming and change of the substance of the world, (3) knowledge and the relation between the knower and the known, and (4) the soul, its faculties, generation, perfection and final resurrection. We shall consider these questions in the above mentioned order, emphasizing in each case the particular complexion given to these subjects by Mulla Sadra.

1. Unity and Polarization of Being

The cornerstone of Mulla Sadra's doctrines is the principality and the unity and gradation of Being. As we have already mentioned,²⁷ one of the major points of contention among Muslim philosophers and theologians concerned the question whether Being or the quiddities (mahiyat) of things are principal. We saw that the Muslim Peripatetics like the Sufis believed in the principality of Being, i.e. the objective reality of Being independent of mental abstractions and considered the quiddities to be nothing but accidents, while the Illuminationists beginning with Suhrawardi Maqtul and followed by Mulla Sadra's own teacher, Mir Damad, developed a "metaphysics of essences" and held the opposite view that existence is an accident and that the essences are principal. In this debate Mulla Sadra sided definitely with the Peripatetics and Sufis in accepting the principality of Being, and opposed the Illuminationists.

On the question of unity and gradation of Being, however, Mulla Sadra departed from peripatetic teachings completely. In the view of the Muslim Peripatetics the being of each thing is in essence different and distinct from other beings while it is principal with respect to its own quiddity. According to Akhund, however, Being is the same reality in all realms of existence, it is a single reality but with gradations and degrees of intensity. Just as we say the light of the sun, the light of a lamp, or the light of a glow-worm and mean the same subject, i.e. light, but with different predicates, i.e. under different conditions of manifestation, so in the case of Being, the being of God, of a man, of a tree, or of a heap of earth are all one Being or one reality but in various degrees of intensity of manifestation.²⁸

Moreover, Being, no matter where it manifests itself, appears always with its attributes or armies ('asakir), as they are traditionally called, such as knowledge, will, power, etc.²⁹ A stone, because it exists, is a manifestation of Being and, therefore, has knowledge, will, power, and intelligence like men or angels. However, since at the level of a stone the manifestation of Being is very weak, these attributes are hidden and not perceptible.³⁰

The various beings in the world of manifestation are limitations of the one reality or Being. These limitations are abstracted by the mind and become the forms of quiddities (mahiyat) of things, and when transposed into the principle domain, they become the Platonic ideas or archetypes. Unlike Being which is objectively real and in fact is the reality of the cosmos, the mahiyat are accidents of Being abstracted by the mind without having a reality independent of Being. Even the archetypes (al-a'yan al-thabitah) possess a form of Being which in this case is God's knowledge of them.

What distinguishes the earthly manifestation of things from their celestial archetypes is not a gradation of the mahiyat from more subtle to more gross modes of existence, as certain followers of the Illuminationist school believe. Rather, it is the intensity of Being which determines the level of existence of each creature. If the light of Being shines upon the form or quiddity of a man with a greater intensity than now, he will become the man of the intermediate world (barzakh) and if the intensity is greater still he will become the celestial man identified with his heavenly archetype.

Absolute Being itself, which is the proper subject for metaphysics, is above all limitations and, therefore, above all forms or mahiyat, above all substances and accidents. It is the "Form of forms" and the Agent of all acts. By manifesting Itself longitudinally (tuli) It brings into being the various orders of Being from the archangels to terrestrial creatures and by manifesting itself latitudinally ('ardi) It creates the various members of each order of Being.³¹ Being is the reality of all things so that the knowledge of anything is ultimately the knowledge of Its being and, therefore, of Being itself. Likewise, the archetypes exist eternally through God's knowledge without which they would have no share whatsoever in Being.

Since Being is unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in unity,³² it partakes of logical distinctions and divisions while remaining in essence indivisible and above all polarizations. Mulla Sadra goes into great detail about the various divisions and categories of Being and in fact most of the first book of the Asfar is concerned with them. We mention here a few of the division which Akhund discusses with great rigour in his writings, especially in the monumental Asfar.

One division of Being is into connective being (al-wujud al-irtibati) and self-subsistent being (al-u'ujud al-nafsi). Connective being is that which connects a subject with a predicate as in the statement, "Man is a rational animal." Self-subsistent being is one which stands independently by itself and is not simply the means of connecting two terms. This category of being which exists in itself is in turn divided into three kinds: that which is objective existence is not the quality of something else and is called substance (jauhar), that which is the quality of something else and is called

accident (‘ard), and, finally, that which has need of no cause outside itself, i.e. the Being of God. From another point of view Mulla Sadra considers the being of all things other than God to be the connective being (wujud al-rabit) and only the Being of God to be Being per se.³³

Another division of Being adopted by Mulla Sadra is that of the necessary (wajib), possible (mumkin), and impossible (mumtani‘) beings which nearly all the Muslim philosophers and many theologians coming after ibn Sina and following his example, have accepted.³⁴ If the intellect considers a being and finds that the meaning of being is essential to it, i.e. lies in its essence, and that there are no causes outside it which have brought it into being, that being is called the Necessary Being. If it has need of a cause outside itself it is called possible being. Moreover, the attribute of possibility pertains to its quiddity as well as to its being. The possibility of its quiddity concerns its relation to its particular being, and the possibility of its being pertains to its relation to the Necessary Being. The being or existence of each object, therefore, depends upon the being of God and the knowledge of anything upon the knowledge of the root or principle of its own being. Since the root or basis of the Necessary Being is unknowable, the knowledge of the being of things remains also unknowable to us and it is only the quiddities or mahiyyat which we can know.

These quiddities, as already mentioned, are the limitations placed upon being and abstracted by the mind. The intellect in perceiving any object immediately analyses it into being and quiddity, the latter consisting of the limit determination of the former. It is only in the case of the Divine Being that such an analysis cannot be made because Absolute Being has no mahiyyah. One can say that It is without mahiyyah or that Its Being and mahiyyah are identical.

The quiddities in themselves are only mental concepts without a separate objective existence so that the effects produced by things come from their being and not from their quiddity. Likewise, cause and effect are categories of being which in one case becomes the cause and in the other the effect of things.

The mahiyyat are either particular or universal; the latter either exist before or are abstracted by the intellect from particulars.³⁵ The universals which exist independently of all particulars are the archetypes of Platonic ideas upon the reality of which Suhrawardi Maqtul had insisted against the view of the Peripatetics. Mulla Sadra likewise criticizes Aristotle and ibn Sina for considering the Platonic ideas to be nothing but the forms of things impinged upon the divine intellect. He insists upon the reality of the archetypes in a spiritual world that is completely independent of the world of particulars as well as of all mental images formed in the human mind.³⁶

Akhund praises Suhrawardi Maqtul and accepts fully the reasons he had given for the existence of the Platonic ideas or “masters of the species” (arbab al-anwa‘). There is a spiritual man in the spiritual world who is the real cause for the activities and ontological qualities of the terrestrial man; likewise in the case of other species each has an intelligible idea or archetype which governs all the activities and life of that species on earth.

The archetype is in essence one with its particulars but differs from them in characteristics which arise from the substance or “matter” of the particulars. The archetype appears different in each stage (taur) of manifestation while in the realm of reality it is one and the same truth. The beings of this world are the reflections and shadows of the archetypes so that they are like them and share in their reality and at the same time are different from them in being less real and farther removed from the source of Being.

One of the principles for which Akhund is famous is called imkan al-shraf or “the possibility of that which is superior.” According to this principle, just as each being in treading the path of perfection passes through various stages from the lowest to the highest, so it is necessary that for each imperfect being in this world there be degrees of being in the higher stages of the cosmic hierarchy, since each being has descended from the divine Principle through intermediate states of being. For example, the being of man on earth in his present state of imperfection necessitates the being of man in the intermediary world of souls, and the latter the being of the spiritual man in the intelligible world. According to this principle, therefore, the very existence of quiddities in their earthly state of souls or the world of inverted or reflected forms (al-amthal al-mu‘allaqah) and these in turn necessitate their existence in the spiritual world of simple intellectual substances.

After showing the mahiyyat are in reality limitations of being, Mulla Sadra goes on to assert that the logical distinction made by Aristotle and all the later philosophers between substance and the accidents which together form the ten categories concerns only the mahiyyat; Being properly speaking, is neither substance nor accident but above both. When we say of a thing that it is such and such a substance or that its particular quality and quantity are its accidents we refer only to its mahiyyah and not to its being.

The relation of cause and effect, however, contrary to that of substance and accidents, concerns only the being of things.³⁷ All things in the universe have a cause and an effect and since everything is a manifestation of Being, every effect is but an aspect of its cause and cannot in essence differ from it. That is why the well-known principle that from unity only unity can issue forth, *ex uno non fit nisi unum*, must be true. From the divine essence which is simple and one, only a simple being can issue forth. Mulla Sadra calls the first manifestation of the divine essence extended being (*wujud al-munbasit*), the first intellect, the sacred effusion (*faid al-muqaddas*) or the Truth of truths (*haqiqat al-haqa’iq*) which he considers to be one in essence but partaking of degrees and stages of manifestation.³⁸

He divides reality into three categories: of the divine essence, of “Absolute Being” which he identifies with extended being, and of relative being which that of the creatures is.³⁹ The cause of all things, therefore, is extended being which in turn the first determination of the divine essence. God is, thus, the Cause of causes and the Ultimate Source of all effects to be seen in the universe, because all causes and effects arise from the beings of things and all beings are in reality the stages of the One Being.

To terminate our discussion of the polarizations of Being in cosmic existence we must also consider the question of form and matter. On this question Mulla Sadra sides with the Peripatetics and is against the Illuminationists in accepting the theory of hylomorphism. In his view, however, matter is not limited to the corporeal domain. Rather, it is the aspect of potentiality which manifests itself in all the realms of existence according to the conditions of that particular realm. Bodies have a matter belonging to the corporeal world, and souls (anfas), a matter conformable to the subtle world of the psyche, moreover, in each world matter is a lower degree of being of the form with which it is united and for that reason accompanies it in all realms of existence until the highest realm which is the world of pure intelligences (mujarradat). That is why, as Akhund expresses it, matter has love for form which forever compels it to seek union with it (form). Only in the intelligible world, which is also called the 'alam al-jabarut, are the spiritual realities completely separated from and free of all species of matter, even the most subtle.

2. Substantial Motion

The question of potentiality leads to that of motion because motion, as Aristotle said, is becoming actual of that which is potential. Mulla Sadra rejects the possibility of sudden change from one substance to another which the Peripatetics accepted along with gradual change. Rather, he considers all change to be a form of motion and introduces the idea of substantial motion (al-harakat al-jauhariyyah),⁴⁰ which is another of the well-known principles associated with his name, as a basis of his whole outlook from which he goes on to prove the creation of the world in time, bodily resurrection and many other doctrines that will be discussed in the course of this chapter.

It is well known that the Muslim Peripatetics, following Aristotle, limited motion to only four of the ten categories, i.e. quantity (kam), quality (kaif), place (makan), and substance,⁴¹ the last understood only in the sense of generation and corruption. Ibn Sina rejected completely substantial motion in any sense other than instantaneous coming into being and passing away and argued that since the essence of a thing depends on its substance, if that substance were to change; its essence would also change and lose its identity.⁴²

Following the Sufis, Mulla Sadra considered the world to be like a stream of water which is flowing continually and believes motion to be nothing but the continuous regeneration and re-creation of the world at every instance.⁴³ According to him, it is not only the accidents but the substance of the universe itself that partakes of motion and becoming, i.e. continuous re-creation and rebirth.⁴⁴ In order to prove this assertion, Akhund makes use of several arguments. For example, he writes that it is an accepted fact that accidents have a need of a substance upon which they depend for their being and properties. Their subsistence depends upon the subsistence of their substance and their creation and regeneration upon its creation and regeneration. Therefore, every change which takes place in the accidents of a body must be accompanied by a corresponding change in the substance; otherwise the being of the former would not follow the being of

the latter. Or, in other words, since the effect must be the same as its cause, the cause or substance of a changing accident must itself be changing.

In addition, it is known that all beings in the universe are seeking perfection and are in the process of becoming and change in order to overcome their imperfections. Since divine manifestation never repeats itself, God creates new theophanies at every moment in order to remove imperfections and bring new perfections to things. The matter of each being, therefore, is continuously in the process of wearing a new dress, i.e. being wed to a new form, without, however, casting away its older dress. It is only the rapidity of this change that makes it imperceptible and guarantees the continuity and identification of a particular being through the stages of substantial motion.

According to Mulla Sadra, each body consists of matter and two forms: one, the form of the body which gives matter dimensions and the possibility of accepting other forms, and the other the form of the species (surah nau'iyah) which determines the species and identity of the body. Each of these two forms is at every instant changing, and matter is taking on new forms at every moment. Moreover, at each stage of substantial change the totality of a being which itself consists of form and matter may be considered to be the matter of the aspect of potentiality for the next stage the actualized aspect of which then becomes the form.

The power or force which motivates this change in nature which is a force hidden within the cosmic substance. In fact, since Being comes before nothingness, motion in this world comes before rest through the force immanent in the cosmos. Needless to say, this motion is limited to the degrees of cosmic existence in which matter is present, i.e. to corporeal and subtle manifestation, and does not extend to the world of pure intelligences or archetypes which are beyond all change.

Substantial motion itself has also the two aspects of change and permanence. Each form has two faces, one in the world of archetypes and the other in nature, the first permanent and the second in continuous renewal. The substance of the world itself is, therefore, the intermediary between permanence and change; it possesses two aspects, one which is continuously in motion and the other, which Mulla Sadra identifies with the intelligences, above all change.

Time, for Akhund as for Aristotle, is the quantity of motion, which, in a world of continuous substantial motion, becomes an inherent feature of cosmic existence.⁴⁵ It is, more specifically, the measure of the substantial motion of the heavens but not the measure of their rotation as held by the Peripatetics. The heavens, according to Mulla Sadra, are in continuous contemplation of the perfection of their beloveds, i.e. the universal intellects which at every instant cause a new form to be projected upon the essence of the universal souls. The cause of celestial motion is, therefore, the desire to reach perfection, a goal which, because of its limitlessness, makes celestial motion endless. The heavens are in continuous creative worship, their motion being a sign of their contemplation of the divine by means of the intelligences, and their causing generation and growth in nature through their illumination being a sign of their act of creation. The whole world,

therefore, both in its gross and subtle domains, partakes of substantial motion, and time is the measure of this motion as it occurs in the heavens where it is most regular as well as regulatory.⁴⁶

Mulla Sadra makes use of the principle of substantial motion to explain many of the most intricate problems of metaphysics and physics including the relation between permanence and change which we have already mentioned, the creation of the world, the creation of the soul, and various eschatological questions. This principle can, therefore, be regarded as one of the distinguishing features of his doctrinal formulation.

As to the question of creation Akhund opposes the simple creation ex nihilo of the theologians who believe the world to have been brought into being in time from utter nothingness. Likewise, he rejects the view of the Peripatetics who believe the world to have been created only in essences or in principio but not in time and the view of Mir Damad about al-huduth al-dahri.⁴⁷ Mulla Sadra believes that creation is in time (al-huduth al-zamani) because through substantial motion the being of the universe is renewed at every moment or, more explicitly; that the world is created at every instant, so that one can say that the being of the world depends upon its non-being at a previous moment. Where he differs from the theologians is that his conception of creation ex nihilo is complementary to the view that the archetypes of the world of creation exist changelessly in the intelligible world and that the world is connected with its divine origin through a permanent hierarchy.

This hierarchy begins with the first determination of the essence which Akhund, following the Sufis, calls the reality of Mohammad.⁴⁸ This is followed by the pure intelligences which are completely separated from matter and potentiality, the last of which is the giver of forms to the universe and the governor of the world of generation and corruption.⁴⁹ This last intellect is like a mill that grinds out new forms at every moment to feel the hyle of the world. It governs the world according to divine decree and gives revelation to prophets an inspiration to saints. Following the intelligible hierarchy there is the world of cosmic imagination or inverted or reflected forms or the purgatory between the intelligible and the material domains and, finally, the visible universe. The world is, therefore, created in time in the sense that its being is renewed after a moment in which it “was not”; at the same time it is the terminal state of an immutable hierarchy which through the subtle and angelic realms of being relates the visible cosmos to its divine source.

3. Divine and Human Knowledge

From what we have already said, it is clear that for Mulla Sadra knowledge forms the very substance of cosmic manifestation itself and is moreover the gate to and means of salvation for the soul. Like all other gnostics Akhund considers knowledge and being, or, from another point of view, the knower and the known,⁵⁰ to be essentially the same and identifies the being of things with God’s knowledge of them.⁵¹ God knows His own essence and His essence is none other than His being, and since His Being and essence are the same, He is at once the knower, the knowledge, and the known.

In the case of pure intellects or forms that are completely divorced from matter also, the intellect and the intelligible are the same, the difference in the two instances being that, although knowledge of the intellects is identical with their being, it is not identical with their quiddities, since their being surpasses their quiddities, whereas in the case of God's knowledge is identical both with Being and quiddity, since God's quiddity is the same as His Being.⁵²

Mulla Sadra rejects the Peripatetic notion that God's knowledge of things is the projection of their forms upon His essence as well as the idea followed by many Illuminationists that God's knowledge is the presence of the very forms of things in His essence. Rather, he uses the gnostic symbol of a mirror and considers the divine essence a mirror in which God sees the forms or essences of all things and in fact, through the contemplation of these forms or archetypes in the mirror of His own essence, He brings all things into being. Moreover, since the forms of all creatures, universal as well as particular, are reflected in His essence, God has knowledge of every particle of the universe.⁵³

Mulla Sadra divides knowledge ('ilm) into acquired (husuli) knowledge and innate (huduri) knowledge and, like the Illuminationists, divides the latter category into the knowledge of a thing in itself, of a cause of its effect, and of an effect of its cause. Perception is for him a movement from potentiality to actuality and an elevation in the degree of being in which the perceiver or knower rises from his own level of existence to the level of existence of that which is perceived through the union between the knower and the known which characterizes all intellection.

As for acquired knowledge or the knowledge of the human soul of things other than itself, it is not a reflection of the forms of things upon the soul and the soul does not have a passive role in the act of knowing. Rather, since man is a microcosm composed of all degrees of existence, his knowledge of things comes from the contemplation of these forms in the mirror of his own being much like divine knowledge with the difference that God's knowledge leads to objective existence (al-wujud al-'aini) of forms, while man's knowledge leads only to their mental existence (al-wujud al-dihni). Otherwise, man's soul has a creative power similar to that of God; its knowledge implies the creation of forms in the soul - forms the subsistence of which depends upon the soul as the subsistence of the objective universe depends upon God.⁵⁴

According to Mulla Sadra, mental existence or the presence in the mind of forms that yield knowledge of things as well as knowledge of itself is above the categories of substance and accidents and is identical with Being Itself. The knowledge that the soul has of things is just like the illumination of the light of Being. This knowledge established the form of that which is perceived in the mind, as Being establishes and manifests the forms and quiddities of things externally. Moreover, it repeats in an inverted order the degrees of cosmic manifestation. Just as cosmic existence originates from the divine essence through the world of the intelligences and consists of the degrees of cosmic souls, bodies, forms, and matter, so knowledge begins from the senses, then rises to the level of the imagination, apprehension, and

finally intellection ascending the scale of Being to the summit from which the whole of universal manifestation has descended.

4. Soul, Its Origin, Becoming and Entelechy

Another of the important changes which Mulla Sadra brought about in the formulation of Hikmat was the emphasis he laid upon the importance of psychology or the science of the soul ('ilm al-nafs) above and beyond what Peripatetic philosophy had accorded to it. Moreover, he removed the discussion of psychology from physics or natural philosophy and made it a branch of metaphysics and a study that is complementary to the science of the origin of things.⁵⁵

The soul (nafs), according to Mulla Sadra, is a single reality which first appears as the body (jism) and then through substantial motion and an inner transformation becomes the vegetative soul, then the animal soul, and finally the human soul. This development occurs from within the substance of the original body without there being any effusion from the heavenly souls or the active intellect.⁵⁶ The substance of the human sperm is at first potentially a plant, and then as it grows in the womb it becomes actually a plant and potentially an animal. At birth, it is actually an animal and potentially human, and finally at the age of adolescence it is actually human potential either an angel or a disciple of the devil.⁵⁷

All these stages lie hidden within the first substance or germ which through substantial motion traverses the degrees of being until it becomes completely divorced from all matter and potentiality and enjoys immortality in the world of pure intelligences.⁵⁸ The soul is, therefore, brought into being with the body but it has spiritual subsistence independent of the body.⁵⁹ Or, to be more precise, the soul at the beginning "is" the body which through inner transformation passes through various stages until it becomes absolutely free from matter and change.

The soul in each stage of its journey acquires a new faculty or set of faculties. As a mineral it has the faculty of preserving its form and as a plant, the faculties of feeding, growth, and the transformation of foreign substances into its own form. As an animal the faculties of motion and various forms of desire are acquired, and as a higher animal it develops in addition to the external senses the inner faculties of memory and imagination.⁶⁰ Finally, in man the five inner faculties: sensus communis (hiss al-mushtarik) which perceives forms, apprehension (wahm) which perceives meanings, fantasy (khayal) which preserves forms, memory (dhakirah) which preserves meanings and the double faculty of imagination (mutakhayyilah), and thought (mutafakkirah) which in the first case governs the sensible and in the second the intelligible domains, are also acquired.⁶¹

Throughout its development it is the same single soul which in one case appears as sight, in another as memory, and in yet another as desire. The faculties are not something added to the soul but it is the soul itself, or, in a more esoteric sense, being itself which appears in various forms in each case.⁶² The soul passes through this stream of becoming - this world - and the parts of its course are marked by the archetypes or Platonic ideas that distinguish one species from another. It wears a new dress and a new guise

at each point of the stream but the traveller is throughout one and the same.⁶³

Although the enumeration of the inner faculties of Mulla Sadra is essentially the same as that made by previous Muslim authors borrowing it from Aristotle, there is one point in which Mulla Sadra departs from the Peripatetics completely. It is well known that Aristotle considered only the universal intellect to be immortal and the Muslim Peripatetics like ibn Sina accorded immortality only to the intellectual part of the human soul. Mulla Sadra, following certain Sufi and hermetic teachings, asserts that the faculty of imagination enjoys also a form of immortality or at least existence independent of the body. He considers the universe to consist of three domains: the intelligible world, the sensible world, and an intermediate world (barzakh) of imagination which is macrocosmic as well as microcosmic.

The faculty of imagination in man as well as in some of the higher animals is, according to Akhund, a microcosmic counterpart of the cosmic imagination and has the power of creating forms. Upon the death of the body, this faculty, like the intellectual part of the soul, enjoys a form of life of its own and may in fact lead the soul to the intermediate world if it is the dominant element in the soul.

Mulla Sadra, like other Sufis, compares the soul to the cosmos on the one hand and to the Qur'an on the other, identifying the higher states of being of the soul with the esoteric meanings of the Qur'an.⁶⁴ There are seven degrees of existence for the soul as there are seven heavens and seven levels of interpretation of the Qur'an. These degrees he enumerates as nature (tab'ah), soul (nafs), intellect ('aql), spirit (ruh), secret (sir), hidden secret (khafi), and the most hidden state (akhfa) which is that of perfect union with God.⁶⁵ Each corresponds to a state of being, the totality extending from the life of nature or the senses to the divine life of union with God.

According to Mulla Sadra from another point of view the soul has two faculties, the practical ('amali) and the theoretical ('ilmi or nazari), which the latter at first is dependent upon the former but later becomes completely independent. The practical faculty consists of four stages: making use of the Law (Shari'ah) of various religions sent to guide mankind, purifying the soul from evil qualities, illuminating the soul with spiritual virtues and the sciences, and finally, annihilating the soul in God, beginning with the journey to God and then in God and finally with God.⁶⁶

As for the theoretical faculty it, too, is divided into four stages: the potential or material intellect ('aql al-hayulani) which has only the capability of accepting forms, habitual intellect ('aql al-malakah) which knows only simple and preliminary truths such as the truth that the whole is greater than its parts, the active intellect ('aql bi al-fi'l) which no longer has need of matter and concerns itself solely with intellect demonstrations and is either acquired or bestowed as a divine gift and finally the acquired intellect ('aql al-mustafad) which is the active intellect that has been united with the divine origin of all existence and is the highest degree attainable by man and the purpose of cosmic existence. These stages are also road-marks upon the path trodden by the soul without implying any form of multiplicity; the soul

remains the one traveller traversing all these stages on the road to perfection, the fruit and end of which is union with God.

Mulla Sadra deals with eschatology in great detail in many of his works and departs completely from the usual philosophical language in the treatment of this subject. His language is primarily that of the Qur'an and the hadith and of the gnostics. According to Akhund, the relation of this world to the next is like that of the mother's womb to this world. While the child is in the mother's womb he is actually in this world as well, but being separated from this world does not know of its existence. Likewise, man, while in this world is also in the next but the majority of people are unaware of the invisible world. Only the gnostics "see" the other world while they are here on Earth and that is because for them terrestrial existence has become transparent.

Akhund divides cosmic being into five classes each of which has a destiny and an end proper to its nature:⁶⁷ the pure intelligences separated from all potentiality, the intelligences which govern the heavens, the various psychic entities belonging to the world of the imagination such as the jinn and certain parts of the human soul, animal and vegetable souls, and, finally, minerals and elements. The separated intelligences subsist forever in the divine essence and are never separated from it. As for the rational soul (al-nafs al-natiqah), it is either perfect, as the souls of the heavens and of some men, and, in both cases, returns to God, or else it is imperfect. In the latter case it is either devoid of all desire for perfection as in the animals and those human beings who have committed much evil in this life, or it is desirous of perfection like many persons who, having chosen the wrong path, realize their mistake and wish to be guided towards the Truth.

In the former case the soul, like other psychic entities belonging to the intermediary world, after separation from the body becomes united with the forms of the intermediary world of imagination ('alam al-mithal);⁶⁸ in the latter case the soul suffers after its separation from the body until it is finally purified and united with God.

Plants are either used as food by men and animals and, therefore, share in their destinies, or have an independent existence, in which case, after the end of their terrestrial existence, they join their archetypes in the world of pure forms. Likewise with minerals and the elements, they too become united with their intelligible counterparts after their terrestrial existence terminates. In fact, these terrestrial beings are united with their archetypes even while they are on Earth, but only the gnostics are aware of this reality.

As for man's bodily resurrection on the Last Day, Mulla Sadra considers it to be one of the great mysteries of metaphysics revealed only to those who have reached the highest stage.⁶⁹ He accepts bodily resurrection which he interprets in a particular fashion. It is known that man's individuality and distinguishing characteristics come from his soul and not from his body because the substance of the body changes every few years without in any way destroying the unity of human beings. Of the faculties of the soul, however, intellection and imagination are innate to it, while the vegetative and animal faculties such as the external senses and passions are received by it through the body.

According to Akhund, in the next world all souls will receive the power to create external forms as prophets and saints do here in this world. For example, each soul can create the pleasure received through sight from within itself without the need of what appears to us here as an external organ. In other words, the organs of the body which appear as “external” to the soul are created from within the soul in the next world so that the resurrection of the soul is really complete with body according to all the meanings we can give to the word “body.”

Difference between paradise and hell lies in that the souls in paradise have the power to bring into being all the forms that are beautiful and pleasant, all the flowers and houris of paradise, while the impure souls in hell have only the power to bring into being ugly and unpleasant forms and are in fact forced to suffer by the very forms they will have created. Mulla Sadra adds, however, that ultimately the pains suffered in the inferno will come to an end and, as ibn ‘Arabi had said, the fires of hell will freeze and all will return to the divine origin of things.⁷⁰

F. Significance of Mulla Sadra and His Influence

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the importance of Mulla Sadra lies not only in rekindling the lamp of learning and reviving the intellectual sciences fully for the first time in the Muslim World after the Mongol invasion, but also for uniting and harmonizing revelation, gnosis, and philosophy together. Some authors have criticized Mulla Sadra for taking certain principles from ibn ‘Arabi, Farabi, and Suhrawardi Maqtul and have, therefore, refused to accept his “originality.” But as Aristotle has said so justifiably, there is nothing new under the sun. One cannot create metaphysics of one’s own as if the metaphysics were a mechanical invention. The principles have always been and always will be the same. What determines the originality of author in a traditional civilization like that of Islam is his ability to re-interpret and reformulate the eternal verities in a new light and thereby create a new intellectual perspective.

Regarded in this way, Mulla Sadra must certainly be considered to be one of the most significant figures in the intellectual life of Shi‘ah Islam. Coming at a moment when the intellectual sciences had become weakened, he succeeded in reviving them by co-ordinating philosophy as inherited from Greeks and interpreted by the Peripatetics and Illuminationists before him with the teachings of Islam in its exoteric and esoteric aspects. He succeeded in putting the gnostic doctrines of ibn ‘Arabi in a logical dress. He made purification of the soul a necessary basis and complement of the study of Hikmat, thereby bestowing upon philosophy the practice of ritual and spiritual virtues which it had lost in the period of decadence of classical civilization. Finally, he succeeded in correlating the wisdom of the ancient Greek and Muslim sages and philosophers as interpreted esoterically with the inner meaning of the Qur’an.

In all these matters he represents the final stage of effort by several generations of Muslim sages and may be considered to be the person in whom the streams, which had been approaching one another for some centuries before, finally united.⁷¹

More specifically, Mulla Sadra was able to harmonize his doctrinal formulation with the teachings of Islam in such a way as to over-come all the major difficulties which the Peripatetic philosophers met in the face of the teachings of the Qur'an and for which al-Ghazālī criticized them so severely.⁷² Of particular significance was his divorcing metaphysics to a large extent both from Ptolemaic astronomy and Aristotelian physics. While in Europe, Galileo, Kepler, and Newton were destroying the homogeneity of Aristotelian cosmology and physics and in this way weakening the medieval Christian world-view which was closely linked with it, Mulla Sadra, through his doctrine of substantial motion and through considering the science of the soul to be independent of physics, separated metaphysics to a large extent from medieval natural philosophy.

This separation, although perhaps not of immediate significance in the 11th/17th century Persia, which was still immune from European ideas, became of great importance in the later centuries. As the modern scientific world-view became more and more accepted in Persia during the Qajar period, the separation brought about by Akhund between metaphysics and natural philosophy helped to preserve the traditional wisdom in the face of attacks by modernists whose only weapon was modern scientific theories connected with the world of matter. In this way also, Akhund rendered great service to the Muslim intellectual sciences and helped their preservation until today.

There is no doubt that nearly the whole of the intellectual life of Persia during the past three and half centuries has centred on Mulla Sadra. Of his immediate students, Mulla Muhsin Fa'id, 'Abd al-Razzaq Lahiji, and Qadi Sa'id Qumi, all of whom are among the leading figures of Shi'ah Islam, we need say little here for they have already been discussed in a previous chapter.⁷³ It need only be added that these men in turn produced a generation of students who extended the teachings of Akhund far and wide.⁷⁴ In the Qajar period, after a short interim of anarchy caused by the Afghan invasion, the school of Mulla Sadra was once again revived, the most famous of its members being Jaji Mulla Hadi Sabziwari, Mulla 'Ali Nuri, author of one of the most important commentaries upon the Asfar, Sheikh Ahmad Ahsai'i, founder of the Sheikhi movement and the commentator upon Mulla Sadra's Masha'ir, Mulla 'Ali Mudarris Zunuzi, author of a significant work Bada'i' al-Hikam in Persian and glosses upon the Asfar, and Mohammad Hidaji, also the author of a commentary upon the Asfar.⁷⁵

The influence of Akhund is to be met with wherever the traditional school of Hikmat is still preserved and taught in Persia.⁷⁶ All the adherents of this school have regarded Mulla Sadra as their master and it is no exaggeration to say that Akhund stands along with Farabi, ibn Sina, al-Ghazālī, Nasir al-Din Tusi, Suhrawardi Maqtul, and ibn 'Arabi among the principal formulators of the Muslim intellectual sciences and, though not well known outside Persia, is no less a figure than his more famous predecessor.⁷⁷ In him the many spiritual streams of the earlier centuries met and united in a new river which has watered the intellectual soil of Persia

during the past four centuries; his teachings are as alive today as they were at the time of their formulation.

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Notes

1. This chapter has been written with the invaluable help of Hajj Mohammad Hussain Tabataba'i, one of the leading authorities on the school of Mulla Sadra in Iran today, the author of the 20-volume Qur'anic commentary al-Mizan and the editor and commentator of the new edition of the Asfar.

2. Comte de Gobineau, one of the most observant of travellers who has visited Persia during the past few centuries, was quite aware of Mulla Sadra's significance although not quite well acquainted with his ideas, for in a well-known passage he writes, "Le vrai, l'incontestable metite de Moulla Sadra reste celiui pue j'ai indique plus haut: c'est d'avoir ramine, rejeuni, pour le temps ou il vivait, la philosphie antique, en lui conservant les moins possible de ses forms avicenniques..." Gobineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie central*, Les Editions G. Gres et Cie, Paris, 1923, p. 102.

3. The date of Mulla Sadra's birth was unknown until quite recently when in preparing the new edition of the Asfar, Tabataba'i collected a large number of handwritten manuscripts of the work. On the margin of one of the manuscripts dated 1197/1782 with marginal notes by Mulla Sadra himself, the authenticity of which cannot be doubted, there appears this statement, "This truth was revealed to me on Friday, the seventh of Jamadi al-Ula 1037 A.H. when 58 years had passed from (my life)..." Therefore, the date of his birth can be established as 979/1571 or 980/1572.

For the traditional accounts of the life of Mulla Sadra and his works, see M.B. Khunsari, *Raudat al-Jannat*, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1306/1888, vol. 2, pp. 331 - 32; M.A. TABRIZI, *Raihanat al-Adab*, Sa'di Press, Teheran, 1331/1912, vol. 2, pp. 458 - 61; Mir Khwand, *Raudat al-Safa*, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1270/1853, vol. 8, p. 120; T. Tunikabuni, *Qisas al-'Ulama'*, 'Ilmi Press, Teheran, 1313/1895, pp. 329 - 33, and Agha Buzurg Tihrani, *al-Dhari'ah al-Gharra* Press, najaf, 1355/1936, on dealing with various writings of Akhund.

As for secondary sources see M. Mudarrisi Chahardihi, *tarikh-i Falasifih-i Islam*, 'Ilmi Press, Teheran, 1336 Solar, vol, 1, pp. 179ff; A. A. Zinjani, *al-Filsuf al-Farsi al-Kabir Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi*, al-Mufid Press, Damascus, pp. 212 - 18, no. 3, 1951, pp. 318 - 27; J. 'Ali Yasin, *Sadr al-Din al-Shrazi Mujaddid al-Falsifat al-Islamiyyah*, al-Ma'arif Press, 1375/1956, and the introduction by M.R. mazaffar, in the new edition of the Asfar, *Da'ir al-Ma'arif al-Islamiyyah*, Qum 1378/1958.

For an account of the life and doctrines of Mulla Sadra in European languages, see Gobineau, *op. cit.*, pp. 91 - 103; E. G. Browne, *A Literary history of Persia*, University Press, Cambridge, 1924, Vol. 4, pp. 429 - 30; and m. Horten, *Die Philosophie des Islam*, Verlag Ernst Rheinhardt, Munchen, 1924, pp. 57ff. Also Browne, *A year Amongst the Persians*, Adam & Charles, London, 1950, pp. 141 - 43.

4. Concerning Baha' al-Din 'Amili and Mir Damad, see the preceding chapter.

To know the names of the masters of a Hakim is important because learning Hikmat from "within" is impossible without a master for the majority of even of those who are gifted to pursue it. One can learn certain ideas from books alone but to really understand what Hikmat means and what the various authorities meant by various expressions there is a need of a master who himself learned the doctrines from another master and so on going back to the early masters. The Hakim is, therefore, as insistent upon the authenticity of his chain of masters as a verifier of hadith is about the ismad of a tradition or a Sufi master about the isilsilahi or chain of his tariqah.

5. We have already discussed in detail in previous chapters the meaning of this term as used here, i.e. a combination of gnosis, illuminationist and Peripatetic philosophy which is neither theology nor philosophy as currently understood but theosophy in the proper and original sense of the term and not in its present usurpation by various pseudo-spiritualist groups.

6. The Khan school which is one of the most beautiful edifices of the Safawid period had fallen into ruins for some years when about ten years ago the Bureau of Archaeology of the Persian Government undertook the task of repairing it. It is now operating once again as a madrasah for traditional learning.

7. He in fact criticizes ibn Sina for having spent his time composing works on other sciences like mathematics and medicine.

8. The story is told in most of the traditional sources mentioned above that Mulla Sadra once asked Mir Damad why he was respected by all the religious authorities while Akhund, despite his powerful family, was molested so much by some of the 'ulama'. Mir Damad answered that although they were both saying the same thing, he hid his ideas within so many difficult expressions that only the elite would be able to understand them while Mulla Sadra wrote so clearly that anyone with a knowledge of Arabic could detect the trend of his ideas.

9. See also Raihanat al-Adab, pp. 458 - 61, where 50 works by him are mentioned, and A. A. Zanjani, op cit., pp. 19 - 22 where he mentions 26 metaphysical and philosophical and 17 religious works some of which are of doubtful authenticity. Refer also to J. 'Ali Yasin, op. cit., pp. 58 - 62, where 26 works are named.

10. The Kitab al-Hidayah dealing with the complete cycle of Hikmat, i.e. logic, natural philosophy, and metaphysics was composed by the seventh/13th century Persian author, Athir al-Din Mufaddal ibn 'Umar al-Abhari, it soon became one of the basic books of instruction in the madrasahs. The tenth/16th century commentary upon it by Kamal al-Din Mibudi was the best known before Mulla Sadra composed his own commentary upon it.

11. The Usul al-Kafi was also commented upon by Majlisi as we have mentioned in the previous chapter. The commentary of Mulla Sadra which is of a more intellectual nature is one of the most important Shi'ah works written in the Safawid period and is perhaps his most significant religious composition.

12. The unpublished treatise the manuscript of which exists in the Majlis Library (MS. 103) in Teheran is the only known prose work of Mulla Sadra in Persian, all the other above mentioned writings being in Arabic.

13. The manuscript of the Sharh al-Hidayah in the Mishkat Collection at Teheran University, MS. 254, is in Mulla Sadra's own handwriting, several quatrains appear in the opening pages which are without doubt his own.

14. E.G. Browne, op. cit., vol 4, p. 430.

15. The 1282/1865 Teheran lithographed edition with the commentaries of Sabziwari on the margin runs over 1,000 large pages and the new edition by Mr. Tabatabai'i with running commentary by himself and several other Hakims of the Qajar period including Sabziwari and Mulla 'Ali Nuri is planned in nine 400-page volumes of which three have appeared so far. The Asfar which is used in graduate school of theological faculty in Teheran University is taught over a three year period and then only a part of the First Book is covered. It is said that Haji Mulla Hadi Sabziwari, the greatest Persian Hakim after Mulla Sadra, taught the complete Asfar to his advanced disciples over a six year period.

16. Mulla Sadra, Mafatih al-Ghaib, al-Miftah al-Thalith, al-Mashhad al-Thamin.

17. See the preceding chapter in which the formative elements of Shi'ah intellectual life leading to Mulla Sadra and of the Safawid sages have been discussed.

18. See Asfar, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1282/1865, Book 2, Section 4. Mulla Sadra writes that these pre-Socratic philosophers actually spoke in a symbolic language (ramz) and implied by their theory that the world was composed of a single element, the doctrine of the unity of Being or wahdat al-wujud which is the basis of the gnostic doctrines of ibn 'Arabi. Mulla Sadra, in fact, identifies the water of Thales with the nafas al-Rahman or the breath of the Compassionate which the Sufis consider to be the ultimate substance of the universe. These early Ionians who are considered by some today to be the founders of the modern quantitative sciences of nature appear to the Muslims in a different light as expositors of universal gnosis and those whom, as Mulla Sadra writes, "have adopted the light of Hikmat from the lamp of prophecy."

19. For an account of the relation of Mulla Sadra to Shi'ism and his success in unifying the three above-mentioned elements, see M. H. Tabataba'i, "Musahibih-i Ustad 'Allamih Tabataba'i ba Professor Henri Corbin dar Barih-i Shi'ah," Salanih-i Maktab-i Tashayyu', No. 2, 1339 solar, pp. 61 - 64. This is one of the most important works written recently by a Shi'ah authority on the general perspective of Shi'ism and the various sciences developed by the Shi'ahs, and is the result of a series of meetings between him and H. Corbin in which the latter posed several basic questions about the spiritual attitude of Shi'ism and the

relation between Shi'ism and Hikmat and Sufism. The book was written in answer to H. Corbin's questions and contains a wealth of precious knowledge about the intellectual life of Shi'ism.

20. It may at first seem surprising that Mulla Sadra wrote a treatise against those who called themselves Sufis. But if we consider the social and political conditions of the later Safawid period in which Sufism was greatly disdained by political authorities and much of it had become body without a soul, we can perhaps understand some of the motifs for Mulla Sadra's attack on it. However, the "Sufis" whom Mulla Sadra attacked were not the Sufis proper but those who were seeking to destroy the exoteric truths and bring about social anarchy in the name of esotericism that they themselves did not possess. Otherwise, there is not the least doubt of Mulla Sadra's connection with Sufism - although he preferred to use the name gnostic ('arif) rather than Sufi - nor can one doubt in any way to the gnostic quality of his doctrines.

21. See the chapter of Suhrawardi Maqtul.

22. If we have translated Hikmat as philosophy in one case and as theosophy in the other, it is because the meaning of the term includes both the wisdom belonging to the rational and mental plane or philosophy and the wisdom which transcends the level of the ordinary human mind and which, properly speaking, belongs to the angelic order and cannot be called philosophy as the term is currently understood in European languages.

23. See J. Muslib, *Falsafih-i 'Ali ya Hikmat-i Sadr al-Muti'allihin*, vol. 1, Unversity Press, Teheran, 1337 Solar, p. 3.

24. Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Rasa'il*, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1302/1884, pp. 279 - 86.

25. Mulla Sara adds at the end of this discussion that the causes for the difference of view among various schools regarding different sciences are four in number: (1) differences in the science of unity leading to the creation of sects like the atheists, etc., (2) the science of prophecy leading to separation between Muslims, Christians, Jews, and other religious groups, (3) the science of Imamate leading to division between the Shi'ahs and Sunnis, and, finally, (4) the science of jurisprudence leading to the creation of various schools and interpretations of law. Mulla Sadra adds that the main cause of multiplicity lies in misunderstanding the science of unity and the science of the soul or the science of the beginning and end of things. *Rasa'il*, pp. 287 - 88.

26. J. Muslih, op. cit., pp 1 - 2.

27. See Chapter 19 on Suhrawardi Maqtul.

28. Mulla Sadra regards light as a perfect and intelligible example of the unity and gradation of Being and praises the Illuminationists on this point. See the first of the *Asfar*.

29. See Seyyed Hossain Nasr, "The Polarisation of Being," *Pakistan Philosophical Journal*, vol. 3, no. 2, October 1959, pp. 8 - 13.

30. The doctrine of the unity and gradation of Being in Mulla Sadra is not new, it was expressed clearly five centuries before him by ibn 'Arabi. Mulla Sadra, however, was the first person to give it a logical dress and introduce it as a principle of Hikmat as distinct from pure gnosis which does not concern itself with various logical distinctions.

31. In dividing the hierarchies of universal existence into longitudinal and latitudinal orders Mulla Sadra follows the scheme of ishraqi angelology, which was discussed in the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtul.

32. What distinguishes the gnostics from the Hakims in this subject is that the former formulate the illuminations they receive which differ depending upon the degree of their inner realization. One gnostic in a certain state of contemplation (hal) may have been aware of only the creatures or multiplicity as a reflection of unity, another of only God or unity, and a third of unity in multiplicity. The Hakims, however, from a theoretical and more logical point of view, do not take particular perspective of the traveller upon the path (salik) into consideration and have even criticized some of the gnostics for considering multiplicity to be completely unreal.

33. By this latter distinction, Mulla Sadra implies the difference which exists, or at least used to exist, in European languages between Being and existence. All creatures exist but only in the case of God can one, properly speaking, say that He "is." See Seyyed Hossein Nasr "The Polarisation of Being," op. cit., pp. 8 - 13.

34. See ibn Sina, *Kitab al-Shifa' (Ilahiyyat)*, Teheran, lithographed edition, pp. 291ff.

35. The feature which distinguishes particulars from one another and determines all other qualities in them is, according to Mulla Sadra, their degree of being.

36. Mulla Sadra writes that it was Hermes who learnt about the truth of the "Platonic ideas" when he became illuminated by the light of the intelligible world and separated from the world of the senses. In this state Hermes met an illuminated figure in the spiritual world who taught him all the sciences and when he asked the figure who he was, the figure answered, "I am thy perfect nature (ana taba'aka al-tam)," Asfar, p. 121. For a study of the rich symbolism of "perfect nature," which means the celestial or angelic part of the human soul, see H. Corbin, "Le recit d'initiation et l'hermetisme en iran," *Eranos Jahrbuch*, vol. 17, 1949, pp. 121 - 88.

37. For the general discussion on cause and effect, see J. Muslih, *op. cit.*, pp. 85ff.

38. It is this "simple being" or the supreme intellect which the Sufis before Mulla Sadra identified with the reality of Mohammad. See ibn 'Arabi, *La sagesse des prophetes*, tr. T. Burckhardt, Albin Michel, Paris, 1955, pp. 181ff.

39. According to a principle - which is another of the well-known doctrines formulated by Mulla Sadra and is called *basit al-haqiqah kull of al-ashya'*, i.e., Truth in its state of simplicity contains all things - the divine essence in its state of simplicity and "contraction" contains all realities within itself. This is indeed a direct consequence of the principle of the unity of Being; it if there is but one Being and the whole universe is nothing but Being, the universe and all its realities are contained in a state of "contraction" in that One Being.

40. See J. Muslih, *op. cit.*, p. 100. This distinction may seem to differ from what was said previously. But it must be remembered that the divine essence cannot be limited to Being, which is its first determination as well as the principle of universal manifestation. It is this distinction to which Akhund is referring here.

41. Mulla Sadra placed a lot of emphasis upon this point that he discussed it not only in the First Book of the Asfar but in many other chapters of the work and nearly all of his other books as well. See also H. A. Rashid, *Dau Filsuf-i Sharq wa Gharb*, Parwin Press, Ispahan, 1334 Solar, pp. 50ff. and J. Muslih, *op. cit.*, pp. 128ff. Mulla Sadra in the second Book of the Asfar and other places insists that he is not the first among the Hakims to have introduced this idea but that the pre-Socratic philosophers had indicated although not explicitly the existence of substantial motion. Moreover, he gives the Qur'anic verses such as "Do ye create it or are We the Creator? We mete out death among you, and We are not to be outrun, that We may transfigure you and make you what ye know not" (51:59 - 61, Pickthall's translation) in support of his view.

42. See ibn Sina, *Danish-Nameh-i 'Ala'i (Tabi'iyat)*, University Press, Teheran, 1331/1912, pp. 3ff. Aristotle also in *De Generatione et Corruptione* (319b, 31 - 320a, 2) divides motion into the four categories of quantity, quality, place, and substance and speaks of substantial change as one of the processes which characterize the sub-lunary region. But the substantial change Aristotle means only generation and corruption and for that reason later Muslim philosophers did not even apply the term "motion" to it and considered motion to belong only to the categories of quantity, quality, locomotion, and posture.

Mulla Sadra, however, considers substantial motion to be an inner transformation of things somewhat in the alchemical sense in which there is not simply a coming into being and a passing away but a process through which a new state of being is reached. Moreover, substantial change for the Aristotelians is sudden and instantaneous while for Akhund it is gradual like other forms of motion. Also, substantial change in the Aristotelian sense is limited to the sublunary region, while for Mulla Sadra the whole of gross and subtle manifestation partakes of substantial motion. Akhund's conception of substantial change therefore cannot be identified with that of Aristotle and should not be confused with it because of similarity in terminology.

For an analysis of Aristotle's doctrine of motion, see also H. A. Wolfson, *Crescas' Critique of Aristotle*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1929, pp. 512ff.

43. Ibn Sina, *Shafa' (Tabi'iyat)*, pp. 43 - 44.

44. The idea that God annihilates and re-creates the world at every moment is one that is shared by the majority of the Sufis. Jalal al-Din Rumi expresses it:

"Every moment the world is being renewed, and we

unaware of its perpetual change.

Life is ever pouring in afresh through the body
it has the semblance of continuity.”

R. A. Nicholman, Rumi, Post and Mystic, George Allen Unwin, London, 1950, p. 117.
See also T. Burckhardt, *Introductio to Sufi Doctrine*, tr. D. M. Matheson, Sheikh
Mohammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1959, chap. 4.

45. Substantial motion is essentially a rebirth because it always means the attainment of
a new state of Being.

46. From what we have said above it is clear that in Mulla Sadra's view motion is
principal, for it is an inherent characteristic of corporeal and even subtle existence, and time
is subservient to it contrary to the view of many previous philosophers who considered
motion to be subservient to time. Mulla Sadra's conception of time as the quantity of
substantial motion, which is itself the renewal of cosmic existence, bears much resemblance
to the doctrine of Abu al-Barakat al-Baghdadi for whom also time is the measure or
dimension of existences. See S. Pines, *Nouvelles etudes sur Awhad al-Zaman Abu'l*
Barakat al-Baghdadi, Librairie Durlacher, Paris, 1955, Chap. 2.

47. In Fasl 33 of the first book of the *Asfar*, Akhund writes that all bodies are limited
within the four dimensions of length, breadth, depth, and time, and are differentiated by the
division inherent in time, while their unity is preserved through celestial archetypes or
Platonic ideas.

48. See Chapter 47.

49. See Mulla Sadra, *al-Waridat al-Qalbiyyah*, *Rasa'il* pp., 243 - 49.

50. The world of change here as in the case of Suhrawardi Maqtul means the whole
visible universe and not only the sublunary region of the Aristotelians. According to Mulla
Sadra, the difference between the sublunary region composed of the four elements and the
heavens composed of ether lies only in that the matter of the heavens is more subtle than
the gross matter of the terrestrial environment and is governed by pure souls that are free
from the passions of earthly souls.

51. The principle that the intellect, intelligence, and the intelligible are one (*ittihad al-*
'aqil w-al-ma'qul) is another point in which Mulla Sadra opposed the previous Muslim
philosophers. This principle, which was accepted by the Neo-Platonists, was rejected by ibn
Sina (see *Isharat*, Haidari Press, Teheran, 1379/1959, vol. 3 pp. 292 - 93) and other
Peripatetics.

Akhund, while acknowledging his debt to Porphyry and earlier Greek philosophers (see
his *Rasa'il*, p. 319), considered himself the first among Muslims to have reinstated this
principle which is made a cornerstone of his intellectual edifice. Actually, Afdal al-Din
Kashani and before him Abu al-Hassan 'Amiri in his *Kitab al-Fursul fi al-Ma'alim al-*
Ilahiyyah had accepted this principle (see M. Minosie, "Az Kaza'in-i Turkiyyah," *Revue de*
la Faculte des Lettre, Universite de Teheran, vol. 4, no. 3, Mars 1957, p. 50) but it was
Mulla Sadra who first systematized this principle and demonstrated it clearly.

For a discussion of the principle of the union of the intellect and the intelligible, see
Asfar, pp. 277ff.

52. "God's knowledge of things is identical with their being" (Mulla Sadra, *al-*
Shawahid al-Rububiyyah, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1236/1820, p. 36).

53. See Mulla Sadra, *Sharh al-Hidayah al-Athiriyyah*, Teheran, lithographed edition,
1315/1897, pp. 308 - 09.

54. See his *Rasa'il* p. 240, where he quotes the Qur'anic statement that "not a particle of
dust in the heavens and earth is hidden from God's knowledge" as support and consequence
of his conception of divine knowledge.

55. Akhund adds that in the case of prophets and saints, the creative power of the soul
becomes so great that like God Himself it can even create objective and external forms.

56. The whole of the fourth book of the *Asfar* is devoted to the science of the soul
where the soul takes on a meaning totally different from the quasi-material substance of the
Aristotelians.

Mulla Sadra often speaks of the complete science of things as *mabda' w-al-ma'ad*, the
origin and end, and has even a book by this name. He identifies the science of *mabda'* with
theodicy and metaphysics and that of *ma'ad* with psychology and eschatology.

57. The view of Mulla Sadra regarding the growth and perfection of the soul resembles the alchemical view in which the power to reach perfection is considered to lie within matter itself and not outside it.

58. Mulla Sadra, *al-Shawahid al-Rububiyah*, pp. 152ff.

59. That is why Akhund writes that “the first seed of the universe was the intellect and the last stage is also the intellect which is the fruit of the same tree” (*ibid.*, p. 165.)

60. This principle which In Arabic is called *jismaniyat al-huduth wa ruhaniyat al-baqa'* is another of the doctrines for which Mulla Sadra is famous.

61. We have not enumerated these faculties in detail because Mulla Sadra follows the earlier Muslim authors especially *ibn Sina* on this point. See Chapter 66 on “Natural History” regarding the various faculties.

62. *Al-Shawahid al-Rububiyah*, pp. 134ff.

63. By emphasizing the immanent aspect of the development of the soul, Mulla Sadra does not forget the transcendent factor, for in the treatise *Iksir al-'Arifin* he writes the Arch-angel *Israfil* blows life into the body and gives it the power of sensation and motion, that *Mika'il* enables the body to assimilate food and sends it its sustenance, that *Jibril* gives it instruction regarding the revelation and acts of worship and finally that *'Izra'il* enables the soul to abstract forms from matter and to separate itself from the body. *Rasa'il*, pp. 306 - 07.

64. Concerning the traditional conception of cosmic becoming, see A. K. Coomaraswamy, “Gradation and Evolution,” *Isis*, 35, 1944, pp. 15 - 16; 38, 1947 - 48, pp. 87 - 94.

As for the unity of the soul which from the gnostic point of view is identified with the divine essence or self, see A. K. Coomaraswamy, “On the One and Only Transmigrant,” *Journal of the American oriental Society*, June 1944, No. 3, pp. 19 - 43.

65. According to a famous hadith of the Prophet, accepted by the Shi'ahs and the Sunnis alike, the Qur'an has seven levels of meaning the last known only God. It is from the esoteric interpretation of the revealed book that Mulla Sandra and Sufis before him have drawn the gnostic doctrines inherent and hidden in the Islamic revelation as they are in all other revelations.

66. *Iksir al-'Arifin*, *Rasa'il*, p. 295. This terminology is a very old in Islam, it was adopted by the early Sufis from the traditions of the Prophets and Imams.

67. *Al-Shawahid al-Rububiyah*, p. 140.

68. Mulla Sadra, *Risalah fi-al-Hashr*, *Rasa'il* pp. 341 - 58.

69. In the case of animals, after death they join the masters of their species (*rub al-nau'*) or archetypes except the higher animals who have the faculty of imagination developed in them. They have an independent existence in the world of cosmic imagination without, however, being distinct individually as in the case of people.

70. See Mulla Sadra, *al-Mabda' w-al-Ma'ad*, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1314/1896, pp. 272ff.

He criticizes both the naturalists who deny the existence of the soul after death and the Peripatetics who accept only the resurrection of the soul but not of the body.

71. This esoteric view expressed in his commentary upon the *Usul al-Kafi* as well as in the *Asfar* was one most attacked by the exoteric 'ulama'. The religious perspective which appeals essentially to the sentimental or passionate aspect of human nature must insist upon “eternal” punishment and reward in order to have its laws accepted in human society. Only the exoteric view meant for the saintly and appealing to the contemplative aspect of man, can take into consideration the relatively of heaven and hell with respect to the divine essence without in any way denying the reality of “eternity” of reward and punishment in the life hereafter with respect to human existence here.

72. For the background leading to Mulla Sadra, see chapter 47 on “The School of Ispahan in this work. See also Mulla Muhsin Faid, *al-Mahajjat al-Baida'*, vol. 1, *Islamiyyah Press*, Teheran, 1379/1959, introduction by Sayyid Mohammad Mishkat , pp. 10 - 23, in which the background leading to Mulla Sadra as well as the distinguishing principles of his own doctrines is discussed.

73. It will be remembered that *al-Ghazālī* in his *al-Munqidh min al-Dalal* considered the philosophers to be infidel on three points: their rejection of resurrection of bodies, their

limiting God's knowledge to universals, and their belief in the eternity of the world. See. W. Montgomery Watt, *The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazālī*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1953, p. 37.

From what we have discussed of Mulla Sadra's doctrine it is clear that he accepted the resurrection of bodies, God's knowledge of particulars, and creation of the world in time though not quite in the sense as that of the theologians.

74. Mulla Sadra's doctrines were especially influential in India to which country one of his disciples by the name of Mohammad Salih Kashani migrated - after reaching a wild state of ecstasy during one Mulla Sadra's lessons -and where he attracted many disciples. The works of Mulla Sadra have continued to be taught in the Islamic schools of the Indian sub-continent, especially his *Sharh al-Hidayah* which came to be known by the author's name as Sadra. Many glosses have been written on it by various philosophers and scholars in India such as Mohammad Amjad al-Sadiqi (d. 1140/1727), Mulla Hassan al-Lakhnawi (d. 1198/1783), Mohammad A'lam al-Sindili (d. 1250/1834), and 'Abd al-'Ali Bahr al-'Ulum who lived in the 13th/19th century. Numerous manuscripts of these and other glosses on the *Sharh al-Hidayah* are to be found in such libraries as the Raza Library of Rampur and the Khuda Baskh Library in Patna (see the *Catalogue of Arabic and Persian Manuscripts in the Oriental Library at Bankiput*, vo. 20 (Arabic MSS), Bihar and Orissa, 1936, MSS. No. 2351, 2386, 2371 - 78).

75. See Chapter 47 on "The School of Ispahan."

76. For a list of the names of Mulla Sadra's disciples in the Qajar period, see Raihdnat al-Adab and Gobineau, op. cit., pp. 103ff.

77. Iqbal's statement that, "It is, moreover, the Philosophy of Sadra which is the source of the metaphysics of early Babism" (*Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, London, 1908, p. 175) is true only in a negative sense in the same way as the doctrine of the Rhenish mystics might be considered to be the source of the Protestant revolt during the Renaissance.

Part 5: Political Thought

Chapter 49: Ibn Khaldun

Chapter 49: Ibn Khaldun

A

The consideration of ibn Khaldun's political philosophy within the context provided by a work on the history of Muslim philosophy, and in a chapter concluding the history of Muslim political philosophy in the classical period, must face and attempt to clarify the complex problem of the precise character of the political aspect of ibn Khaldun's new science of culture, and its theoretical and practical implications when contrasted with the various philosophic practical sciences and Muslim legal sciences that share the same subject-matter.

In this attempt, the investigator is faced with the dilemma that, although ibn Khaldun shows intimate acquaintance with these philosophical and legal disciplines and with the writings of his predecessors on them, he does not present himself in his major work either as a philosopher or as a writer on legal matters, does not choose to continue either the Greek and Muslim tradition of political philosophy or any of the traditional Muslim legal sciences, and does not make a direct or thematic contribution in the form of a treatise on any of these disciplines. He considers his main contribution to be an almost wholly new science based on natural philosophy yet advancing beyond traditional natural philosophy by using certain conclusions of natural science to construct a complete science of culture.

The investigation of culture inevitably led ibn Khaldun to the investigation of the phenomenon of government, which is both a constituent part and the "form" (surah), i.e. the organizing principle, of culture. The third section of Book One of the "History" is devoted to this subject, and its title indicates the various problems which it investigates, "On States, Kingship, the Caliphate, and Sovereign Ranks, and the States Occurring in These - Containing Fundamental (Propositions) and Supplementary (Inquiries)."¹ Since government is the form of culture as a whole, we also find extensive discussions of this subject in all the other sections of Book One, including the section on the sciences. This treatment of political matters is not, however, an independent discussion and is not based on premises of its own but forms an integral part of the science of culture.

Ibn Khaldun himself distinguishes his new science, and his investigation of political matters within the scope of this science, from the traditional political science or political philosophy of his Greek and Muslim predecessors and also from the Muslim legal sciences. After recapitulating the substance of his own investigation of politics, an attempt will be made in this chapter to understand how he characterizes his new endeavour and justifies his departure from the well-established philosophical and legal traditions. We shall find that what appears at first to be an effort simply to distinguish between the science of culture and political philosophy and the legal sciences, progressively takes the form of a critique of, first, certain propositions, and, secondly, of the entire subject-matter of political philosophy and of dialectical theology though the critique of the latter discipline is less pronounced and more implicit.

In this connection, ibn Khaldun raises a number of problems crucial for understanding the character of both his own sciences of culture and of the

entire history of Muslim political philosophy and dialectical theology. In attempting to explore some of these problems, we have restricted ourselves to the issues that are indispensable for a fuller understanding of ibn Khaldun's position and have presented them in a perspective that seems to us to serve this purpose best. In characterizing the political thought of his predecessors, ibn Khaldun does not pretend to be an impartial historian, he assumes the role of a severe critic. The criticism is not based on blind faith or love for contention, but on certain theoretical and practical considerations.

B

In the section devoted to political authority and institutions,² ibn Khaldun remains loyal to the specific character of his new science. He begins with, and thereafter repeatedly recalls, the premises he had posited for the science of culture as a whole.³ The dominant theme of his discussion of political life is the explanation of the natural causes, powers, properties, stages, and accidents inherent in the properties of the human soul, and how they lead off necessity to the formation of political life and subject it to certain natural and necessary laws of human association.⁴

Like culture as a whole, political life is considered by ibn Khaldun to be a generated natural being. The methods he follows in determining its characteristics are, therefore, adopted from natural science in general, and from biology in particular.⁵ Genetically, he follows the development of political life through its various stages: how it is generated, grows, reaches its maturity, sickens, and dies. In biology, the efficient cause of this movement is taken to be the soul and its temper (mizaj). In culture, ibn Khaldun considers the efficient cause of the movement to be a specific property of the human soul, i.e. social solidarity ('asabiyyag) which is a combination of the natural feeling for one's relatives and friends, and of the need for defence and survival. It cements a group together, dictates the need for a ruler, leads to conflicts with other groups and generates the power of conquest leading to victory over others, its initial power determines the extent of this conquest, and the fulfilment of appetites and desires, finally, weakens it and leads to the disintegration of political power.⁶

This genetic method is supplemented by the analytical method through which ibn Khaldun distinguishes and compares the various forms of political power, and the institutional arrangement within each form. Apart from the purely natural regime in which a tyrant or small bands or groups give free rein to their appetites, there are two major types of regimes: (a) rational regimes in which the appetites are ordered by the agency of human reason for the sake of a more peaceful and permanent enjoyment of worldly things, and (b) regimes of divine Law in which prophet-legislators, through the power of their souls to communicate with the "unseen" (explained in the sixth premise), posit laws which order the affairs of men and the enjoyment of both worldly things and things of the soul useful for man's welfare in the world to come. This inquiry is supplemented with a description of the various institutional arrangements and offices in both types.⁷

Throughout this discussion, ibn Khaldun insists that his treatment of political life is not to be confused with the treatment of political life in the

Islamic legal sciences which aim at determining the legal prescriptions to be followed by adherents to the Islamic Law, with the sayings of popular wisdom which do not explain the nature of political life, or with political science or political philosophy which aims primarily at determining how man ought to conduct himself to achieve happiness and perfection.

In summarizing the Third Book of the Laws, al-Farabi informs us that Plato explained that all the *nomoi* are subject to generation and corruption and regeneration, and that he explained the growth of cities, the development of the arts, and the origins and development of governments.⁸ In this context, al-Farabi employs the two central terms which have come to be associated with ibn Khaldun's new science, i.e. 'umran and 'asabiyyah.⁹ Since al-Farabi indicates that generation and corruption are inherent in all the *nomoi* and in all cities all the time (i.e. they occurred in the past, occur now, and will occur in the future), he is also alluding to the fact that Muslim governments and laws are equally subject to these natural laws.

The context within which this and similar discussions occur, however, indicates that, for the political philosophers, the explanation of the natural origins and the generation and corruption of regimes is not an independent inquiry but a subservient branch of the art of legislation and, ultimately, of political science; its aim is to provide the legislator with the necessary knowledge upon which to base his decisions in laying down such laws as are appropriate to the particular group for which he is legislating under particular circumstances.

In contrast, the immediate and apparent context within which ibn Khaldun's inquiry into political affairs is pursued is not the art of legislation or political science, but the science of culture which he develops as an independent science. His major contribution consists in pursuing this inquiry with relative freedom from the art of legislation and of political science or the art of determining how men ought live, and in elaborating all the natural properties and concomitants of political life necessitated by man's natural constitution. Furthermore, he is the only Muslim thinker who has shown, explicitly and in detail, that Muslim history and Muslim regimes are indeed subject to these natural laws of generation and corruption, and, therefore, has insisted that the proper understanding of Muslim history presupposes the natural understanding of the essential properties of man and human association in general.

C

In defending the legitimacy of his new inquiry into political matters, ibn Khaldun does not attempt to present it as a new version of political philosophy or as a substitute for, but rather to explain the distinction between the new inquiry and the established practical philosophic sciences. This distinction is made on the ground of certain basic differences which ibn Khaldun invokes at appropriate places in the course of his inquiry. The examination of these differences will shed light on the fundamental character of both Muslim political philosophy and ibn Khaldun's new science of culture.

Immediately after formulating the basic principles of the new science,¹⁰ and asserting its relative independence and newness, ibn Khaldun sets out to

show that “it does not belong to the science of rhetoric, for the subject of rhetoric is convincing speeches, useful in attracting the multitude toward a certain opinion or turning them away from it.”¹¹ “Nor does it belong to the science of ‘political government’ (siyasat al-madaniyyah), for political government is the administration of the household or the city as is obligatory (bima yajib) according the requirements of ethics and wisdom so that the multitude be made to follow a course leading to the protection and preservation of the (human) species. Thus, its subject differs from the subject of these two arts which are perhaps similar to it.”¹²

Only after having stated this difference does ibn Khaldun proceed to suggest that the new science “is, as it were, newly discovered.” This suggestion is offered reluctantly on the ground that he could not find it in the works of the Greek wise men available to him, a fact which seemed to him to be in need of some explanation, “The Wise men perhaps were concerned in this with the fruits (of the sciences), and the fruit of this (science) is, as you saw, in (the correction of historical) reports only. Even though its problems in themselves and in their proper spheres are noble, its fruit is the rectification of (historical) reports which are weak (or not significant: da‘if). That is why they deserted it.”¹³

Ibn Khaldun’s claim for the relative independence and newness of his science seems thus to be intimately related to his success in distinguishing it, and setting it apart, from rhetoric and political science, or to his success in showing that it does not belong to either of them. This he does through delimiting the subject-matter of these two disciplines by emphasizing their ends or results or “fruits,” i.e. imparting certain opinions to the multitude and governing it according to the requirement of ethics and wisdom. The direct fruit of the science of culture, in contrast, is not convincing the multitude or making it follow an ethical or wise course or way of life (which in turn requires the knowledge of what the ethical virtues are, the practical wisdom of the legislator and the ruler, and the ability to convince the multitude), but simply the understanding of the nature and properties of man and human association or culture, an understanding which is pursued with the specific aim in rectifying historical reports.

The science of culture is not an art concerned with how man ought to live, how society is to be rightly governed, or how the multitude is to be convinced, but a scientific inquiry into how man actually lived in the past, and the natural causes determining the modes of human association and necessitating the activities and ways of life pursued in the diverse human societies about which we possess historical reports, in order to be able correctly to judge the soundness or falsity of these reports.

This leads ibn Khaldun to a second distinction between the science of culture and political science with respect to the inherent character of their subject-matters and, consequently, to their conclusions. It was shown that the premises of the science of culture are drawn exclusively from the conclusions demonstrated in the natural sciences. Subsequently, ibn Khaldun claims the same natural and necessary character for the entire subject and for the conclusions of this science. In contrast, political science, having as its objective the right conduct of government according to the

requirement of ethics and wisdom, does not restrict itself to these natural and necessary premises, but is concerned further with what is ethically or philosophically good for human society, and seeks to convince the multitude of the necessity or obligation of accepting it.

Ibn Khaldun insists that such matters cannot claim the natural and necessary character of the subject-matter of the science of culture. Because political science is concerned primarily with how man ought to live and how human society ought to be governed, it upholds principles which are not, strictly speaking, natural or necessary (i.e. grounded in the science of Plato's and al-Farabi's treatment of the laws, is subsidiary and accidental to their attachment to these other principles.

Ibn Khaldun does not then restrict himself to distinguishing between the new science and the traditional political science, to justifying the need for the new science of culture, and to showing that it has a relatively independent and legitimate subject-matter of its own; he makes, and repeats, certain observations about traditional political science which are not necessarily called for as far as his immediate task is concerned. At first sight, these observations seem to present traditional political science under unfavourable light, to suggest certain fundamental theoretical disagreements between ibn Khaldun and Muslim political philosophers, and to prove the superior character of the new science as compared to the traditional political science. Yet ibn Khaldun's own modest estimate of the "fruits" of the science of culture is a warning against accepting these conclusions at their face value. In order to explore his intention, we must first understand the issues involved.

The central issue which ibn Khaldun repeatedly invokes in this connection is the proof of the "necessity" of prophecy, and of the Prophetic religious Law, adduced by Muslim political philosophers. Upon the first reference to this issue, ibn Khaldun cites what is mentioned by wise men in their proof of the necessity of prophecies, what is mentioned in the fundamentals of jurisprudence (Usul al-Fiqh) in proving the necessity of languages, and what the jurists (fuqaha) mention "in the justification of legal prescriptions through their purposes."¹⁴

In all of these disciplines, the jurists attempt to present a natural proof for the necessity of a legal or conventional prescription, and they seem to argue as follows: men must co-operate in society, therefore, they necessarily need a ruler who must be a prophet, men by nature need to express their intentions, therefore, they necessarily need the easier method of doing this, which must be a language, must preserve their species and their social life uncorrupted, therefore, they must abstain from adultery, murder and injustice. The necessity of prophecy thus appears to be based on the same kind of argument and, consequently, to have the same status, as the necessity of language, and of the injunctions against adultery, murder, and injustice.

Now, all these have some basis in nature. But they cannot be traced directly or exclusively to nature, and they are not produced by nature in a necessary manner. They are, rather, the product of human convention and law, or of a divine Law. That they are not strictly speaking, natural or

necessary, becomes evident when we consider the diversity of languages and differences and conflicts among the various legal arrangements (including those claiming divine origin) in different communities. The mistake of these jurists consists in beginning with the nature of man and society, showing the need for some such conventions and laws, and concluding that this is sufficient proof or the exclusively natural and necessary character of conventions and laws.

While the proof of the “necessity” of prophecy shares in this general mistaken way of argumentation, it is in a class by itself, and we need to follow ibn Khaldun’s regulation of it more closely. According to him, the philosophers begin with the demonstration of the necessity of a government and a ruler. This demonstration he accepts as valid and adopts as the first premise of his science. However, “The philosophers (Falasifah) make an addition to this demonstration when attempting to establish prophecy by rational argument, and that it is a natural property of the human being. Thus, they confirm this demonstration (i.e. the indispensability of the ruler) up to its conclusion and that humanity cannot escape being under restraining and reconciling rule (kukm wadi’).

Then they say, after that, ‘That rule comes to be by a (divine or religious) Law (Shar‘) imposed by God and introduced by one (member) of the human species distinguished from them (i.e. the rest) by the special (properties) of His guidance with which God entrusts him in order that submission to him and acceptance from him take place, so, that ruling among them be completed without disacknowledgement or (angry) reproach.’ This proposition by the philosophers (hukama’) is, as you see, not demonstrable, since existence and human life may become complete without that (Law and prophet) by (virtue of) what the ruler imposes by himself or by (virtue of) the (social) solidarity (‘asabiyyah) by which he is enabled to conquer them (i.e. his subjects) and make them follow his path.

Thus the People of the Book and the followers of the prophets are few compared to the Magians who have no (revealed) Book, for they (the latter) form the majority of the inhabitants of the world. Despite that, they possessed States and monuments in addition to (simply) having lived, and they still have these to this epoch in the intemperate regions of the north and the south, in contrast to human life in confusion and without a restraining and reconciling (ruler) at all, this is impossible. By this becomes plain to you their mistake concerning the obligatory (character) of prophecies, and that it (this obligation) is not rational; rather, it is apprehended by the Law, as is the doctrine of the ancestors of the community.”¹⁵

On the surface ibn Khaldun’s argument is extremely simple, if not naive. The supposed demonstration of the philosophers is based on the minor premise that every ruler must rule with a divine Law.¹⁶ This is evidently false, since a ruler can rule by virtue of royal authority alone, and even a simpleton knows that there have been innumerable rules without divine authority. This simple fact could not have escaped the notice of the philosophers on this level.

D

There are two possible philosophic approaches to the study of man and society: the first, which is characteristic of ibn Khaldun's science of culture, is through the natural sciences, the second, which is the characteristic approach of the Greek and Muslim political philosophers, is through a consideration of the end of man. Since the end of man, his perfection or happiness, pre-supposes the understanding of the place of man within the cosmos of which he is a part, this latter approach comes after metaphysics or divine science ('ilm ilahi) in the order of the investigation.¹⁷ The first approach is based exclusively on natural science and does not admit any premises that cannot be demonstrated therein. It can, therefore, be properly called a "natural" science of politics. The second approach is based on metaphysics or the science of divine things and can, therefore, be called meta-natural or "divine" politics.¹⁸

The comprehensive works of ibn Sina, which ibn Khaldun specifically has in mind in discussing the issue, present us with two features significant for understanding ibn Khaldun's exposition.

(1) They all include two discussions of political matters, the first coming at the end of the natural sciences (in the sections corresponding to Aristotle's *De Anima*), and the other at the end of the divine science.¹⁹ Ibn Sina's works thus point to the fact that both "natural" and "divine" political sciences owe their origin to the philosophers. Yet in studying ibn Sina's "natural" version of political science, we come to realize the significant difference between him and ibn Khaldun: ibn Sina restricts himself here to the natural foundations of man's political life and does not proceed to develop a full-fledged science of society or politics on that foundation alone. He seems thus to suggest that these natural foundations are not sufficient for understanding the full scope of man's political life and cannot offer the proper directives concerning how he is to conduct himself as a political animal. Such an undertaking will have to wait until after the completion of divine science, or, as ibn Khaldun explains, it needs "additional" arguments which cannot be presented prior to the investigation of the world and of the place of man within it.

(2) Further, in his "Parts of Rational Sciences," ibn Sina specifies that the aim of the practical part of philosophy or wisdom is not the attainment of certainty about existents, but "perhaps" of opinions and not opinions simply but opinions for the sake of realizing the good.²⁰ In addition, that part of political philosophy which deals with political government studies all classes of governments, good and bad, those based on kingship as well as those based on prophecy and divine Laws.²¹ Although political philosophy may favour the political government based on prophecy, it transcends any particular class of political arrangements. These issues, however, are not raised in the exposition of the "divine" version of political philosophy in his comprehensive philosophic works, instead, he purports here to offer not a discussion of the total subject of political philosophy or the various classes of opinions and action in all political regimes, but what appears to be rational justification, or the "obligatory" character, of a specific class of political regimes, i.e. that which is originated by a prophet-legislator.

The final four chapters of the *Shifa'*, for instance, indicate that ibn Sina would treat the proof of prophecy, and the prophet's call to God and the return to Him, prayers and their utility in this world and the next, the foundation of the city and the household, and legal prescriptions relating to them (discussed within the framework of prophetic legislation) and successors to the Prophet (Caliphate and Imamate) and other matters relating to governments and ethics.²² The whole discussion is, thus, centred on prophecy and pre-supposes its "obligatory" character.

Ibn Khaldun's first and foremost observation on the total scope of the subject-matter of "divine" political science is that it is not natural (*tabi'i*) or necessary (*daruri*), by which he means the same thing and it is fundamentally this: Considering the natural constitution of man as a political animal, we do not find the revelation, divine governments, and the concern with resurrection and reward and punishment, to be necessary conditions of his survival, for the formation of society, and for the continued existence of both. Religion does not belong to those requirements that form the indispensable minimum for the existence and preservation of society, it is not the sufficient condition, nor even one of the sufficient conditions, required for social life in order that may exist and continue.

Man's natural constitution and the character of society do not make it absolutely mandatory upon man to be a member of a religious community and to obey the prescriptions of a divine Law.²³ Given human nature, prophecy and revelation are possible phenomena. Supposing that a prophet does come and that he possesses, in addition, the ability to rule, to command obedience, and to legislate, there will come to exist a divine Law. And given certain climatic and other conditions, his Law must include certain opinions, such as that prophecy is necessary. These opinions are legally "obligatory" or binding upon the followers of that Law; the source of this obligation is not human nature and the nature of society, or unaided human reason, but a specific divine revelation and a specific divine Law.

Thus, what induces ibn Khaldun to reject the natural and necessary character of religion and divine Laws, and, consequently, of the whole subject-matter of "divine" political science, is not merely that divine government, like man-made language and injunctions against adultery, murder and injustice, is conventional or legal in character.²⁴ For, despite their conventional character, it could be shown that, unlike divine government, all the rest are necessary conditions for the existence and preservation of any society,²⁵ and that the authority of unaided human reason is sufficient to prove that. (Ibn Khaldun says, for instance, that the authority of human reason is "sufficient" for "forbidding injustice."²⁶) Divine government is not only legal convention, it does not even belong to those legal conventional arrangements that form the indispensable minimum required for the existence and preservation of society and which can be said, therefore, to be natural and necessary convention.

Ibn Khaldun's second major observation is that the premises and, consequently, the conclusions of "divine" political science are not rationally demonstrable (*burhani*), i.e., unaided human reason cannot achieve certainty concerning such subjects as the obligatory character of divine revelation and

the divine Law, the necessity of believing in the opinions about God, resurrection, and reward and punishment, or the necessity of performing the actions prescribed in a divine law, such as worship. The authority for the obligatory character of these opinions and actions is the divine law itself. Divine Laws, however, command and do not demonstrate (at least not rationally) the necessity of holding the opinions and of performing the actions commanded.

So far as human reason is concerned, these commands remain undemonstrated, i.e. they continue to hold the status of belief or opinions. Whether these opinions are true or false, generally accepted or not, practically good and useful or bad and harmful, or whether they are preferable or objectionable, is not here the issue; rather, it is the obligation (set up by those who pretend to have shown that these opinions are rationally obligatory) does not impose itself on human reason. The only obligation that seems to be convincing is the legal obligation set up by divine Laws. Unlike demonstrated conclusions, undemonstrated opinions do not by themselves compel the assent of human reason; in order to be accepted, they need an additional force, which in this case is provided in divine Laws.

We are not in a better position to understand the reason why ibn Khaldun distinguishes at the outset between his new science of culture, on the one hand, and the practical philosophic sciences, the legal sciences and popular wisdom, on the other, and why, in discussing the six premises of the new science, he distinguishes between what can be demonstrated and what cannot be demonstrated within the sciences of nature. Only in the science of nature are we able to arrive at demonstrated conclusions about what is natural and necessary for man and society. The conclusions of all these other sciences are undemonstrated opinions.

This is also the case with the conclusions of the divine science or the science of divine beings. The fact that “divine” political science is based on premises derived from divine science deprives all of its conclusions of their demonstrable character. This is also the reason why ibn Khaldun mentions rhetoric as the first of the practical philosophic sciences. Since the practical sciences deal with opinions, and opinions do not compel assent immediately, an art is needed which is capable of convincing men to accept certain opinions and to reject others. This is precisely the function of rhetoric. In the practical sciences, the philosophers do not follow the method of demonstration; they are not, strictly speaking, philosophers but rhetoricians.²⁷

E

Ibn Khaldun’s critique of “divine political science presents a curious paradox: it defends religion against the mistakes of theologians and it defends philosophy against the mistakes of philosophers. His defence of religion consists in establishing revelation and divine Laws as the exclusive source for beliefs in the substance of the doctrines relative to prophecy and divine government, yet he objects to every kind of theology or the effort to prove these doctrines rationally. His defence of philosophy consists in the bold assertion that, in as far as reason is concerned, the political doctrines

purporting to support religion cannot claim a status higher than that of undemonstrated opinions, and he exposes the philosophers who claimed that they were presenting properly a philosophical support or defence of religious doctrines, or had succeeded in turning philosophy into a rational theology. From this it appears that ibn Khaldun's critique is not directed against philosophy, but against theology, not against philosophers as philosophers, but against philosophers in their role as theologians, dialecticians, and rhetoricians.

This critique is based on the distinction between religion or, more specifically, religious beliefs and practices based on a particular revelation and divine Law, and philosophy or, more specifically, the body of scientifically demonstrated conclusions based on rational inquiry. It is characteristic of ibn Khaldun that he upholds the legitimacy of both religious knowledge and scientific philosophic knowledge in their proper spheres, and contests the theoretical legitimacy of all disciplines that occupy an ambivalent position between the two and profess to demonstrate their agreement. Such disciplines, which according to him belong to sophistry and rhetoric rather than either to religion or scientific philosophy, are primarily the dialectical theology of the Mutakallimun and the political theology of the philosophers.

Religiously, ibn Khaldun identifies himself with the early Muslims or the pious ancestors who rejected all attempts at rational justification of religious beliefs and practices as unnecessary, if not dangerous, "innovations." But since these pious ancestors were innocent of the philosophic sciences, they could not be considered his true precursors. Philosophically, he supports his position, not only on the basis of the requirements of scientific demonstration, but by invoking the authority of the philosophers who followed the method of verification (*muhaqqiqun*). He thus shows a predilection for pure religion and pure philosophy over against any kind of theology which is necessarily a confused mixture.

It is noteworthy that in the crucial passage where ibn Khaldun criticizes the divine science and the political theology of the philosophers, he mentions al-Farabi and ibn Sina but not ibn Rushd.²⁸ Of Muslim philosophers, it was precisely ibn Rushd who (like ibn Khaldun) was a recognized religious judge (*qadi*) and a philosopher who criticized al-Farabi and ibn Sina for imitating the dialectical theologians, and who wrote the most celebrated treatise on religion and philosophy the main theme of which is the defence of the legitimacy of religion and philosophy in their proper spheres, and which is a devastating attack upon the combination of religion and philosophy in the form of theology.²⁹

It is not possible here to enter into the historical and doctrinal developments that led to ibn Rushd's new attitude towards theology. For our immediate purpose we need only note that in this decisive respect ibn Khaldun is following in the footsteps of one of the most illustrious Muslim predecessors. Therefore, his position could not be construed to be anti-philosophic or based on any lack of understanding of the intentions of al-Farabi and ibn Sina. To understand his specific reasons for criticizing them,

we must now analyze his treatment of Muslim dialectical theology (Kalam), and of the divine science and political theology of the “philosophers.”

“Dialectical theology,” says ibn Khaldun, “involves arguing for the beliefs of faith with rational proofs, and answering the innovators who deviate in (their) beliefs from the ways of the ancestors and the followers of orthodoxy.”³⁰ The beliefs of faith consist of such things as the attributes of God, the truth of revelation and prophecy, the angels, the spirits, the jinn, resurrection, paradise, hell, etc. Unlike things that have rationally ascertainable natural causes, these are ambiguous matters, the reality of which reason cannot ascertain. Therefore, it must be left to the divinely-ordained legislator (the Prophet) to determine them and teach them. The general run of believers, like the deaf and the blind, must accept the authority of their fathers and teachers, and since they cannot establish the truth of these matters, they must follow the general accepted opinions about them, based on the command of their prophet-legislator.³¹

More important, however, is the fact that these beliefs are not theoretical assertions but part of a way of life within a system of divine government intended for the happiness of the believer. Their purpose is not mere knowledge or belief or assent or faith. Perfection, according to the legislator, consists of “perfect faith” or the habit firmly rooted through practical repetitive action (worship, obedience, and the submissiveness), until believers possess the established attribute moulding their souls. Beliefs are not primarily intended to be known, but to “be possessed,” their purpose is not knowledge, but practical utility, their end is not theoretical perfection, but the happiness promised by the legislator.³²

The proper function of dialectical theology is to defend beliefs with rational arguments, but since this is not necessary for faith, it is only useful when these beliefs are endangered by innovators. At that time, dialectical theology had a useful function to perform. Once innovators are suppressed (rational argument being one of the tools used in this fight),³³ dialectical theology has no further reason to exist; indeed, it can be harmful, since it gives the impression that rational arguments are somehow necessary for accepting beliefs. This is false both because (except in the case of rational attacks upon them) beliefs do not need rational support and because that rational support offered by dialectical theology is only dialectical, sophisticated, or rhetorical (i.e. based on common opinions), it has no scientific value.³⁴

While discussing the emergency of dangerous innovations, ibn Khaldun notices a certain identity of origin and a certain parallelism between the opinions of the innovators (the Mu‘tazilites and the Shi‘ites) and the writings and opinions of the philosophers “which are in general at variance with the beliefs of the divine Law.”³⁵ He indicates that innovators in Islam studied the works of the philosophers. But it seems also that the philosophers in turn took notice (e.g. in their rational proof of the obligation of having successors or Caliphs to the Prophet)³⁶ of the opinions of the innovators or of the Mu‘tazilite and Shi‘ite theologians, and presented identical or similar opinions, or that philosophers presented themselves to the Muslim community in the guise of Muslim theologians purporting to

give a rational support for certain Muslim beliefs and more specifically of those beliefs, held by the heterodox minorities, which were closer to their own views.

Be this as it may, ibn Khaldun was also aware of the radical difference between the content and the ultimate intentions of the views of the philosophers and those of theologians of all shades. That is why he devotes special chapters to the exposition of divine science and of the philosophy centred on this divine science.

In contra-distinction to all dialectical theologians, philosophers suppose that “all” existence can be apprehended by “mental contemplation and rational syllogisms.”³⁷ It thus appears that they include all “spiritual” being in their contemplation; hence, they purport to give (in divine science) a rational, syllogistic knowledge of God, the soul, resurrection, etc., or of the religious beliefs revealed and commanded by the prophet-legislators. Unlike dialectical theologians, however, philosophers do not begin with religious beliefs revealed and commanded by the prophet-legislators. Unlike dialectical theologians, however, philosophers do not begin with religious beliefs as revealed by the prophets and attempt to elucidate them or support them rationally; their position is that reason can know these matters independently of revelation. Being philosophers, they also believe that the rational syllogistic knowledge of these matters is superior to divine revelation and, therefore, must be made the final judge of the correctness of revelation, or that “the rectification of the beliefs of faith is through contemplation, not through tradition (hearing: sam‘), for they (i.e., the beliefs) belong to the apprehensions of the intellect.”³⁸

But philosophy does not content itself with presenting theoretical knowledge as a superior alternative to the religious belief; philosophy is also a way of life, and the philosophers contend that true happiness consists of complete theoretical knowledge, or “the apprehension of all existents...through this contemplation and those demonstrations,” together with the improvement of the soul and the acquisition of the virtues (all of which can be known and established by the sole agency of reason. In contrast to the religious way of life and the happiness of the philosopher “is possible for the human being even if no divine Law comes down.” For the lovers of wisdom, the blessed life means theoretical knowledge and living according to the dictates of reason, and eternal suffering means ignorance.³⁹

In presenting the content of their theoretical knowledge and of their way of life, however, philosophers have committed grave errors, not only from the more apparent standpoint of religion, but also from the standpoint of philosophy itself. Philosophy says that scientific knowledge has to conform to certain conditions and that scientific demonstration is possibly only within the limited range of what can be humanly experienced and known. Yet philosophers in general, and al-Farabi and ibn Sina in particular, seem to speak about all sorts of “spiritual” matters: the One, the source of all beings, the emanation of beings, the states of the soul after departing from the body, its return to the source joining the active intellect, and resurrection.

Further, they present these matters in a manner suggesting that they are the philosophical parallels to, or the true meaning of, religious beliefs and even “that the joy resulting from this apprehension is identical with the happiness promised (by the prophet-legislator).”⁴⁰ Yet their great master, Plato, had said, “As to divine (things), no certainty can be realized concerning them; rather, they are spoken of in accordance with what is most fitting and proper” - he means “opinion.”⁴¹

Since Plato was indeed the great master of al-Farabi and ibn Sina in their exposition of divine matters, and the *Timaeus*⁴² and the *Laws* were their models, we are faced again with question why the philosophers, including Plato, should find it necessary or useful to speak profusely concerning matters of which one cannot achieve certainty; why, having done this, al-Farabi and ibn Sina did not indicate clearly that they were only giving the most fitting and proper “opinions” about these matters, and why, finally, they gave the impression that these opinions were the equivalents or the fitting interpretations of religious beliefs - in short, why they presented fitting opinions in the guise of demonstrated conclusions on religious beliefs. The exploration of this theme is an indispensable pre-requisite for a sound understanding of Muslim political philosophy. For the present, we shall restrict ourselves to the following observations with the intention of clarifying ibn Khaldun’s position.

In this section on “divine science” (‘ilm ilhai) in the “Enumeration of the Sciences,” al-Farabi divides this science into three parts: the first two examine existents as existents and the principles of the demonstrations of particular theoretical sciences (logic, natural science and mathematics), respectively. The third part examines incorporeal existents, their number, order, and progression to the most perfect One, explains the attributes of this last and perfect incorporeal existent, explains “that this which has these attributes is the one which must be believed to be God,” makes known the descending order of existents beginning with Him, explains that the order of the existents involves no injustice or irregularity, and finally “sets out to refute corrupt opinions” about God.⁴³

The relation between political science, treated by him in the following chapter and the last function of divine science is not immediately clear, although the inclusion of dialectical theology (*Kalam*) as part of political science leaves no doubt as to the political importance of the opinions of the citizens concerning incorporeal existents. In his strictly political writings, on the other hand, he does set up a detailed theology for the inhabitants of the city.⁴⁴ But there he does not speak about the relation between this theology and the examinations conducted in divine science. We conclude that al-Farabi leaves the problem of the relation between divine science and political theory set up for the inhabitants of the city ambiguous, at least in his more public writings.

At first sight, ibn Sina appears to have followed a different course. In all of his works that deal with the whole subject-matter of philosophy, he presents the conclusions arrived at in divine sciences as making “obligatory” the existence of the prophets, the legislation of divine Laws, and even the contents of the beliefs and practices legislated in these Laws.⁴⁵

It is true, as ibn Khaldun observes, that ibn Sina begins his second version of political science with a recapitulation of the conclusions arrived at in the first (natural) version of political science and seems to be building the “obligatory” character of prophecy and divine Laws upon that natural basis; but ibn Khaldun correctly notes that the “proof” of the obligatory character of prophecy and divine Laws is not based on the nature of man as explained in *De Anima*, but on the additional examinations conducted thereafter in divine science.

Ibn Sina’s presentation of his political theology is indeed based on rational considerations, but not on the rational consideration of the nature of man as in *De Anima*; rather, it is based on the attributes of “the First Cause and the angels.” Being what divine science has presented the First Cause and the angels to be, it is obligatory that they should send prophets and divine Laws.⁴⁶ Since divine science is a rational science, the obligation set up here seems to be rational, not legal; God and the angels are not bound by Laws but by their very nature. Thus, ibn Khaldun is again justified in interpreting this rational obligation to mean natural necessity, and in wondering why God and the angels do not uniformly act in accordance with what is purported to be their very nature, why they have not fulfilled their obligation to the overwhelming majority of mankind and why only on rare occasions have there been prophets and divine Laws.

Ibn Sina seems indeed to argue in the context that the realization of prophecy is necessary as a preparation for the existence of the “good order” or of man’s possible perfection, a perfection which he assumes to have become evident as the proper end of man in divine science, but this raises the further question whether prophecy and divine Laws, as they are known to exist, are preparations for this type of perfection. We are, thus, forced to note that despite the apparent clarity of his presentation of the relation between his divine science and his political theology, ibn Sina leaves many questions unanswered, or that his presentation is as ambiguous as that of al-Farabi. There is, thus, ample justification for ibn Khaldun’s criticism. Following Plato, he explains that these ambiguities follow from the fact that in divine science itself the philosophers have not attained, or at least have not presented, certain knowledge, but only fair and fitting opinions. Therefore, their political theology has the same character.

Ibn Khaldun raises this issue in the most acute and critical fashion, he reveals that the philosophers, in presenting fair opinions and undemonstrated conclusions concerning the way to theoretical perfection and happiness, could only defend them by means of dialectical and rhetorical arguments, and, dialectical theologians, they do in fact assume the same role as the dialectical theologians when presenting and defending these opinions. In taking his bearings on these matters, ibn Khaldun distinguishes between philosophy properly so-called, i.e. the philosophic sciences which do in fact pursue the method of demonstration and about the conclusions of which, when properly arrived at, there can be no doubt, and philosophic theology (the greater portion of divine science) and political theology (or “divine” political science) which are in fact the philosophic versions of

dialectical theology (Kalam). He accepts the former (i.e. logic, natural science, mathematics), while rejecting the latter.⁴⁷

Ibn Khaldun's theoretical reason for this rejection is justified but cannot be considered sufficient. For granting that ultimately the theology and divine political science of the philosophers are in fact likely images and opinions presented in the guise of rational beliefs, it remains to be shown that these images and opinions are not only contrary but in fact inferior to the religious beliefs of the community in which they were being propagated. From the standpoint of demonstrative science, religious beliefs and philosophic or rational opinions enjoy the same status - they are all opinions. The quotation from Plato, however, indicates that opinions are not all alike: they can be distinguished as being more or less fitting or proper. The philosophers hold, in effect, that their rational opinions are more fitting or proper than religious beliefs and that their way of life, their virtues, and their happiness are more truly such than the way of life, the virtues and the happiness, pursued on the basis of divine Laws. Ibn Khaldun is silent on this subject; he does not attempt a direct refutation of this contention.

Instead, he explains that the philosophic way of life contradicts the religious way of life which is based on faith and obedience to the commands of a prophet-legislator, that the content of the happiness pursued by the philosopher, and that the attempt to equate or harmonize the two is an impossible task and one which is fraught with danger for the religious community - it breaks the protective wall around it, leads to doubts and scepticism about the beliefs of faith, and turns the faithful away from the tasks appointed for them by their prophet-legislator.

The philosophers were not justified in preaching their opinions to the Islamic community. Whatever their intention about reforming the beliefs of the Islamic community might have been, they had only sown confusion in the minds of the faithful, and led to the emergence of mistaken notions about the distinct purposes of religion and of philosophy. Their own way of life and their own happiness are of no concern to the religious community, and since they assert they can pursue this way of life and attain happiness regardless of the existence of divine Laws and of a religious community, they had no compelling reason to sow the seeds of confusion and dissension within the religious community and endanger its peace.

Political life, as practiced in all human communities, has to take into account the nature of all men, and should be directed to the common good of the multitude. This requires a ruler and a law based on the rational understanding of their common needs and interests in this world, or a divine Law based on their common good in this world and the next. But in every case, it is mandatory that the ruler and the law should set up opinions and actions in the forms of commands to be obeyed without qualification. The philosophic life, however, transcends all established laws. The real "meaning" of political science, "according to the wise men" themselves, is to lead a way of life in which "they dispense with rulers altogether," their "virtuous city" is not an association of men subject to commands serving their common interest, and they talk about it as a supposed or hypothetical city whose realization is highly improbable.⁴⁸

The philosophic life is then radically different from the ordinary political life of the citizens. It requires rare natures and rarely accomplished arts. The philosopher is essentially a solitary being, and the best he can hope for are few kindred spirits within a vast majority of men leading different ways of life and pursuing different ends. Since he needs to live in a political community, ibn Khaldun offers him this opportunity, but within clearly defined limits: he is not to interfere in the political life of the community in his capacity as a philosopher, not to attempt to reform the opinions of this community, not to communicate his opinions or propagate his way of life among the multitude, and he is to relinquish his role as a theologian and as a divine politician. He should restrict himself publicly to practicing the demonstrative sciences (logic, natural science, mathematics) and the useful arts (e.g. medicine, music and jurisprudence). But, above all, he should, like ibn Khaldun, uphold in no uncertain terms the Law of his community and obey it. The philosopher must present himself to his community in the guise of an ordinary citizen.

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For certain thinkers, polemic is a method of examination and investigation, a way of entering into a dialogue with their predecessors, and a means of uncovering what lies behind or beyond the garb with which their predecessors chose to clothe their thought or in the manner in which they expressed it. When, in addition, this polemic is presented to the reader to draw attention to the theoretical difficulties encountered by the author and his proposed direction for finding a solution, and to an audience which the author intends to convince to accept or reject certain opinions or a course of action, the polemic necessarily gains a formal complexity difficult to comprehend without a sustained attention to the diverse, and perhaps conflicting, purposes which is designed to serve. Ibn Khaldun's polemic against ibn Sina is an instructive example.

Muslim philosophers, dialectical theologians, and mystics, like the jurists, the pious leaders of the community, and the common run of Muslims seem to accept the superior character of the opinions and actions legislated by prophets in general and their own Prophet in particular. The unsophisticated Muslim believes in the opinions of the Prophet and performs the actions commanded by him because of his faith in their divine origin, his expectation of rewards, and his fear of punishment in the world to come, the pious leaders of the community defend and promote, by exhortation, example, and threat of punishment, communal obedience and devotion to the beliefs and the way of life of their community, the jurists formulate and elaborate the prescriptions of the Law of their community, the mystics devote themselves to practical exercises designed to facilitate the institution of the verities beyond the beliefs and legal prescriptions designed for the common run of Muslims, the dialectical theologians protect the beliefs and the ways of life of their community against rational doubts and attacks, and the philosophers attempt to present an additional rational ground for the coming of the prophet and the setting up of the opinions and actions he commands.

Ibn Khaldun, too, presents himself as the defender of Muslim beliefs and the Muslim way of life. But, instead of choosing to join the apparent consensus of all the parts of the community, or to re-establish such a consensus where it is lacking through harmonizing apparently conflicting views, he labours to make implicit conflicts explicit, to show that the apparent consensus conceals some fundamental differences, and to intensify these conflicts and differences by a show of vigorous partisanship. He is the partisan fighting for the simple, unsophisticated beliefs and the way of life of the common run of Muslims, and for the undiluted, unexplained, and unsupported faith, against the useless and dangerous efforts of mystics, dialectical theologians, and philosophers, to defend, explain and support Islam. What were the fruits of the victory, so intensely coveted by him?

On the scientific and theoretical plane his immediate aim is to disentangle the confusion between dialectical theology, mysticism and philosophy. This confusion or mixture (khalt), as we learn from his account, reigned in these disciplines in his time, and those primarily responsible for it were the “modern” school of dialectical theology and the later extreme rational mystics.⁴⁹ This objective is achieved through the reassertion of the legal character of dialectical theology and mysticism. Both must accept the beliefs and the way of life of the community and unquestionable basic axioms, they should make no pretension to extra-legal or properly rational knowledge of the nature of things: dialectical theology is to restrict itself to the defence of the beliefs and practices of the community when these are questions, and mystics should keep their supposedly intuitive achievements to themselves.

Since this confusion has been harmful to philosophy (it was in danger of losing its distinctive character and of becoming a tool of dialectical theology and mystical exercises), philosophers should contribute to it by presenting themselves to non-philosophers in the guise of dialectical theologians and mystics, as ibn Sina had done: philosophy is to exercise greater circumspection.

What induced the philosophers to present a rational support for prophecy and divine Laws was no doubt the realization that a community living in accordance with such Laws is superior to other communities - to communities without God or gods, without concern for the welfare of the soul, and without hope of a life to come. This has a demonstrative rational foundation (it is shown in the science of nature that the soul is higher than the body), and it is at the basis of ibn Khaldun’s division of regimes into “rational regimes” and “regimes of Law.”

But to say that the soul is higher than the body, that prophecy is possible, and that a regime without a divine Law, and to say that prophecy and prophetic Laws are obligatory, or that reason can prove or support the commands, the beliefs, and the virtues, set up by a legislator - these are two radically different things: the former set of propositions has solid support in the investigation of the nature of man and society, the latter has no such support.

A strictly natural, rational, and demonstrative approach to man and society is then faced with the dilemma that, while it can attain certainty

about the necessity of society, the need for a ruler, and the preservation of peace through a minimal practice of justice, it can attain no such certainty about morality, virtues, or rules of conduct. Morality and virtues of character are not, strictly speaking, natural or necessary; they have no natural basis, no ground in nature. There is not a single universally valid rule of conduct. Rational morality has no secure foundation or justification in nature, and rational moral laws are not essential to man's nature or to the nature of society.⁵⁰ There can, consequently, be no theoretical science of ethics or politics except in the extremely limited sense developed by ibn Khaldun in his science of culture.

But although not simply natural, rational, and universal, morality, virtues and general rules of conduct are not simply against nature. Society, to flourish and to be preserved, requires the common pursuit of practical ends, and these require in turn a morality and virtues readily accepted and commonly agreed upon by all, the majority or the better part of society. This is not the morality of the philosopher. The philosopher sees human perfection in theoretical knowledge. Theoretical activity has its own immediate reward. The rewards of the practice of moral virtues, in contrast, are neither evident nor immediate. They must be based on less evident rewards, such as glory or honour, or future rewards such as happiness promised to the just and the virtuous in the world to come.

The philosophic study of ethics and politics, if it is intended to go beyond the perfection and the happiness reserved for the philosopher and possible only through philosophic way of life or the life of theoretical activity, has to assume the character of a practical discipline and to have as its object the generally acceptable opinions about goodness and happiness, e.g. that moderation is good, that the pleasures of the soul are superior to the pleasures of the body, or that the future rewards of virtue are preferable to the immediate rewards of vice. The aim of such a practical philosophy, however, is not knowledge but action, i.e. the practical pursuit and realization of the good.

Yet philosophy, since it does not rule in cities, lacks the practical implementation of what it considers fair and fitting; therefore, the need for a ruler, a legislator, a law, and a tradition as instruments for the execution of moral duties and obligations. It is thus not philosophy, but the legislator, the legal prescriptions, and the embodiment of the law in the traditional way of life of the community that are the efficient cause which forces the citizens to lead a virtuous way of life. The law, and not practical philosophy or reason, is what redeems that lack of ground or necessity in nature: it supplies the justification, the obligation, and the authority that compel the citizens to hold fast to fair and fitting opinions entailing the renunciation of their natural and compelling desires which opinion alone is unable to achieve.

Divine Laws revealed to prophet-legislators have the additional force of being based on the belief in their divine origin, in the over-powering will of God, and in the certainty of the rewards and punishments in the world to come, they are thus the most efficient laws and offer the most compelling ground for accepting as valid what cannot be demonstrated by nature and reason.

The attempt to offer a natural and rational explanation of the beliefs embodied in these Laws, as practised by dialectical theology, mysticism, and philosophy, is unwise and dangerous. It may, in certain cases, strengthen the faith of the believers in the commands of a divine law, but it may also weaken that faith by bringing to light certain discrepancies between these commands and what is rationally most fitting and proper. Since, ultimately, there is no naturally or rationally demonstrative and compelling ground for these commands, the multitude will be made aware of this fact and this will lead to the loss of unquestioned faith in them and since the multitude are incapable of knowing or pursuing the human perfection attainable by theoretical activity, they will pursue sham and pseudo-scientific activities: the citizens will lose their civic or religious virtues without finding the happiness reserved for the true philosopher.

Ibn Khaldun's theoretical consideration of the nature of man and society thus results in a practical teaching aimed at the protection of the Muslim religious community and its divine Law against the confusion and disruption resulting from the vulgarization of philosophy. This practical teaching is founded on the consideration of the respective character of rational morality and the law, but in recommending it to the Muslims of his time, ibn Khaldun supports it by the more acceptable authority of the Prophet, the pious ancestors, and the consensus of the leaders of the community, i.e. he presents it as a legal injunction. Whatever the theoretical status of his critique of the social role of philosophy may be, his practical recommendation to the faithful must be obeyed because of its legal character.

Ibn Khaldun did not consider the critical issue for the Muslim community of his time to be the rational justification or support of its divine Law. Indeed, he thought that this issue was a luxury which his community could not afford because it was faced with problems that involved its very existence. Long periods of cultural decline and disintegration were threatening to dissolve the fabric of society. What the community and its leaders needed most was clarity concerning the elementary and natural foundations of human association or culture and the understanding of the natural and necessary conditions without which no society can exist at all. Muslims had for centuries lived as members of a religious community under the aegis of the divine Law until they came to forget other forms of social life and the fact that religion and the Law cannot continue to exist except when based on a solid foundation of social solidarity, royal authority, and other indispensable natural conditions.

The Prophet and the early Muslims were clearly aware of that and acted accordingly. But in ibn Khaldun's time, this was no more the case. Therefore, he set out to teach his compatriots and co-religionists the telling lessons of history, and his new science of culture and his investigation of the natural basis of political life within this science were intended to explain to his readers those elementary, indispensable natural conditions which Muslims and their rulers need to consider if they are to succeed in preserving their religious community and divine Law. They may not need philosophy to explain and support their religion and Law, but they are in

desperate need of it for understanding the natural foundation of their religion and Law, and this in turn is an indispensable condition for preserving their way of life.

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Notes

1. Q. 1 278ff. Cf. Book Four, Part Four, Chapter 46 for bibliographical information about ibn Khaldun’s works and other works cited in the footnotes. Complete bibliographical information will be given in this chapter only for works not already cited.

2. Q 1, 278, 2, 201

3. Q 1, 278: 5 - 7, 337 - 38, 398:3, 415:5, 2, 126.

4. Q 1, 247 - 48, 291:15 - 16, 293, 294:16 - 18, 299 - 300, 309, 336 - 38, 342; 2 19:4 - 5, 65ff, 93ff, 106 - 07, 128.

5. Q. 1 299 - 300, 305 - 06, 309ff.

6. Q 1, 291:15 - 16, 293, 294:16 - 18, 299:14, 331:1 - 2, 342; 2, 93ff, 108ff.

7. Q. 1, 342ff; 2, 126ff.

8. Talkhis Nawamis Aflatun (“Compendium Legum Platonis”), ed. Franciscus Gabrieli (“Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi, Corpus Platonieum, Plato Arabus,” Vol. 3), London, The Warburg Institute, 1952, pp. 16 - 18.

9. Ibid., pp. 17:4, 18:2 and 6, 24:10, 33:13, 41:6.

10. Q. 1, 61; cf. above, Chap. 46.

11. Cf. Q. 3, 322, where ibn Khaldun refers to the flowing prose used “in rhetorical (speeches) and prayer, and encouraging and frightening the multitude,” and also 324 where he indicates the political use of such rhetorical speeches.

12. Q. 1, 62:3 - 10.

13. Q. 1, 63:5 - 8.

14. Q. I, 63 - 64.

15. Q. 1, 72:7 - 73:5.

16. Q. 1, 345 - 46.

17. Ihsa’ al-‘Ulum (La statistique des sciences), ed. Osman Amin (2nd ed., Cairo, Dar al-Fikr al-‘Arabi, 1949), pp. 102ff.

18. In al-Farabi’s “Enumeration of the Sciences,” political science (which includes the art of jurisprudence and the art of dialectical theology) comes at the end immediately following divine science. Following the same scheme, all of ibn Sina’s comprehensive philosophical works relegate political science to the very end to be treated as an ancillary to divine science. This argument is based on the consideration that the subject of divine science includes the study of “spiritual” beings, and is, thus, in a position to correct the false opinions about them in the city, and that, for ibn Sina in particular, the “branches” (furu‘) of divine science are concerned with the study of revelation, miracles, resurrection, and reward and punishment; cf. al-Farabi, Ihsa’, pp. 99 - 101; ibn Sina, Aqşam al-‘Ulum al-‘Aqliyyah (The Parts of Rational Sciences) in Tis‘ Rasa’il, Cairo, Matba‘ah Hindiyyah, 1326/1908, pp. 112 - 16.

A political science concerned with the opinions and actions of a religious community must, therefore, follow the study of the principles of these opinions and actions in divine

science. Ibn Khaldun, who clearly saw the close relation between divine science and the “divine” version of political philosophy, adopts, as we shall indicate, an equally critical attitude towards both.

19. Uyun, pp. 40 - 46, 59 - 60; cf. pp. 16 - 17; Isharat, pp. 119 - 37, 176 - 222; Najat, pp. 157 - 93, 284, 38: “Nafs,” Shifa’, pp. 157 - 268, “Siyasah,” Shifa’ (La sociologie et la politique dans la philosophie d’Avicenne”) ed. Mohammad Yusuf Musa (“Memorial Avicenne” 1), cairo, Institute Francais d’Archeologie Orientale, 1952, pp. 8 - 27.

20. Aqsam al-‘Ulam, p. 105.

21. Ibid., pp. 107 - 08. This philosophic discussion of the prophetic regime, according to ibn Sina, is contained in Plato’s works on the nomoi.

22. “Siyassah,” Shifa’, pp. 8ff.

23. For a more detailed discussion of this problem, cf. Leo Strauss, “The Law of Reason in the Kuzar” in Persecution and the Art of Writing, Glencoe, Illinois, Free Press, 1952, pp. 95 - 141, and Natural Right and History, Chicago, the University of Chicago Press, 1953, pp. 156 - 64.

24. Cf. above, pp. 966 - 67.

25. Not that a particular language, etc., is necessary, but the some language is necessary.

26. Q. 1, 346:4 - 5.

27. Cf. above, p. 965; Q. 3, 73.

28. Q. 3, 213.

29. Fasl al-Maqal (Traite decisf), ed. L. Gauthier, 3rd ed., Alger, Editions Carbonel, 1948, pp. 20ff.

30. Q. 3, 27:1 - 3.

31. Q. 3, 29 - 30.

32. Q. 3, 31 - 35.

33. Al-Farabi , Ihsa’, pp. 108 - 13.

34. Q. 3, 40 - 42, 45 - 49.

35. Q. 3, 40, cf. also 41

36. Q. 1, 345 - 46.

37. Q. 3, 210:2 - 5, 211:15 - 17.

38. Q. 3, 210:5 - 6. Here we see another similarity between the philosophers and the innovating theologians (the Mu’tazilites): the latter sought to “understand” and “interpret” religious beliefs through reason.

39. Q. 3, 210:7 - 8, 211 - 12.

40. Q. 3, 121, 213 - 18.

41. Q. 3, 215:12 - 13.

42. The quotation from Plato apparently refers to Timaeus 28C; cf. Rosenthal’s translation of Q. vol. 3, p 252, n 1029.

43. Isha’, pp. 99 - 101.

44. Cf., e.g., Ara’ Ahl al-Madinat al-Fadilah (“Der Musterstaat”), ed. Fr. Dieterici, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1895, pp. 5ff.

45. “Siyasah,” Shifa’, pp. 12ff Consider the frequent repetition of wa-yajibu (and it is obligatory) through the text.

46. Ibid., p. 9:8 and passim.

47. Q. 3, 212 - 20.

48. Q. 2, 127.

49. Q. 3, 121 - 24.

50. Since the attack of al-Ghazālī and ibn Rushd on ibn Sina, the latter’s star declined, especially in western Islam. To attack ibn Sina was fashionable, not only in theological, but in philosophical circles as well. The significance of ibn Khaldun’s attack, however, consists in uncovering those fundamental, bitter, and practically dangerous philosophical truths which philosophers before him, precisely because they identified themselves with the philosophers, could not utter.

**A History of Muslim Philosophy Volume 2, Book 5:
Other Disciplines (Covering Both The Early And The
Later Centuries)**

Part 1: Language and Literature

Chapter 50: Arabic Literature, Poetic and Prose Forms

Chapter 51: Arabic Literature, Poetic and Prose Forms

Chapter 52: Arabic Literature: Theories of Literary Criticism

Chapter 53: Persian Literature

Chapter 54: Turkish Literature

Chapter 50: Arabic Literature, Poetic and Prose Forms

A. Poetry

Let us imagine an Arab Bedouin riding his camel on frequent long journeys across lonely deserts. While the rhythmic beating of the padded hoofs on soft sand breaks the stillness of the air, the rider is sunk deep in recollections of his own past. As he feels excited to share his mood with his “two companions and fellow-travellers,” there is nothing more natural than that he should start chanting in unison with the movement which has the sole possession of his entire perception. This unsophisticated outpouring of one’s heart in response to an occasional urge took the form of *rajaz* - the simple iambic alternation of *harakah* (moved or vocalized) and *sukun* (quiescent consonant) corresponding to the alternation in the lifting and lowering of the camel’s feet. (Cf. the *khbab* in which the pattern of alternation corresponds to the pace of the horse.)

The observation of the effects of the “song” induced a deliberate practice to beguile the man and quicken the animal. As the practice grew and attracted talent, formalities accumulated by common taste and general acceptance, giving rise to the art of poetry. The art was not slow to create for itself forms much more varied and complex than the original *rajaz*. About the middle of the second/eighth century when al-Khalil scrutinized the structure of Arabic poetry according to the quantitative measure suggested to him by the different tones on the rebound of the smith’s hammer (just akin to the camel’s tread) he admirably reduced it to a system of prosody consisting of 16 material forms.

Some foreign influence is not precluded from the development of some of these standard Arabic forms, all of which, of course, did not, and could not, have an equal measure of antiquity or popularity. What is remarkable is that this system of prosody sufficed to serve as the hard core of future indigenous development as well as assimilation of foreign models up to the present day.

By the quarter of the fifth century A.D. when we get our first yet full acquaintance with Arabic poetry, myriads of tribes hailing from different quarters of the country had commingled sufficiently at commercial coliterary fairs, e.g. that of ‘Ukaz, religious such as at Mecca, and cultural as that at Hirah, to evolve a common language and widely appreciated norms and forms of artistic composition, though, naturally enough, they exhibited peculiarities of usage of speech. This common literary medium which developed out of the North Arabic, coinciding with the steady decline of the economic, political and cultural influence of the South, was leavened mainly in Hirah with the accompaniments of material and religious civilization as augmented with currents - Judaic, Christian, and Graeco-Roman - from the opposite end of the Northern Desert.

Generally speaking, it was precise to finesse so far as Bedouin life and environment were concerned, but lacked the facility for conveying abstract ideas and general concepts. However, it possessed, by the very nature of its being a compromise between various dialects, an immense wealth of synonyms together with ample resources of rhyme and assonance inherent in its schematic morphology. Thus *saj’* (rhyme) came to be the first and

natural form of artistic composition prompted by the instinct for symmetry and balance in the structure of short, compact sentences especially designed for intonation and oral transmission without being committed to writing.

The saj' existed before metre; the evolution of metrical forms only pushed it to the end of a verse under the name of qafiyah. It is sometimes overlooked that the qafiyah constituted an essential element - and not an additional, far less artificial, embellishment in the structure of Arabic poetry. In other words, verse without qafiyah has been unknown in Arabic during its infancy as much as in its youth and old age. As we shall see later, so long as there was healthy development, any tendency on the part of the qafiyah to rigidity and monotony was checked in due time by adequate adaptation to the requirements of the theme (vide the evolution of muzdawij and musammāt).

In the period of decadence it was not sheer conservatism but a deep realization of its essential worth, which caused artificiality to be preferred to freedom. The positive function of the qafiyah in laying down rails, so to say, for the movement of thought, is demonstrated by the spontaneous rush of the imagination of the audience to the end - almost the entire later half - of a line ahead of actual recitation by the poet.¹ Such a thrilling experience of effective communion between the poet and his audience is in no way rare wherever Arabic poetry (or Persian or Urdu poetry for that matter) is recited even today. This is quite apart from the practical utility of the qafiyah in helping memorization as alluded to before.

In the sociological fabric of the pre-Islamic time the poet occupied a very high and influential position. The popular mind was impressed so deeply with the efficacy of his art that it believed him to be in communion with some super-natural source vaguely identified with a jinn or a devil. But the conception about his art was the same as about the skill of a horseman, it had to be consecrated entirely to the cause of the solidarity and the ascendancy of the tribe. The poet had a task irrevocably assigned to him, which was to act the spokesman and the counsel on behalf of the tribe.

Hence, he was expected to specialize in a knowledge of the tribal saga supporting the cause for his clients and against their rivals.² In short, poetry was appreciated primarily as a weapon of offence and defence in the struggle of tribes against tribes; its function was to commemorate the glories of the poet's own tribe, exalt its achievements in war and peace, and embolden it against the other tribes by holding them to scorn. There was little room for the personality of the poet to detach itself even for a while from the interests and the fortune of the tribe.

Naturally enough, the motifs of pre-Islamic poetry sprang fundamentally from the spirit of the jahiliyyah - the ignorance of a moral code of conduct characterized by a strong sense of tribal solidarity based on blood kinship, and highly volatile passions cramped within stunted sympathies and primary selfish impulses.³ Thus, the two oldest kinds of verse were the *hija'* (satire) and the *fakhr* (self-glorification) with the keynote of the *hamas* or desperate pursuit of unbridled aggression. True, the *nasib* (erotic verse) also must have had an independent form in the oldest time but all the same it could not have occupied a position other than the subsidiary one which is assigned to it in

the scheme of the qasidah. After all, the theme of love had no bearing on the security of the tribe. The very reason that its interest was human and universal, i.e. not peculiar to the tribe, was enough to render it inconsequential.

Leaving aside the *hija'*, which has throughout maintained its independent form, the *fakhr* in its kindred form of *madih* (eulogy) came to assume the pivotal position in the structure of the qasidah, which was devised especially to rope in the *nasib* and many other minor forms of occasional verse to subserve it. This "loose-knitting" of the diverse kinds into a rigidly conventional structure seems to have come into vogue not long before our earliest acquaintance with Arabic poetry, i.e. about 125 years before Islam.⁴ The order in the composition of the qasidah is invariably as follows. First comes the *nasib* by way of a prelude, second, the *madih* as the main part, and third, the *khatimah* (epilogue) which is most didactic. A certain proportion was observed particularly between the first two parts on the principle that the *nasib* should neither over-shadow the *madih* nor pass without fulfilling its function of catching the ear of the audience for the latter.

The Nasib

Usually the poet pictures himself as confronting, in the course of his journeys to and from, the remains of the encampment which once had been the scene of his love. This gives him the opportunity to depict with remarkable pathos the scene of the separation and recollect in moving terms the charms of the beloved and the pleasures of her company in the past. The physical charms are dwelt upon with much gusto and not a little sensuousness. The discreteness of the Arab mind is amply shown in concentration on the individual parts of the body one by one.

To take just one typical instance, the Arab poet has a long breath in expatiating on the saliva - its purity, coolness, freshness, and fragrance like that of "early morning rain collected in a clear stony pond" - which nectar he would suck, draught after draught, with the zest of a drunkard in order to convey the meaning of the simple word "kiss." A life free from hard work is idealized for its effect in promoting feminine delicacy and untarnished complexion. To stay behind the curtains, well protected from the rigours of the weather, and jealously guarded in the manner of "the delicate shell of an egg under the feathers" was the vision which enthralled the heart of a young damsel.

Qualities of heart, particularly modesty, gentleness of manners, friendliness towards neighbours, and mirthful coquetry in the company of the lover, are also highly appreciated but only as adjuncts of physical beauty. Having perforce to suffer long spans of solitude due to unsettled life, the Bedouin acquired high sensitivity to any stimulus to his memory.⁵ Hence addresses to the natural surroundings associated with the exploits of the past and outbursts of sympathetic response to the cooing of the dove and the like are an ubiquitous feature. Further, it was the relish for musing which earned for the image of the beloved (*khayal* or *taif*) a special place in Arabic poetry.

The poet's feeling of love for the beloved is expressed only in general terms such as the comparison of his own heartache to that of "a she-camel who has lost her young." For the rest, the pursuit of love is only reminiscent of "the hot chase of a game." The only relieving feature is that of the Arab lover insists on a response to his love, and that without any trace of cringing. He would start taking pride in his own qualities so as not to leave any doubt about his deserts for the esteem of the beloved, but in the end he would not mind warning bluntly that although he relishes coquetry he cannot brook any affront to his dignity. That is why in describing the union he would take care to mention the yielding, passive and tacit though it may be, on the part of the beloved.

Incidental to the journeying of the poet in quest of love and fortune comes the description of the animals and the natural scene. It has been said that the camel occupies the same place in Arabic poetry as the cow in the Rg-Veda. The horse, no less indispensable for the normal pursuits of life including war, comes next. Though the description came soon afterwards to sound jejune even to the townfolk of Baghdad, one cannot help being moved even today by the tenderly feeling shown to the two animals which equals to, sometimes even exceeds, that reserved for the members of the household.

To bring out certain points of comparison in the riding beasts, the poet turns to the wild animals, among which the pride of place goes to the wild ass, the wild cow and the ostrich. The subject of wild life is frequently enlivened with fine thrilling scenes of flight and chase. The natural scene is, of course, dominated by clouds, thunder, lightning, rain and the mirage, not to speak of the desert and the mountain valleys.

The Madih

The nasib formed only a prelude to catch the ear of the audience, the main theme being the madih. Though in the form of personal eulogy, it is really a concentration of the pride in the tribe. The particular patron to whom the verses are addressed is a mere peg on which to hang the ideal that united the tribe as against other tribes. The so-called virtues constituting this ideal are, in addition to the hamas already noted, the over-powering passion for vendetta, loyalty to friends and allies (and not to any moral law or civic organization), and hospitality to guests. The pride in valour was so all-engrossing that the dictates of prudence always needed a special and somewhat diffident, pleading.

But, as a rule, the Bedouin considered it below his dignity to try strength with an unequal foe, which is reflected in his acknowledgement of merit on the other side. Those who refused to be restrained by the collective interest and initiative of the tribe in practice of these same virtues were designated the sa'alik, i.e. disowned outlaws, whose production bears the exceptional feature of defiance of tribal authority and extra hardihood. Hospitality and generosity were characterized by the same excesses as courage and aimed only at achieving prominence over other tribes. With the transition from tribal into some kind of State organization as, for example, at Hirah, the panegyric tended to be more and more personal and acquired features of flattery.

The Khatimah

The didactic epilogue was devoid of any depth of thought and merely embodied lessons learnt from practical experience in the particular and limited milieu. Religion sat very lightly on the pagan Arab, some occasional references to pre-Islamic ritual only prove that it was treated as part of an inherited tribal custom⁶ without symbolizing any moral ideal. The absence of religious thought and feeling is fully confirmed by the total lack of reasoning of any kind whatsoever.

Death is frequently mentioned as a stark fact, but it only stimulated bravery, rather rashness, on the battlefield, on the one hand, and a sort of hectic hedonism in the intervals of peace, on the other. It is in this context that the poetry of Jewish and Christian poets and such pagan poets as were influenced by their thought (e.g. Zuhair and the Hanifs) assumes a distinctive character. The idea of submission to a Supreme Power controlling man and the universe, a life after death involving moral retribution, and a spirit of peace and respect for the rights of others (the very anti-thesis of hamas) stand out as streaks of early morning light in the surrounding darkness.

Such poetry flourished mostly in Hirah and the oasis towns like Yathrib and al-Ta'if, which were also the centres of material civilization. Hence truly religious thought and emotion are found side by side with exhilarating pictures of urban refinement in luxury as in the poetry of 'Adiyy b. Zaid. It is noteworthy that the Romans and Christians were throughout, from the beginning down to the 'Abbasid period, the purveyors not only of wines but also of the etiquette of wine-drinking.⁷ Anyhow, wine-drinking had become a common habit. On the other hand, artistic music and dancing, so far as they are mentioned in pre-Islamic poetry, are mere clichés popularized by individuals who had occasions of frequenting centres of high life under Persian and/or Roman influence. Both these arts were neither indigenous to nor common in the Arabian Society of the days before the Islamic conquests.

The qasidah presented a series of thoughts moulded in self-contained verses strung together in the most impressive form of a single metre and qafiyah. A thought running into more than one verse was a rarity and regarded somewhat as a weakness of the poet. But one wonders whether the outward unity which was so perfect as to invite the charge of monotony from the uninitiated possessed also a similar unity of thought and ideas.

The fact is that there was enough of coherence internally within the two main parts, viz. the nasib and the madih, though the appreciation of it depends upon a certain degree of familiarity with the pattern of life and the train of thought and feeling generated by it. It was only the transition from the first to the second part which was rather abrupt, either lacking a link altogether or depending upon one which was clearly artificial and weak. It is, however, untrue to say that the Arabs were not conscious of it; on the other hand, they were throughout applying their ingenuity to husn al-istitrad (grace of digression).

Similarly, there is no doubt that the ideas as well as the modes of expression were stereotyped, but the primary reason for it is to be sought in

the physical existence of the Arab Bedouin which was characterized, above all, by little variety. The pre-occupation with a hard and meagre subsistence in a monotonous natural scene contributed to averseness to all serious reflection and to poverty of theme. At the same time the totalitarian demands of tribal loyalty left little room for indulgence in personal experience or individual reaction. As soon as thought was quickened by spiritual impulses from Judaism and Christianity and the monotony of life was relieved by the encroachment of Aramaean and Persian material civilizations, the structure of the qasidah proved accommodating enough to change.

In addition to *hija'*, there was one more form of artistic poetry, namely, the *ritha'* (elegy), which maintained its position independently of the qasidah. Although this form too had its own clichés and was dominated by the spirit of *hamas* and the passion for vendetta, yet the element of strong personal emotion running through it is often genuine and highly remarkable. It is this reliability of the personal element which brings to the fore the strength of the lament of the sisters as compared with that of the wives, which is again a projection of the all-powerful importance of blood kinship.

The tradition has concerned itself only with the preservation of artistic poetry,⁸ unconventional pieces prompted by events of everyday life were allowed to lapse. Yet a number of them noted for wit and humour (*al-mulah*) are available for enjoyment on informal occasions.

Islam and Poetry

Wherever the ideals of the jahilliyyah suffered a decline owing to the growth of a sense of justice and corporate life under some kind of civic and political organization, there was left little scope for self-glorification at the expense of others (i.e. *hija'*, *fakhr*, and *hamas*). Al-Jumahi makes an interesting point when he attributes the paucity of poets and the meagreness of poetry in the tribe of Quraish already before the advent of Islam to a sense of respect for the rights of others as exemplified by the incident arising out of the lampooning by *ibn al-Zib'ara*.⁹

Thus, pre-Islamic poetry being so dependent on tribal wars for its impulses and motives, Islam was bound to make the ground slip under the feet of the poets. As soon as the faithful renounced all pride (*al-nakhwah*) and blind partisanship (*al-'asabiyyah*) in favour of a universal egalitarian brotherhood and organized their life under a government by-law, which guaranteed mutual rights and obligations, eliminating resort to force, and treated satire as punishable libel, the poets naturally felt that their day was over.

Unable or unwilling to appreciate any ideal of morality, they turned their invectives against the person of Muhammad and aligned themselves actively on the side of his opponents. It was such poets, and not poets or poetry in general, who were denounced in the Qur'an as incapable of leadership due to lack of moral thinking and purposeful activity.¹⁰ Severe penalties had also to be meted out to a number of them such as Abu 'Azza, al-Nadr b. al-Harith and Ka'b b. al-Ashraf - all of whom had played a part as active competitors while using the art of poetry as an additional weapon directed

especially against the person of Muhammad, whose kindness they were not loth to exploit whenever they found themselves helpless.

But the reason for the vehement pique and chagrin of the poets against Islam went much deeper. The ideals of the jahiliyyah were not the only thing involved, their art itself was threatened with dislodgment from the position or supremacy enjoyed theretofore. Was there not the Qur'an held up as a challenge to artistic composition? It is quite understandable that the Arabs should be completely at a loss to place the Qur'an in any of the categories of artistic composition known to them. They would call it al-shi'r (poetry) when their own poetic production was so palpably different from it both in form and content.

Only poetry had been known to exercise such sway over the minds of the people as the Qur'an did. If it were not poetry it could only be grouped along with the utterances of a soothsayer (kahin) or a person in trance (majnun). This equation, however, had an ostensibly disparaging intent inasmuch as such utterances were seldom held in high esteem as a piece of art. The allusion was only in their enigmatic character in which the people deciphered fortune and prophecy. When at last they turned to the content, they gave unmistakable proof of their jahiliyyah outlook on finding the Qur'an to be merely a bundle of "the stories of the ancient peoples" (asatir al-awwalin).

Soon they propped up one of them, al-Nadr b. al-Harith, to draw the people away from the Qur'an with his skill in reciting the stories of Rustan and Isfandiyar. As a matter of fact, the form of the Qur'an is derived from a familiar pattern, yet it represents a new class by itself. It is prose composed of short, compact sentences which, when read together, sound as balanced counter-parts (mathani), The endings (fawasil) of them having a distinguishable cadence free from the shackles of a regular saj'. It bewildered and dismayed the Arabs that this form which, in contrast with the familiar pattern of the soothsayers, tending to simplicity rather than artificial encumbrance, should soar to such height of inimitable perfection as to constitute a challenge to poetry.

The same is true of the diction employed in the Qur'an: it is clear and easily intelligible (mubin), yet pure and elegant. But whatever the elegance of form and diction, the uniqueness of the Qur'an lay particularly in its content, the reflection on the world of nature as distinguished from an aesthetic worship of it, the search for a goal of life and an ideal of morality in human conduct, in short, the awakening of the forces of good in the nature of man to set limits to, and control, the evil in himself. It was this content which made the Qur'an the prototype of an entirely new class of literary composition. In later times it was an aberration of the pre-Islamic taste which exalted the excellence of the word over and above that of the content.¹¹

It is quite easy for us to realize the dismay of the poets whose production, when judged subsequently by the standards of the Greek philosophers, was found to be nothing but an exhortation of lewdness, only two qualities of character, namely, bravery and generosity, were such as could be said to be harmless to the youth. But the Prophet appreciated their art much more than

they realized. He could not taboo poetry; rather, he would listen eagerly to the verse of Umayyah b. Abi al-Salt and many others. He was not even indifferent.

On the other hand, he adopted the way of active patronage and guidance to make clear the demands for adjustment. As an example, let us take the case of Ka'ab b. Zuhair. The ode which brought him the burdah (mantle) as a prize is in the traditional style. It opens with erotic verses lamenting separation from the beloved, Su'ad, and recalling her physical charms, not excluding the intoxication of the saliva compared to wine. The madih puts a new aspect in so far as the glorification of the new ideal is concerned.¹² But the poet did not yet know how to restrain his passion for satire; he had to make amends for suppressed expressions on the Ansar.

Thus, the only demand made by orthodox Islam on the poets was to avoid the proud and gleeful recounting of adventures of sinful pleasure such as abound in the verses of the "Vagabond Prince," and to refrain from indulging in tribal pride or exaltation of force regardless of moral rectitude.¹³ Within these ordinary limits of decency and peaceful life the old literary traditions were to survive and grow. It has particularly to be noted that erotic interest in woman or even the mention of wine as a symbol of joyful experience was lawful pursuit, and not in renunciation, of sensuous pleasure. As the examples of Dabi' b. al-Harith and al-Hutai'ah would prove, only the satire and the libel were sternly put down.

Development of the Ghazal

The detachment of poetry from the passions and the fury of tribal antagonism as well as the absence under the Orthodox Caliphate of that corruptive patronage which draws talent away from the universal human interests to flattery of personages, conduced inevitably to concentration in the theme of love in poetry and song. These arts were cultivated in the Hijaz by the sprightly and intelligent youth from among the nobility of the Ansar and the Muhajirin, who were precluded from playing their part in politics and government and were at the same time pampered with frequent accessions to their already vast hereditary fortune in the form of largesses on behalf of the Umayyads.

Thus frustration, leisure, and opulence all combined to turn the creative genius to art and amusement. The peculiarly Islamic institution of rehabilitating the prisoners of war as members of the households of the conquerors, instead of segregating them in penal camps, has always had far-reaching consequences, in the field of cultural inter-change but never were such consequences so great as in the case of the conquest of Persia. Suffice it to say that it was the new Persian element in the households of Mecca and Medina which for the first time introduced artistic music and dancing in the very heart of Arabian society.¹⁴

In the special traditions of the people and the time, there was no music and dancing without poetry. Therefore, poetry underwent a highly welcome and profound change both in form as well as content. Whereas in the jahiliyyah period the motif of aggressive self-glorification often made some of the more militant tribes positively to discourage the ghazal, it now came to be the main theme catering to the refined aesthetic taste and tenderly

feelings of the new society. Naturally enough, the erotic prelude came in hand for development as an independent form, which, by the way, marked the beginning of the breaking up of the “loose unity of the qasidah.”

The development of the independent form of the ghazal took two distinct and parallel lines. First, the licentious (al-ibahiyy) ghazal, best represented by ‘Umar b. Abi Rabi‘ah (d.c. 101/719), flourished in the towns and faithfully reflected the high life obtained there. As compared with the pre-Islamic nasib, this ghazal is an end in itself. The poet is no longer a warrior made essentially of hard stuff, who snatches a few moments of respite to devote to the hot pursuit of a woman. Rather, he is an amiable and amorous youth entirely devoted to the cultivation of his feeling of love and desire for soft dalliance without being distracted by any thought of tribal security and personal safety.

The description of physical charms is no more a mere description; it is rather a fine aesthetic appreciation of beauty. Still more remarkable is the shifting of the focus inwards and the transformation of the union into an exchange of feeling and sentiment.¹⁵ And both the lover and the beloved are endowed with sharp wit, humour, and the mood for sport. In short, the qualities of the mind and the longings of the heart come to the fore and find unimpeded expression. Special delight is taken in the evasion of social restrictions and the celebration of clandestine visits while the congregation at the time of the hajj is brought in as the connoisseur’s opportunity for the enjoyment of beauty from near and far.

The second kind of ghazal was born of the ideal of Platonic love cultivated in the desert. The chastening influence of the restraints of Islam on the simple-living Bedouins had the remarkable result of originating the conception of love shorn of all tinge of bodily lust - an ideal conception thoroughly unknown to the pre-Islamic Arab. This ideal is enshrined in the highly subjective verse centring on the popular stories of Majnun-Laila and Jamil-Buthainah. They may or may not have been real historical personages; what really matters is that they do represent a type of idealistic lover who regards any touch of lust as desecration of love, beauty, and art. No wonder that the physical charms are over-shadowed by a tete-a-tete between two hearts full of deep pathos.

Vilifying Ghazal

It has already been noted that the lover-poets of the towns were really men of frustrated political ambitions. Their impotent rage against the rulers would not be held back even when they sought to beguile it with art. Rather it is highly interesting to note that it should turn the artistic form of the licentious ghazal into an instrument for vilification and political vendetta. Taking the typical example of ibn Qais al-Ruqayyat (d.c. 80/699 - 700) one finds him mentioning Umm al-Banin, the wife of Walid b. ‘Abd al-Malik, as the object of his flirtation. His aim was no other than to leave the Umayyad monarch smarting with anger, even though sometimes he adroitly contrived in the verse itself to absolve the innocent lady of guilt.

Apart from political vendetta, it became a commonplace with the poets to give rebirth to *hija’* in the form of ghazal by mentioning the ladies and the female relations of their enemies in shamefully amorous terms. How

unrelated to truth all this was, is illustrated by the incident of Umm Ja'far. When she could not keep patience over al-Ahwas, a Medinese poet, mentioning her in his verses in order to bring her people into disrepute, she caught hold of him one day in the market-place and demanded of him the money which, she made out, he owed to her. As the poet swore that he did not know her at all, she remarked, "Of course, you do not know me, yet you mention many things about me in your verses."

It is no surprise that State authority was sometimes invoked against such poets in the same way as it was invoked in the case of the direct *hija'* of al-Hutai'ah and others. At the same time there is evidence to show that at least the high-class ladies aspired to have their charms sung by the poets in the same way as in our own days they would feel proud to see their photographs in newspapers. It must, however, be remembered that, on the whole, "licence" was confined to a disregard of social conventions relating to contacts between the two sexes; otherwise, obscenity was guarded against in all good taste.

In regard to form, it is enough to remind ourselves that the lover-poets of Mecca and Medina produced for the first time a lyric verse especially designed to be set to music. With this purpose they naturally referred such metres as were short and characterized by an easy flow, though they continued to rely mainly on the old tradition itself. Consequent upon the development of natural, humanistic interests, all artificiality about the language and pompousness was shed and simple unaffected expression in familiar words and soft tones came to be aimed at. To some, though very limited, extent, continuous verse also came into use for such purposes as the reproduction of dialogues in love-poetry.

It so happened that the merits of the Umayyad poetry set out above received little appreciation owing to the pre-occupation of the scholars with such pre-Islamic poetry as might be helpful in the study and preservation of the idiom of the Qur'an. With regard to its appreciation, the time factor alone was the prime importance; hence the prejudice in favour of the pre-Islamic verse became stereo-typed and all pervading. It was ibn Khaldun who first realized that, linguistic research apart, the intrinsic artistic merits of the Umayyad poetry were definitely far superior to those of the pre-Islamic poetry.

And the reason for it was that those who lived under Islam benefited from the model of high class speech provided by the Qur'an and the Hadith; hence, their literary taste improved a great deal beyond that of the pre-Islamic people. That this improvement should have taken a generation to manifest itself fully in poetry (and also in prose), was quite natural and should not stand in the way of tracing it to its origins in Islam. The depth of thought, the richness of imagination, the paramountcy of content, the search within for the feelings of the heart, and the consciousness of the restraint of reason, and its Holy Book, and these general qualities are perceptible in the post-Islamic production even where the themes are un-Islamic.

It was perhaps this un-Islamic element such as the "licence" in *ghazal* and the lampooning in the *naqa'id* which, in addition to the necessities of linguistic research, turned the attention away from the contribution of Islam

to the literary production of the Umayyad period. Ibn Khaldun further tells us that some of the learned scholars of his time had to acknowledge their dormant impression of the superior merits of the post-Islamic production, as if it were to their own surprise, but were unable to give any reason for it.¹⁶ No wonder that the view of Ibn Khaldun should remain unattended until it found an echo in Taha Hussain, although the latter's judgment seems to have been the result of the application of the modern standards of literary criticism in the West.

If one were to look for the dominating motif of poetry in Islam itself, it will be found in the verses of the Kharijites. Their production represents a characteristic regimentation of the pre-Islamic qualities of hardihood, courage, and sacrifice in the service of the ideology of Islam. Just because it is as true of life as the poetry of the pre-Islamic age, the new spirit, ideals, and sentiments are clearly discernible. Yet it symbolizes, according to the cultural milieu of the Kharijites, the purely ancient Arab tradition as mellowed by the Islamic Puritanism.

Most interesting is the survival without any loss of attraction of the erotic theme in a society where even the "talk" of wine or a mere hint of laxity in relationship between the two sexes was an unpardonable offence. Equally notable is the spirit of martyrdom which would not allow virility to be impaired by a relish of tragedy and pathos for their own sake.

While under the Islamic influence poetry was set on its course of development along natural, humanistic lines, the corruptive patronage of the Court stepped in to revive the old tribal antagonism and buy off unscrupulous, though talented, poets to act as its propagandists. Thus the trio - Farazdaq, Jarir, and al-Akhtal - attained high fame in the field of panegyric and lampoon. They couched praise for the Umayyads as well as invectives against their opponents in the true form of the qasidah with its carefully chosen diction and high-flown style. The Christian al-Akhtal, who, by the way, was considered to be free to revel in wine without offending Muslim piety, was also remarkable for his willingness to step in where a Muslim, irrespective of his alignment, feared to tread, namely, the satire against the Ansar. The counter offensive from the other side showed a much more genuine feeling of devotion not only to the House of the Prophet but also to the ideal of justice and public weal popularly associated with it.

The contrast between the settled life in the towns and the Bedouin ways of the desert has throughout been a powerful factor in Arab thought and history. Islam, with its marked predilection for congregational activity, accelerated as never before the process of drawing emigrants from the desert, who flocked into the towns to enlist in military service, State organizations, and economic activity. This created nostalgia in the mind of some poets who introduced a new theme, viz. the comparison of new life, including the charms and manners of the damsels of the towns, with the old ways of the desert.

Even in regard to the qasidah, though its conventional form remained intact, the new pattern of society changed the modes of thought and the manners of expression sufficiently to render the purely Bedouin tradition a mere curiosity. This curiosity had its last protagonist in Dhu al-Rummah (d.

117/755). It is somewhat in the same spirit that the oldest and the simplest form of rajaz were employed in long qasidahs pedantically over-loaded with rare vocabulary.

The ‘Abbasid Era

With the advent of the ‘Abbasids the corruptive patronage of the Court, which siphoned poetic talent into the madih, expanded to such an extent that only a few could keep themselves free from it just because they were consciously determined to do so. Curiously enough, as the Caliphate declined it only led to a multiplicity of such centres of patronage and thus the servility of the poets went on increasing further and further. At any rate, the growth of luxury and the enrichment of culture from foreign sources were bound to seek an outlet in new forms and modes of poetry.

Fortunately the traditional qasidah did comprise within its orbit a large number of themes concerned with peaceful enjoyment or warlike activity, which, in their developed form under the Empire, now claimed separate treatment. All that required was to salvage the various themes from regimentation by all the engrossing passion of tribal solidarity as signified by the supremacy of the madih. This process, which started with the development of the ghazal under the Umayyads, took its full course in the following era until all the topics treated incidentally in the old tradition branched off into independent kinds.

Further Development of the Ghazal

It will be remembered that Islam, not being a monastic religion, regards woman not as a taboo but as one of the three things dearest to the Prophet. Thus, the theme in itself, far from offending the moral sense, was particularly compatible with Islam’s bold affirmation of nature. Significant is the use in the Qur’an of this very imagery of woman and wine for the conveyance of an idea of the highest bliss in the heavens. It must, however, be admitted that a certain degree of licentiousness has actually attended upon the development of the ghazal from the very beginning.

Towards this element of licentiousness the early Islamic society adopted an attitude of practical toleration as apart from official recognition; it was only the personal scandal which was generally condemned by the people and sternly curbed by the State. This tolerant attitude is best embodied in an incident at the Court of Sulaiman b. ‘Abd al-Malik. Once when al-Farazdaq recited to the monarch such verses of his as amounted to a confession of adultery, the monarch perhaps could think of no better way of expressing his appreciation than to embarrass the poet with the threat of legal cognizance and penalty.

But calmly the poet asked him, “The sanction behind the penalty?” “Of course, the Qur’an,” replied the monarch, whereupon the poet retorted, “All right, the Qur’an itself assumes my innocence when it says of the poets that they ‘celebrate in speech what they do not practice!’”¹⁷ Truly, there is much more than wit in the argument of the poet; it gives pointed cognizance to the fact that a poet relies mainly on his mental experience. Practical experience has no essential bearing on art; rather, it is a matter of personal character.¹⁸

In the words of Nuwas, one can safely and effectively “talk of fire without burning one’s mouth.” Thus cultivation of the erotic verse, including the licentious ghazal, originated and flourished vigorously under Islam in public circles. But as soon as it was transferred to the royal palace it suffered from the same servility to the over-indulged baser instinct of the patrons as the madih in relation to their inflated sense of vain-glory. At the palace the poet was promoted to the position of boor, companion who shared the privacy and the intimacy of the patron, and enlightened, diverted, and amused him with appropriate citations, impromptu compositions, and ready wit.

It is legitimate to link this institution with the life of the pre-Islamic poet, al-Nabighah, at the court of Hirah, but one has to take note of the steadily increasing dissoluteness and sexually exhibitionism which began with al-Walid II and reached its climax in Abu Nuwas.¹⁹ This exhibitionism was designated separately as al-khala’ah al-mujun and was relished only in the company of intimate friends as a source of enjoyment. From the palaces it percolated down to public circles and was preserved only for the sake of witticism and elegance of language - obliquity it was condemned outright as obscene and in sheer bad taste.

Bohemianism

In public circles the joys of life were idealized in terms overtly disdainful of moral restraint under the pressure of another set of circumstances in which national and political rivalries played a significant part. It has been noted above that in the initial stage licence in poetry was treated apart from the personal character of the poet. But gradually the poet’s own guilty conscience and the general social approbation caused him to introduce in poetry itself some sort of defence of his own promiscuous way of life. This involved an active propagation of the disregard of social and moral values, scorn for the religious preceptor, an invidious lack of faith in after-life and at the same time a somewhat philosophical justification for the excesses from God’s quality of “forgiveness.”

Even this development left the larger section of society unalarmed; it was taken merely as an exercise of wit and humour. Soon, however, there was a further development in the peculiar atmosphere of Baghdad which was torn by Persian-Arab rivalry - a rivalry fanned by the alignment of the Persian element with the ‘Abbasids. In Baghdad certain types of literary Bohemians, mostly Persians, organized themselves into cells or clubs where wine, women (those of a low status, of course) and poetry full of sarcasm for the orthodox way of life were zealously enjoyed. From apologetics it now passed into the phase of active glorification of practical libertinism.

And all this was done in a spirit of arrogant demonstration of the intellectual refinement and cultural superiority of the Persians so much so that zarf (quickness of wit) came to be proverbially associated with this class of proud libertines - zindiqs as they were called.²⁰ Although it is very doubtful that many of these Bohemians were genuinely devoted to Zoroastrianism or Manichaeism as against Islam, it is a fact that some of them were bold enough to mention the names of Zoroaster and Mani as the

Bacchul-like patrons of libertinism as against the restrictions on pleasure symbolized by Islam.

Anyway, there is little doubt that this cultural arrogance was linked with the aspiration to greater and greater political control, which made the 'Abbasids closely watch and suspect their own supporters. While the public were left speculating as to the cause of the sudden downfall of the Barmakids, a methodical zindiq-hunt was set afoot, the verses of the poets were incriminatingly dissected at ceremonial trials and the guillotine applied to the partners in the widespread net of conspiracy.²¹ Thus the poetry of Bashshar (d. 168/784) came to be typical of that pursuit of refinement and culture which is associated with the enjoyment of woman and wine and their celebration in arts and song enlivened by wit, humour, and sarcasm on social and moral restrictions.

Before we pass on it has to be added in regard to these libertines that their fund humour and sarcasm was not exhausted in their engagements with the opponents, their unprincipled levity often caused them to exercise the same resources against one another. Hence, most of them have the reputation as satirists as well.

New Features of the Ghazal

A few special features of the new ghazal under the 'Abbasids have to be noted. First, there was the addition, almost substitution, of the male for the female object of love. It must be admitted that it almost amounted to a common social vice attributable to Persian influence. Secondly, a refined taste in similes and metaphors and the subtlety of imagination in general are also traceable to the same source. Thirdly, though gleeful descriptions of wine were quite old in Arabic poetry, the subject came now to be cultivated as an independent art. As with the theme of beauty so with that of wine; it is no longer a mere description of the transparency of the glass, the colour of the wine, the various stages of brewing, and the haggling of the wine-seller over its price, nor is wine-drinking a mere appurtenance of nobility.

The emphasis now is on the inner sensation of abandonment and revelry experienced by the drunkard. Lastly, one has to take account of the special characteristic of Islamic society which causes even renegades of the type of Abu Nuwas to be over-taken by remorse and pious reflection in old age. Hence, al-shaib w-al-shabab (old age and youth) developed into a recurring and semi-independent theme closely associated with the nasib. It is characterized by recollections of the pleasures which are no more than reach or capacity - a feature inherited from pagan poetry. Under the influence of Islam it was complemented with a desire to make amends for the erroneous ways of the past.

Moral, Philosophical and Mystic Poetry

It would be a very lopsided view indeed if we imagined the 'Abbasid society to be merely that which is pictured by the boon companions of the elite and the Bohemians of the metropolis. Religion and morality had their own devotees and champions in no way negligible either in numbers or in importance. In the very nature of things, however, religion, as apart from religious sentiment, could not be cultivated in poetry. Morals formed a fit

theme for poetical art. They also had a precedent in the so-called wise sayings of the pre-Islamic poets, though these latter were entirely devoid of any element of reasoning in them.

Abu al-‘Atahiyah (d. 213/828) introduced moralizing verse characterized by thought and reflection but it was because of this very new basis that it came in for reserve and suspicion. Also, it inevitably involved criticism of the prevalent modes of society. Abu al-‘Atahiyah sometimes appears as the spokesman of the down-trodden masses bringing to the notice of the Caliph their economic plight and difficulties. Most unfortunate of all, the entire theme was permeated with a mood of pessimism which persisted and was steadily augmented by the influx of philosophical ideas and monastic tendencies.

Philosophical poetry reached its highest achievement with Abu al-‘Ala’ al-Ma‘arri (d. 449/1057), who made a frontal attack on all religions as such and exalted reason in opposition to revelation. Yet he remained the pessimist par excellence. His eclecticism also centred on the austere as exemplified by the particular features of Indian philosophy proved no more delectable in verse than religion. Even though Abu al-‘Ala’ was a master of literary arts, his philosophical poetry remained a simple statement of judgment and argument unclothed in poetic imagery; hence, it provided enough justification for denouncing it as “no poetry at all” (ibn Khaldun).

His resort to jugglery with words is also a further proof, if proof were needed, of his woeful failure to devise a truly poetic form for the presentation of his philosophical thought.²² That is why his poetry seldom achieved any high degree of popularity, though he was, and has throughout been, highly respected as a scholar. It is wrong to attribute this to the prejudice against the anti-Islamic ideas contained in it. Had it been so, the production of the libertine poets would not have fared any better.

The true reason is that Abu al-‘Ala’s poetry was bare of essential poetic appurtenances. In the words of an Arab critic, the art of poetry consists in making a thing appear beautiful: the intrinsic beauty of the thing or the idea would not make up for any crudity of presentation. The libertine poets were accomplished masters of this art of presentation; hence, unlike Abu-‘Ala’, they were widely enjoyed but seldom respected.

In contrast with philosophy, mystic ideas belong essentially to the theme of love and naturally command for their expression all the paraphernalia of love and poetry. The high sentimentalism of the mystic poets was enough to ensure for them a strong popular appeal, in consequence of which they came in for persecution while Abu al-‘Ala’, a lone voice, was left comfortably alone. Again, we have to note that, significantly enough, the popularity of mystic poetry survived all questioning of the orthodoxy of its contents and even the attacks on the person of the mystics.

But the excessive sentimentalism of the mystic poetry centring on the beatific vision is such as to have a lamentably adverse effect on the search for clear, practical ideal of life and the urge to realize it through activity. The passivity of an intoxicated visionary, as opposed to the ardent activity of a devoted missionary, formed the keynote of it.

Formal Panegyric

Apart from the lighter side of the life in the privacy of the palace, which was shared and recorded by the nadim-poet, there were many formal occasions and official assemblies at the Court when the emphasis was on decorum and dignity. On such occasions it was the strictly conventional form of the madih, the qasidah, which was in vogue. In view of the rigidity of its forms had already noted, it is no surprise that it required the highest skill to handle it with success. In any case, the monotony of the stereo-type could only be made up with hyperbole and rhetorical tropes of all kinds. Some pedantic display of logic and philosophy was also introduced as a novelty.

As these formal panegyrics were designed in the manner of the party press of our own day to exalt the powers that be in the eyes of the public, naturally enough they were replete with references to the political ideology - often bound up with specific religious belief and dogma - of the ruling dynasty as, for example, the claims of the 'Abbasids vis-a-vis the 'Alids. But, while there were scores of those who for sordid gain served as mere trumpeters, there was no dearth of those who spoke from conviction. And in fairness it must be said that the conscientious objectors on the side of the opposition were given a long rope only if they had the courage to forgo the patronage of the Court.

It was also in this traditional form fit for themes of grandeur and no levity that the incidents of the wars were pictured. They came to be particularly relished by the Bedouin spirit of the Hamdanids under the shadow of the Crusades. Another theme cognate with it was that of the prison-poems (al-habsiyyat) best represented by Abu Firas (d. 357/968). They are an impressive blend of nostalgia for home, pathos of suffering, and indomitable courage.

Complaint against Time (Shakwah al-Zaman)

Perhaps the most depressing aspect of the poetry of these times is the common expression of dissatisfaction with one's lot and a feeling of insecurity in respect of life, property, and position. As undeserving people enjoy wealth and power and real merit is neglected, nay persecuted, consolation is sought in the acceptance of this state of affairs as the "way of the world" - the decree of fate beyond the control of man.

There was no such dominant note of despondency and helplessness when the pre-Islamic poet occasionally bemoaned the inscrutability of fate (jadd) and the failure and his hard struggle (jidd) to bring him the coveted reward. Even in the early days of Islam fate did not appear to be so arbitrary: when there was dissatisfaction it was directed against persons - tyrants and other dynasties. It is only in the late 'Abbasid period that the complaint against "Time"²³ became almost a fashion, so much so that the poets simulated it in the same way as they simulated love.

Personal and Occasional Verse

It was characteristic of the progress of culture that poetry be sought after as the medium of the communication of thought and feeling occasioned by the vicissitudes of personal relations and small incidents in everyday life. The pre-Islamic poet also had frequent occasions to address his "ibn al-'amm" (cousin) in reprobatory terms, but his utterances were deep-rooted in

the actual matter-of-fact struggle for existence. The ikhwaniyyat of the period under review constitute a branch of cultivation of elegance. The difference is the same as between an actual fighter and an amateur sportsman.

The topics range over estrangement, effort at reconciliation, and tickling and teasing through wit and humour. These categories, however, appear to be sham when compared with the impressive genuineness of the pieces relating to incidents in everyday life as, for example, the one attributed to a literatus who was compelled to part with his collection of books in a time of adversity. This kind of poetry concerning the unaffected, natural gushing forth of some poignant feeling or passion aroused by the actual facts of life reached its full development in Spain in general and in the verses of al-Mu'tamid in particular.

A strong element of genuine enthusiasm and personal acrimony is also evoked by the rivalry among the diverse national groups: the Arabs, the Persians, the Turks, the Romans and the Negroes. Pride-cum-satire was the popular form of championing one nationality against the other on the basis of ethnology, history, mental qualities, and cultural achievements. This must be distinguished from the aspect noted above which concerned the exaltation of a particular kind of social and cultural life.

Descriptive Poetry

Beauty no longer remained confined to nature: there were high mansions, fortified castles, exquisite mosques, and public buildings, and, above all, public and private gardens, aqueducts and boat-houses - all claiming attention from the artist and the poet. Even the starlit sky and the cloudy horizon were endowed with a new charm. To the Bedouin they gave only a simple impression of awe and induced a mood of little good cheer; to the Baghdadi who went out for a stroll in the evening they catered to his desire for the enjoyment of beauty. Thus, the descriptive poetry of this period, which often monopolizes the larger part of long qasidahs, is almost something new.

It is exhilarating indeed to find roses being compared to cheeks and tall cypress to the slim stature of damsels rather than vice versa as of yore. Flowers in particular were the craze to the tasteful and the elegant, which even used them as symbols of moods and sentiments in their exchanges of love.²⁴ No surprise that the description of flowers (al-zahriyyat) should grow into a semi-independent branch of poetry in which al-Sanubari (d. 334/945) distinguished himself in the East.

Yet there is nothing comparable to the poetry of Spain so far as high sensitivity to nature is concerned. There the poet not only describes and enjoys nature but also shows himself to be in communion with it. Another branch of descriptive poetry which attained semi-independent form was al-tardiyyat (venery poems). It also reflected an ample measure the trappings of luxury and civilization around an old traditional interest.

Panegyrics on the Prophet (al-Mada'ih al-Nabawiyyah)

As we have seen earlier there was no time lost in celebrating the achievements of the Prophet and composing panegyrics on him in the traditional form and style of the qasidah. When the Umayyads fanned

political partisanship by employing the poets to denounce their rivals, it evoked a new spirit of selfless devotion to the cause of the 'Alids, which found its most forceful exponent in al-Kumait. It soon became a panegyric on the family on the Prophet which was characterized, apart from legal arguments in favour of the 'Alid claims, by a good deal of symbolism of pathos and suffering drawn from the incidents of history.

A concomitant theme of high general interest was the condemnation of tyranny, oppression, and mis-rule coupled with the fervent hope of return to ideal conditions at the hands of the virtuous Imams. The two sides carried on the old bout right through the 'Abbasid period during which the 'Alids continued to be in the wilderness of opposition. In later times when the political controversy lost a good deal of realism and turned into mere sectarian ritual, this kind of poetry was taken over into the circles of the Sufis, who concerned themselves particularly with its content of loyal sentiment and tragic pathos.

These Sufi composers, it will be remembered, were seldom men of high literary attainments nor did they care to examine facts and rely on them alone. Rather they would introduce all sorts of superstition which would feed sentimentalism. A famous example of this kind is the pseudo-Burdah of al-Busiri (d. 694/1294 - 95) which, though not devoid of literary elegance, is typical of superstitious belief and is esteemed primarily for its supposed magical properties.

The framework of these panegyrics being that of the traditional qasidah, the essential prelude of erotic verses was there. It was, however, observed as a convention that in this particular context "love" should be characterized by restraint and dignity rather than "licence." For example, it was specifically disallowed to mention a male object of love or to refer to the hips or the charm of the naked shin among the physical attractions. It will be seen that this only confirms the thesis advanced earlier that erotic interest in woman (without licence) was no offence to Muslim piety.

Still later when originality became rarer the form and the theme of the panegyric on the Prophet were used for the demonstration of one's skill in rhetorical tropes, such qasidahs were designated the badi'iyat. That kind of play with words is, of course, beyond the purview of poetry proper.

Adaptation of Metre and Diction

It was indicated at the very beginning that the metrical forms handed down by the pre-Islamic poets continued to hold their own throughout the classical period. We have only to review the adaptation of these forms to the demands of new developments in theme and style. First, there was the preference of short, flexible metres and then, with the dethronement of the madih, the tendency to short pieces devoted to single or closely allied themes.

However, the only departure from the tradition with regard to the qafiyah was the adoption from the Persian of the muzdawaj, i.e. tanzon with each verse having a separate rhyme for its two hemi-stiches (instead of the whole poem having a single rhyme for the endings of each verse). This was the form attributed to the Zoroastrian scriptural psalms which the zindiq poets were charged with reciting in secret. And obviously this was the form best

suited for the epic which, because of its length, made it well-nigh impossible to sustain one single rhyme-ending.

But though the form of the epic narrative (al-sh‘r al-qasasiyy) was found, the Arabic poets failed to achieve anything remarkable in the field from an aesthetic viewpoint. The early pioneers, ibn al-Mu‘tazz and al-Khuraimi, were tolerably good in picturing national calamities but unfortunately it was now reduced to a mere mnemonic versification of the chronicles of kings and dynasties without anything of genuine poetry about it.

No sooner did the need to please the vanity of the patron disappear than the diction tended to be unaffected, soft, sweet, and naturally fit for the theme and content. Abu al-‘Atahiyah, himself a pitcher-seller, succeeded particularly well in employing the simple language of the common people without any loss of standards. On the other hand, this trend towards the natural and the unaffected suffered some degeneration at the hands of the libertine poets like Bashshar, who did not mind effeminacy and the verbatim reproduction of the idiom of the sporting women in the private company of lovers.

Strophic Verse

It is quite understandable that the need for strophic verse should arise as soon as music and dancing were introduced in Arabia consequent upon the Islamic conquest of Persia. Al-Khalil has left behind a few verses which are like a formula for the rhythmic beating of the feet.²⁵ Further, the attempt to evolve an artistic form for the special purposes of music and dance took the direction of adaptation of the old tradition rather than a complete innovation.

The full length poem was divided into parts consisting of two or more verses, each part having a different single rhyme for its several hemi-stitches but all the parts followed by the repetition of a particular verse with a rhyme of its own and thus held together as if by a string (Ar. simt; hence the device called al-tasmit). This evolution must have taken place at a very early period since it is ascribed without certainty to Imru’ al-Qais. It was the same device which was employed to take greater liberties with rhyme (and also metre) in Spain under the name of al-muwashshah (from wishah meaning girdle).

Later, when the colloquial dialect was fully admitted to this form it came to be known as the zajal. Thus, it came to be an artistic form just free enough to be within easy comprehension and unsophisticated taste of all, yet devoid of none of the essentials of traditional art. From Spain it was brought to Egypt and the East and achieved a high degree of popularity. There were still more spontaneous forms of strophic verse in which the street vendors and the like moulded their cries but in all cases the qafiyah was fully relished and the variety of it in different strophes was compensated with the uniformity of the refrain in between them.

B. Prose

The earliest specimens of Arabic prose coming down to us from the pre-Islamic times fall into the following categories:

1. Proverbs

2. Oracular sayings

3. Orations and

4. Accounts of battles and stories of love, adventure, and entertainment.

Except for the last category the form in vogue was unmistakably epigrammatic and high condensed, consisting of short, cadenced and loosely rhymed sentences. This form was quite in conformity with the morphology of the language and the peculiar temperament of the Arab, particularly in view of his reliance on memory alone for preservation and transmission. No surprise that whatever did not conform to this requirement of form was simply allowed to go by the board.

The oracular sayings were almost lacking in any content whatsoever. If the oracle excelled in anything it was mere adroitness in ambiguity. The most remarkable from the viewpoint of the content were, of course, the proverbs, of which the few highly suggestive words often symbolized a whole story deep-rooted in the simple Bedouin life. Hence, they were early recognized as a source, second only to poetry, for the knowledge of the history, manners, customs, and superstitions of the Pre-Islamic Arabs. In subsequent periods also, there was a remarkable curiosity to pick up pithy and suggestive lines and phrases from poetry and prose and to pass them round in speech and writing. Thus, the stock of proverbs, which in Arabic include idioms and phrases in common use, never ceased increasing and receiving variety from the changes in the pattern of life. Often they mirrored the experiences, complimentary and otherwise, of contacts between the various nationalities.

The orations were designed for actual needs arising out of war-like tribal activity or communal social relationships. Though prose, however, exquisite, was always rated as a lesser form of art, there is no doubt that oration had sufficiently developed into a recognized literary medium. It would also be justified to assume that sermonizing for its own sake, as, for example, on wise conduct and good behaviour had come into vogue.

The evening get-together in the courtyard, generally under the auspices of some generous dignitary, is the age-old manifestation of the Arab instinct for communal social life. The importance of this feature in the hard, matter-of-fact life in the inhospitable desert cannot be over-emphasized. It is also quite understandable that the main diversion on this occasion should be a round of talks on events and anecdotes bound up either with historical curiosity or common interest in love and adventure.

The contents of this samar can be easily be distinguished as (a) the narratives of the battles of the Arabs, (b) stories of love and adventure of Arabian provenance, and (c) stories borrowed from foreign sources. Some traces of the beast-fable have also been found scattered here and there. Nevertheless, pure fables were seldom flair of the Arab mind even in subsequent times. Naturally enough, this evening talk was couched in simple informal language with emphasis on content rather than on elegance of word, and the way in which it has been recorded by the scholars of early Islam can at best be described as quotation from the speech of the narrator.

Influence of the Qur'an and the Hadith

The unique position of the Qur'an as the first book in Arabic has already been noted. It, for the first time, made Arabs fully aware of the potentialities

of prose as an artistic form. Still more important in another way was the normative influence of the Hadith. It is certainly wrong to assume that the influence of the Qur'an was in any way circumscribed by its claim to inimitability because even an unattainable ideal is always potent enough to set the direction of effort in the future. But, of course, there was an air of formality about the Qur'an.

On the other hand, the Hadith represented the model of effortless, everyday speech - simple, terse, to the point, efficacious of purpose, and interspersed with flashes of vivacity and humour. The most important general contribution of both the Qur'an and the Hadith was to drive home the primordial need for setting an aim and a purpose in speech and composition and making both the content and the word fit and conform to the same. The new outlook on literary beauty as related to a definite purpose represented a radical change from the old tradition of aimless talk - "the wondering into every valley" (Qur'an) - and gave birth to a mental discipline which is the hallmark of the orations and the epistolary compositions of early Islam.

The official correspondence of the early Caliphs and their addresses on different occasions of war, legislation, and administration are all marked by a simple and direct style of flowing naturally from high concentration on purpose and thus surpassing all art. Yet they show all the dignity of authority. It will be remembered that orations and epistles were the two branches of literary composition which were especially favoured in early Islam by the needs of administration as well as congregational activity and social life. They only underwent a portentous change at the hands of the Persian secretaries, who introduced in the Arab chanceries all the fanfare of the Sassanian Court by way of pompous language and grandiose style.

Early Works on Adab (Belles-Lettres)

The early literary activity (apart from poetry) concerned itself mainly with compilation and narration rather than personal creation. The scholars and the students were content with collections of texts and explanations of important pieces of poetry, proverbs, orations, sayings of prophets and wise men, historical narratives, and witticism - all considered to be the necessary equipment of polite education and moral instruction. These collections were like packets in which the knowledge of their compilers was lumped together without any systematic arrangement or classification, the compilers themselves contributing only a few comments here and there. Only ibn Qutaibah (d. 276/889 - 90) introduced some order into the invaluable chaos.

The beginning of original production was closely bound up with an interest in man and his natural surroundings. Curiously enough, this interest was roused by the rivalry among the various nationalities within the 'Abbasid Empire. The political and social conditions of the time promoted interesting, even though acrimonious, discourses on the characteristics - physical, temperamental, and cultural - of the peoples of different lands as exhibited in their current behaviour and past history. Al-Jahiz (d. 255/868 - 69), one of the first Mu'tazilites to study the Greek naturalists endowed these discourses with the superb literary form of causerie or short tract characterized by a combination of erudition and artistic skill with the spirit

of reliance on facts of observation and history rather than on speculative deductions.

Thus, highly scientific data, worthy of a Darwin, relating to the processes of adaptation between man and nature, came to form the theme of high literature and art. Al-Jahiz's "Book on Animals" (Kitab al-Hayawan), a fine specimen of the wedlock between art and science, is a definite gain to literature and a high compliment to the general culture of the time. Only one is left wondering whether science would not have prospered better by an early separation from its charming companion.

Popular Anecdote

Beyond the circle of scholars and students the interest of the common people lay in the anecdote couched in simple, unsophisticated language. They sought light entertainment by listening to stories of love or adventure or a blend of both. Apart from the pre-Islamic lore, the wars of Islamic conquest lay handy for the purpose and were especially suited to satisfy at the same time religious fervour, national pride, and the instinctive love of adventure. There is ample evidence to show that the conquests were actually the subject of a saga which, however, could enter the books only surreptitiously.

Two other streams contributed to the fund of anecdotes in the early Islamic period: first, the South Arabian lore in which the Umayyads took particular interest as part of the glorification of the Arabs, and, secondly, the Jewish religious lore which was widely and indiscriminately drawn upon the qassas (religious sermonizers). None of these stories, however, could find artistic presentation because the regard for historical truth prevented their incorporation in book form: the dangers which were guarded against are illustrated by the corruptions that evaded detection and are found today here and there.

Even when they were collected in book form at a very late period and they continued to be regarded below the dignity of a scholar. Of course, the stories of love which are not liable to be mixed up with religion and history were given freer admittance to the literary circles, but even these (e.g. the story of the ideal love of Majnun or the profane love of Waddah al-Yaman) were recalled only with reference to poetry and seldom took any definite artistic form in prose. Whatever form these popular stories possess has only been achieved effortlessly through common repetition.

Story Cycles

The indigenous stories of love alluded to above were simple incidents which could not keep the attention of the samar-hungry audience for any considerable time. As town life grew, the need was felt for cycles of stories or stories within a story, separate yet inter-connected with a string plot which would keep the curiosity on its edge for as long as "Thousand and One Nights." This need was met, in the first instance, by import from Persia, which had long been known to be the store-house for such stories.

The Persian afsanah, the prototype of the Arabic story cycles, had passion, wonder, and surprise as the keynotes of its content, it is the quest for the wonderful and the surprising which brings in super-natural elements

and magic to heighten the effects of adventure, and treachery and moral depravity to enhance love. This element of wilful selection and exaggeration of the unusual in actual life should not be over-looked in making any sweeping generalizations in regard to the state of society. The over-tone is particularly deceptive in regard to historical personalities as, for example, Harun al-Rashid, who though he indulged in luxury and sensuous pleasure in private life, would never allow any lapse from dignity and moral propriety in public.

It was perhaps in the original core of Hazar Afsanah itself that popularly idealized historical personalities were woven into the texture with a view of imparting a touch of reality to the fiction. Yet it is remarkable that this particular branch, as contrasted with that of Kililah wa Dimnah, was successfully cultivated at Baghdad and Cairo. The anonymous maddahs went on dressing up the borrowed material and augmenting it with their own creation until the whole stock was moulded into a more or less fixed but sufficient polished form.

The professionals, whose job was gradually reduced to vocal performance, often to the accompaniment of simple instrumental music, circulated and transmitted the stock by oral tradition among themselves until it was redacted in book form in about the ninth/15th century. The form and the content of these story cycles would be better appreciated if it is constantly kept in view that they were never meant to be read; they were recited to an audience seeking mental relaxation rather than intellectual satisfaction. They were designed simply to amuse and not popularize or criticize any particular view of society. Rather, the surmise is that they were secretly helped into circulation by the powers that were interested in turning the attention of the masses away from political and social problems.

Hence, all the emphasis is on the tempo of action to the subservience of everything else. Further, in the very nature of circumstances, the style and the diction could only be such as were regarded elegant and interesting by the standards and taste of the common people. It really reflects very well on the common culture of those days when people could learn how to appreciate and enjoy elegance of language in their ordinary social surroundings without necessarily studying at school. But after all the story cycles never regarded as a piece of literature (adab) and were never read and taught by scholars as such. It was only in the West that the scholars thought it worthwhile to devote time to the Alf Lailah wa Lailah.

The Siratu 'Antar, another notable work of the same class, bears the impress of conscious art, its texture being loose-rhymed prose embroidered with some 10,000 verses. In point of content, a hero of the pre-Islamic times is made to live through 500 years of Islam down to the Crusades, personifying in himself all the chivalry of the famous knights of Islamic history as well as the legends of the Persian epic. It sprang into popularity in the tense atmosphere of the Crusades and represents fully the peculiar temperament of the time.

High-class Fiction

It will be seen from the preceding two paragraphs that the imagination of the Muslim masses, like that of the masses of any other people, was strongly

tempted to dramatize history and to develop the hard core of facts in fabulous stories. But such a pursuit was totally barred to a Muslim scholar by his high sense of intellectual honesty and academic responsibility cognate with the sanctimonious regard for religious purity. As fiction was disdained and frowned upon by the cultured, it was condemned and relegated to the circles of the common people.

Pure fiction, which posed no danger of distortion to valuable fact, was quite welcome in literary circles. But, again, literati were earnest people who would relish a fable only if it had some moral import in the manner of the stories of the Qur'an. It will, however, be observed that the reliance of the Qur'an on the known incidents of history, rather than fables, to point a moral is highly significant as being in full accord with the peculiar temperament of the Arab. Not that the Arab was weak in imagination; he only considered it somewhat childish to invent fictitious tales, which is best evidenced by the clear absence of a mythology even in the pre-Islamic days.

He was indeed very fond of moralizing but would do so only through direct, pithy, and pointed proverbial sayings supported by illustrations from real life. The style of the Qur'an in this respect stands in sharp contrast with that of the sacred books of India, which seek to convey the truth mainly through fables. Thus, it was only when highly cultured Persians consecrated themselves to the service of Arabic that the treasures of the Indo-Persian tradition were transferred into this language. As these were mere translations, their contents do not belong to Arabic: only the use of the artistic form of Arabic for this kind of composition was a notable innovation.

The rendering of the *Kalilah wa Dimmah* by ibn al-Muqaqffa' was designed to be read by the educated class who relished it for its moralizing on the conduct of private and public affairs. It was warmly appreciated as a novelty and versified more than once, but the attempts at imitation of the model failed to achieve any considerable measure of success. Thus, pure fiction too, like the fanciful encrustment of history and religion, fell to the lot of the common people who indulged in it for sheer amusement.

The unproductivity of the Arab-Islamic milieu, so far as high-class fiction is concerned, has only to be viewed by the side of unparalleled success in the preservation of the religious texts, the scrupulous eschewing of the subjective element in historical annals, and the evolution of a full-fledged science for establishing the authenticity of a text with reference to the character of the narrator. In short, the learned and the scholarly devoted themselves to checking the rampancy of the imagination of the unlettered rather than giving free reins to their own fancy. Further, the authority of the Shari'ah left no need for any emotional pleading or intellectual canvassing by dramatization of social problems; hence the absence of the story or the novel except for literary and philosophical themes.

Literary Epistle (Risalah) and Rhetorical Maqamah

The extra-ordinary interest in linguistic studies provided a scholar in early Islam with a vast fund of vocabulary and usage as well as a sense of elegance and beauty in expression. He, however, waited for events and occasions in actual life to put his knowledge and skill to use; hence, the

absence of any prose form than the oration and the epistle. The disputations on the merits of the various nationalities and different classes of people brought into vogue for a while the short topical essay. But the natural, forthright style soon started soaring high at the hands of the Persian scribes until it became thoroughly inflated and encumbered.

To this encumbrance the Christian scribes further added the embellishment of *saj'*, and the over-played art degenerated into tiresome gymnastics. There was, however, some expansion in the range of the epistlecum-essay writing, which opened up a welcome outlet for literary skill. Tracts on the rules of good conduct were very popular, some of which on Persian model were meant especially for kings, while others were addressed to all classes. Similarly, there was a plethora of manuals of instruction through which all men of consequence were eager to communicate their wisdom.

But the most important branch conducted merely for the sake of pleasure was "letters" addressed to fellow-scholars and patrons touching upon purely academic and literary problems. Pride and rivalry helped to impart zest to such a pursuit. The style was high-flown and ornate with the obtrusive aim of pedantry. A further development of this tradition of the literary epistle (*al-risalah*) was the *maqamah*, which represents perhaps the first attempt to invent a loose framework of picaresque romance for the display of one's literary knowledge and skill.

The idea must have been suggested by the presence of a real character in the Arabicized Persian society of the time - a witty and somewhat unscrupulous prodigy of letters, devoid of patronage from high-ups and loth to engage himself in any lucrative work, thus compelled to shift for himself by roving from town to town and "begging" by the public display of feats of improvisation on the interesting and instructive situations of life. The emphasis is, no doubt, on the exhibition of linguistic virtuosity but there is throughout a vein of witticism which is sometimes employed for parodying society, manners and peoples.

As this form came to be the dominant one in Arabic prose, a large variety of it depicting incidents and situations concerning particular classes such as the 'ulama' and the lovers, was successfully attempted in every age. It has throughout remained a typically indigenous product, especially suited to the equipment and training of the Arabic scholar as alluded to above.

Development of the Story for Literary Theme

The significance of the *maqamah* lay in the Arabic scholar at last condescending to create out of imagination the framework of a story, however short and undeveloped, with a view to displaying his profuse but pent-up literary skill. For the newly released fancy Abu al-'Ala' al-Ma'rri borrowed the wings of the popular traditions relating to the Prophet's Ascension (*al-mi'raj*) to the heavens. His *Rislat al-Ghufran* is really a *maqamah* cycle under the overall covering of a *risalkah*. The story is no more than a frail show-case to display the author's store of knowledge, just a device to string together a series of expositions of problems and judgments relating to the poetry, literature, and grammar.

As the author was also a philosopher and a critical observer of beliefs and practices, he brought out the witticism characteristic of the maqamah for an audacious burlesque of contemporary state of learning and society, which imparted a unique quality to the work. The state excelled only in pedantry and artificial beauty. Yet the review of the entire field of literature, beliefs, morals, and manners in the course of an imaginary flight remained the high watermark of the traditional Arabic scholarship.

Story for the Philosophical Theme

The philosophical romance of ibn Tufail (d. 580/1184) entitled Hayy Bin Yaqzan is a complete surprise in Arabic literature in more ways than one. Here for the first time we have the plot as the main concern of the author. Sufficient attention is also paid to characterization and setting. The style is sub-ordinated to the theme. It will be recalled that the general body of Muslim philosophers had been confronted with a two-fold problem: the capability of reason to attain to reality unaided by revelation, and the identity of reality notwithstanding the difference in the source and the categories of knowledge imparted by religion.

Soon intuition, the tertius gaudens, achieved a lasting victory over both. On the one hand, it established its claim to be the essence of religion and, on the other, it was recognized as the higher form of philosophy. The importance of the latter development, which was by far the greater victory, has not often been fully appreciated. It was a momentous step indeed to accept intuition as part of a man's natural equipment, cognate with reason, for the "realization" of truth. Anyway, it was for the purpose of explaining all these points together that the philosophers conjured up the vision of a Solitary Man, cut off from all knowledge of religion yet attaining to a vision of God through the proper use and development of his faculties alone.

Historical Writing

The Arabic historian was solely concerned with the preservation of authentic records. He would not digest the facts and attempt at their reconstruction and interpretation of the reader. The merit of a historian like al-Tabri (d. 310/922 - 23) lay only in the extent and variety of his information, his own personality could be discerned only in the indication here and there and a preference for one of the several versions of a particular event. This self-imposed restraint on the part of the historian, like the similar scruples of the adab producer, betokened only high devotion to truth nurtured by the traditions of religious sciences.

As a matter of fact, it proved to be a valuable asset in eliminating, so to say, the middlemen and enabling all posterity to get a purely objective view of the past. Even when the annalistic framework was not strictly adhered to and the method of topical historiography was initiated by al-Mus'udi (d. 345/956 - 57) the style continued to be dominated by reporting. However, this deliberate suppression of the personal element contributed to the lack of any prose for historical writing. Such development had to wait until the beginning of the eighth/14th century when ibn al-Tiqtaqa produced his book al-Fakhri.

Keeping in view the fact of its being an innovation, the success achieved was remarkable. A lucid and fluent yet brilliant style is applied to carefully selected facts combined with appropriate comments. But again, this admirable example was not sufficiently followed up. Rather the main development from which ibn al-Taqtaqa revolted consciously, had already proceeded far on the lines of the transference and application of the epistolary style - grand and verbose, as already noted - to historiography. It was fortunate indeed that this style was carried to palpable absurdity quite early by al-'Utbi (d. 427/1035 - 36).

It was decisively rejected by the Arab taste only to find favourable development in Persian. Court patronage of the historians also brought in the need for flattery and exaggeration, but it must be said in fairness that historian did not absolve himself totally of regard for truth in the manner of poets. On the whole, the style of the official amanuenses and the Court historians of the late 'Abbasid period belongs to the same genre.

The best examples of Arabic historical prose, both in regard to form and content, are the private memoirs of personal experiences of war and peace like the *Kitab al-I'tibar* of 'Uthman ibn Munqidh (d. 584/1188 - 89), and the accounts of travels. In the latter class of works one finds not only observation and effective narration but also the author's own appraisal of personalities and events in the light of history and contemporary society. Generally, the style is simple and natural and even where art is displayed, as in the case of ibn Jubar (d. 614/1217 - 18), it is not over-played at the expense of the content. Al-Ghazālī's *al-Munqidh min al-Dalal* forms a class by itself - an auto-biographical account of mental conflict and spiritual quest written with such simplicity and naturalness as defy all art.

Influence on the West

Looking in retrospect over the entire field of Arabic prose and poetry, the general reader will not fail to be struck particularly with a few features which stand out prominently. First, there is the perfect symmetry, so characteristic of all Muslim art, the unfaltering rhythm, and the regular rhyme which at once give the general impression of order, system, and exquisiteness in the construction of the verse. Secondly, there is the entire scheme of romantic love as embodied in the tradition of the ghazal. It is not fully appreciated, especially among the Muslims who take it as a matter of course, how much the Islamic outlook on woman and sex relationship has to do with the sentimental romantic love.

Love as an art can only flourish in a society where the company of woman is sublimated into a virtue. A further condition for the growth of romanticism is the recognition of certain ethical rules for courtship, a certain idealization of restraint. Such restraint is only symbolic of awe for the independent will of a separate individuality (best exemplified in the economic rights of women in Islam) coupled with a tenderly appreciation - so different from lustful exploitation - of the frailty and delicacy of the feminine constitutional and sentimental make-up.

In the blind fervour of the extremist revolt against the denial of human rights to women in the West, the last basis of all chivalry and romance is much liable to be forgotten. Anyway, it was these two features - the

exquisite form and the romantic content - of the Andalusian poetry which impressed the troubadours of Provence so deeply. Needless to say that lyrical poetry of romantic love had a special development in Spain so as to become unique even in Arabic. In the same way the strophic verse blossomed in Spain as nowhere else. The tradition, however, goes back to the Umayyad ghazal with Islam intervening between it and the frank hedonism of the jahiliyyah.

Turning to prose, one finds Arabic offering, at its best, aphorisms, apologues, popular fables characterized by the spirit of adventure, and picaresque romance (maqamah). Actually, these were the very curiosities which achieved a ready success in medieval Europe through oral transmission and book translation. It was not very appropriate indeed that works like the Arabian Nights, which were meant only for recital in the marketplace, were read in book form in Europe.

This was bound to produce certain revulsion at a later period when they were to be devoid of the finer elements of literary art. Anyhow, "orientalism" - a touch of the fabulous, the wonderful, and the exotic - entered the thought processes of the European writers and poets. Still more important is the percolation of some of the higher devices resting on characteristically Islamic traditions like the mi'raj into the Divina Commedia and the Solitary Man into Robinson Crusoe.

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Notes

1. Note the definition by ibn Qutaibah of a born poet as "the one who indicates to you the end of a verse in the very beginning of it, and the qafiyah in the fatihah (opening word) itself." Al-Shi'r w-al-Shu'ara', Cairo, 1367/1947, 1, p. 36.

2. It was perhaps an account of this special knowledge that he was called sha'ir, i.e. the "kenner," who knew better than others. There is, however, another view which traces the word to its Hebrew counter-part meaning "chanting" and "singing." Anyhow, the poet only knew and sang whereas the authority for taking decisions and giving judgments rested with another class known as the hukkam. Fajr al-Islam, p. 56.

3. The schooling of the impulses through hudud Allah (limits of the Sacred Law) pinpoints the difference between the jaahiliyyah and Islam.

4. Consistently with the Arab habit of ascribing long, gradual developments to particular persons, the innovation of the qasidah is said to have originated with Muhallil b. Rabi'ah (c. 500 A.D.), whose very name bears testimony to his contribution. Al-Jumahi (Tabaqat, Cairo, 1952, p. 24) dates it from the time of 'Abd al-Muttalib and Hashim b. 'Abd Manaf.

5. There are touching stories of lovers who would intercede with the hunters to have the gazelles set free because of the resemblance of their eyes to the eyes of the beloved; cf. Raghbat al-'Amil, 7, p. 39.

6. The stock phrase attributed in the Qur'an to the pagans in defence of their ways that "they found their forefathers practising them" faithfully exposes their lack of thought and reasoning.

7. Vide al-Ma'arri, risalat al-Ghufran, ed. Bint al-Shati, p. 246.

8. Al-Jumahi, op. cit., p. 11.

9. Ibid., p. 197; see also p. 217 where the same reason is adduced for the meagreness of poetry in al-Ta'if and 'Uman.

10. Qur'an (26:224) et seq. There is an exception in favour of those who are devoted to righteous belief and good deeds.

11. The example of the Qur'an illustrates the principle of novelty in literary form. In order to achieve the paramount purpose of communication and effect, novelty must always be embedded in familiarity.

12. The verses of ibn al-Zib'ara are much more explicit on the subject of renunciation of the old and devotion to the new ideal, vide al-Jumahi, op. cit., pp. 202 - 03.

13. An excellent example of the change of values in this respect is provided by the *hija'* of al-Najashi which was taken by 'Umar to be a eulogy, vide ibn Qutaibah, op. cit., 1, p. 290.

14. Up until the days of 'Umar, Arabian music was nothing but intonation of voice in the manner of a camel-driver reciting his songs (vide al-Aghani, 8 p. 149, quoted in Fajr al-Islam, p. 120). This accounts most plausibly for the absence of reference in the Qur'an to music and dancing while the symbolization of wine is so common-place.

15. Vide al-Jahiz quoted in Duha al-Islam, 1, p. 15.

16. Ibn Khaldun, Maqaddimah, Chap., 6 (49).

17. Ibn Qutaibah, op. cit., 1, p. 451.

18. In all Islamic literature some of the best wine songs have been produced by those who never tasted it. After all, does an actor actually experience death before he successfully acts the scene on the stage? Even the poets who waxed eloquent on the properties of the saliva safeguarded the chastity of the lady-love by saying at the end that they knew of it just as one knew of the water in the cloud by the flash of lightning.

19. It is only an exuberance of popular fancy which has foisted with *mujun* of Abu Nuwas on the company of Harun al-Rashid. Ibn Khaldun has noted the incongruity of it with the restraint and dignity of the bearing of the great monarch.

20. Any exact parallel is to be observed in our own day: Is it not that wine-drinking, ballroom dancing, and cabaret shows are associated with the superiority of the cultural taste and the intellectual refinement of Western provenance?

21. It is not merely a sentimental reaction but a perfectly reasonable attitude that the liberties taken by Iqbal's "love in the presence of God be denied to one who talks of God from the atheistic viewpoint. A verse of Hafiz ridiculing formalism in religion will be appreciated by the Muslims, who would legitimately resent the same being quoted in the context of an anti-God movement. Also, significant are the words in which al-Mahdi interceded with his father, al-Mansur, on behalf of Muti' b. Iyas. He pleaded that Muti' was only a *fasiq* (libertine) and not a *zindiq*, i.e. not committed to over-throwing the existing order.

22. In our own time Iqbal succeeded eminently where Abu-'Ala' failed miserably. Iqbal's employment of the traditional language of the mystics, which sometimes misleads even great scholars to take him for a mystic, is a device to make his ideas appear beautiful. Such a popular and familiar literary medium is all the more essential when the ideas are novel and unfamiliar.

23. This is the "abuse of time" which is expressly prohibited by the Prophet. Only he would curse the stars who believe him to be a passive object under their blind inexorable influence. Islam, on the other hand, stands for man's active and dominant role in setting the pattern of life through the instrumentality of the process of time as ordained by God; cf. Iqbal, *Asrar-i Khudi*.

24. See the interesting treatise on elegant manners by al-Washsha' (Leiden, 1887).

25. Vide Risalat al-Ghufran, p. 183.

Chapter 51: Arabic Literature, Poetic and Prose Forms

A. Grammar

The intellectual activity of the early Muslims stemmed directly from their devotion of religion. The Arabs had throughout been sensitively proud of their language; contacts with foreigners were regarded by them as derogatory to pure Arabism. However, before Islam any corruption of the dialect was but a social drawback; after Islam, any lapse from the norm inevitably led to distortion of the sacred text with dire consequences both in this as well as in the next world. Curiously enough, it was Islam itself which brought about the commingling of the Arabs with the non-Arabs on a vast and unprecedented scale.

In the very second decade of the Hijrah the Arabs were carried on the crest of a wave of military conquests across the bounds of their homeland to settle down in the neighbouring countries of Iraq, Persia, Syria, and Egypt. At the same time there was a large influx of aliens, mostly prisoners of war, into the principal towns - Mecca and Medina - of Arabia itself. Before long, there appeared for the first time in history a considerable and growing number of neophytes seeking initiation into Arab society with a conscious effort to learn, imbibe, and serve that new religious culture which was only couched in Arabic and had its prototype in Arab milieu.

Naturally enough, the inaptitude of these neophytes in the use of the Arabic tongue excited the laughter of the younger folk in Arab households, it also shocked the elders as it amounted to inadvertent profanity and distortion of the Qur'anic verses.¹ The corruptive effects on the new generation of the Arabs - the townsmen among them - were no less disconcerting; the daily usages marked a sharp decline from the Qur'anic idiom. Thus, there is little doubt that about the middle of the first century of the Hijrah the Muslims were squarely face to face with their foremost literary problem, viz, the need for the preservation of the Qur'an.

The Arabs needed reinforcing their own natural way of speech with a discipline of conscious effort; they were also eager, in keeping with the true spirit of Islam, to pass on to the myriads of non-Arabs, who daily swelled the ranks of the faithful, not only the religion and the practices of Islam but also the language as a key to a first-hand knowledge of its primary source or sources.² Actually, however, only a few of the Arabs concerned themselves with those branches of studies which involved the use of the method of qiyas, i.e. analogy and deduction.³

Such creative intellectual activity was notably flair of the non-Arab inhabitants of Iraq, which province occupied a unique position in the incipient literary life of Islam. It is worthwhile recalling that the province had been the cradle of ancient civilizations and the nursery of cultural currents from the Hellenes, including those relayed from the important academy of Jundi-Shapur; hence, the mental attitudes of its inhabitants bore the stamp of philosophical scientific discipline. Still more remarkable was the spirit motivating the political relationship of these "intellectuals" with their proud and unlettered masters, the Arabs, and their peculiar religious and cultural propensities towards Islam and the Arabic language.

In contrast with Syria and Egypt, it will be seen that the 'Ajmis of Iraq were from the very beginning determined to assert their own individuality, albeit only within the pale of Islam and on the ground of Arabs' own devotion to the Arabic language. Even the Sh'ubiyah movement, the outburst of an outraged sense of superiority of the Persians over the Arabs, involved no resilience from loyalty to the language of the Qur'an. It was a clear parallel to early Shi'ism, which was calculated to work out the political ascendancy of the Persians but only under the supreme and authoritarian over-lordship of the House of the Arabian Prophet.

Basrah and Kufa, the two cantonments of the Arabs, provided ideal conditions for fruitful contact between the Arabs and the non-Arabs. Of particular importance were the proximity of the two towns to the northern Arabian desert, long regarded as the preserve of the linguistic norm, and the market-place of al-Mirbad - on the outskirts of Basrah - was no less a close-by rendezvous of the A'rab (Bedouin Arabs of the desert) and the literati until the former, becoming aware of the demand, themselves came to offer their linguistic materials to the elite of Iraq and western Persia.

According to the classical tradition, it was Abu al-Aswad (Zalim b. 'Amr) of al-Du'ali (or Dili), a poet, warrior, and teacher died (69/688 - 89) at the age of 85), who took the first step to stem the tide of growing laxity and error in the use of the Arabic tongue. He was an active partisan of 'Ali in politics and actually fought against Mu'awiyah at Siffin. It is, therefore, no surprise that he should take pride in claiming that the rudiments of Arabic grammar were confided to him by 'Ali. This assertion can safely be dismissed as only an instance of the too frequent attempt to trace all learning to 'Ali, the "Gateway of the City of Knowledge."

It is also true that Abu al-Aswad himself cannot be credited with having worked out the fundamentals of Arabic grammar as such.⁴ But it is reasonably certain that he did institute something which, to later historians of the development of grammar, appeared to be the genesis of it. Let us examine what it was actually. Until the time with which we are concerned, the Arabic script, originally taken over from the Syriac-Nabataean writing, remained without a system of i'rab, i.e. vowel-marks. Nor was there any established practice as to the i'jam, i.e. diacritical marks, to distinguish letters of similar shape. Of course, there was no urgent need for either so long as the main dependence was on memory and writing was regarded as a mere casual help.⁵

In context of the new demands made by the change in the social pattern, the alert and acute mind of Abu al-Aswad realized the inadequacy of the written consonantal letter to evoke the correct unmarked vowel, which had ceased to come natural as of yore. He, therefore, must have been the first to conceive the idea of introducing some further aid to make the people "know and observe correct speech." It appears that at the first innovation was opened Ziyad b. Abihi, the Governor of Basrah, with whose sons Abu al-Aswad might have discussed it. After some time, however, all conceded that it was absolutely needed and Abu al-Aswad went forward to lay down the following system:

1. the vowel “a,” the pronunciation of which needs a full upward opening (fathah) of the mouth, to be marked with a dot above the letter,
2. the vowel “i,” the pronunciation of which needs a little downward movement (kasrah) of the mouth, to be marked with a dot below the letter,
3. the vowel “u,” the pronunciation of which needs a rounded closing (dammah) of the lips, to be marked with a dot in front of the letter.⁶

This system of dots is to be seen in one of the oldest copies of the Qur’an dated 77/696, now preserved in the National Library at Cairo. The text on parchment is in black, while the vowel dots are in red, in accordance with the usual practice. It has been noted that a similar system of dots was in use in the writing of Syriac, and, though Abu al-Aswad’s contacts with the Syrians are not expressly alluded to, it stands more than probable that having realized the urgency he turned round and took the cue from his compatriots of the Syrian Christian Church.⁷

It is also possible, as some reports make out, that Abu al-Aswad went a step further to propound some broad distinctions in the main parts of a sentence such as the subject and the predicate. On the whole, however, his contribution was merely to focus attention on the usage of vowel endings as the distinctive characteristic of Arabic. Hence, observation of vowel endings was designated al-‘Arabiyyah, i.e. the art of speech in the correct and characteristic Arab way. The use of vowel-endings itself was known as al-i‘rab, i.e. rendering into the proper Arabic way.⁸ The al-‘Arabiyyah was undoubtedly an embryonic form of Arabic grammar.

The emphasis on al-‘Arabiyyah grew in proportion to the need for saving the Qur’an from being consigned to antiquity. So far the method used was mere talaqin, i.e. putting the particulars in the mouth of the student. Only the necessary terms and signs for indicating the different vowels in speech and writing had been devised. As yet there was no ta‘lil or reasoning on the basis of general principles governing the incidence of the i‘rab. But certainly the i‘rab was under intense and searching observation, from which it was not a far step to collecting a number of analogous examples and inducting from them some rules for general guidance.

This was the beginning of the discovery of the logical structure of the language which, in the words of Sarton, was as much a scientific discovery as, for example, the discovery of the anatomical structure of the human body. This scientific discovery, the Nahw proper, reached the proportions of a separate branch of study at Basrah with ‘Abd Allah b. Abi Ishaq al-Hadrami (d. 117/736) and his student, Abu ‘Amr ‘Isa b. ‘Umar al-Thaqafi (d. 149/767). Both the teacher and the student were non-Arab clients (the latter being the client of none other than Khalid b. al-Walid) who relished putting the Arabs to shame on the score of incorrect speech. They had a reputation for boldness in ‘ilal w-al-qiyas, i.e. induction of causes from an array of analogous examples.

Even in the first flush of discovery, they were so confident of the principles arrived at that they did not mind criticizing on their basis the ancient model poets such as al-Nabighah, not to speak of the contemporary al-Farazdaq. When the latter composed a vitriolic satire against his dogmatic critic, ibn Abi Ishaq would only retaliate by pointing out a grammatical

mistake even in the satirical verse.⁹ The student elaborated the method explicitly, as in discovering principles which held well generally and in listing the deviations as *lughat*, i.e. exceptional usages. And it was he who embodied the results in two books said to have been the first on the subject.

It must be noted that *al-lahn*, i.e. incorrect speech, which gave stimulus to the thought of Abu al-Aswad, had by the turn of the first/seventh century assumed alarming proportions. It had percolated to the ranks of the elite of the Court and the administration as well as the circles of the learned such as the traditionists and the jurists. But the deterioration, as far from inducing an attitude of toleration, gave rise to a strong reaction against what was regarded almost as a sin, and there was a determined effort not so much to preserve the purity of the Qur'anic text as to make the ordinary speech conform to the standards of its idiom.¹⁰ It was at this very time that *al-Nahw*, the science of "the proper way of speech of the Arabs" (ibn Jinni), was fully recognized as an independent branch of study and the term *al-nahwi* became widespread in popular parlance.¹¹

The Basrah School reached its perfection in the following age, which produced such giants as al-Khalil and Sibawaihi. Al-Khalil b. Ahmad, a truly versatile genius of Arab descent (al-Furhudi/al-Farahidi, al-Azdi), whose contribution alone would outweigh the achievement of the host of non-Arabs, was born in 100/718 - 19 and died sometime between 170/786 and 175/791. There can be no greater testimony to his powers or originality than the discovery of Arabic prosody without any previous pattern, taking his cue merely from the rhythmic beats of the smith's hammer.

No surprise that after benefiting from the teachings of 'Isa b. 'Umar, he should have been able to elaborate the framework of Arabic grammar, a framework within which *al-i'rab* could be explained and reasoned out. But al-Khalil cared neither for fame nor for material gain; it is said of him that he lived in a state of abject penury while his students made a fortune with the learning imbibed from him. It fell to the lot of his Persian student Sibawaihi,¹² who also had direct contact with 'Isa b. 'Umar, to complete the work of al-Khalil and to arrange and produce his findings in concrete book form.

Sibawaihi (Abu Bishr 'Amr b. 'Uthman b. Qanbar), a native of Shiraz who died at the young age of about 40 years in the last quarter of the second century of the Hijrah, really proved to be another genius for comprehensiveness, if not so much for originality. His *Kitab* has throughout the ages been regarded as the final word on Arabic grammar and has become proverbial for its unique position in the field. Those who followed Sibawaihi right down to the present time could only comment upon, remove obscurities, arrange and rearrange the materials furnished in the "Book" without adding much to it.

It has been a vexed question as to whether the main concepts of Arabic grammar are an indigenous growth or they are traceable to some external pattern. Modern scholars have stumbled upon casual resemblances such as those with the Indian *Praticakhyas*, but they offer no secure ground for any assumption of borrowing. It must be remembered that the Arabic grammar is concerned mainly with the *i'rab*, which is a peculiarity of the Arabic

language and was actually realized and proudly asserted to be so by the early grammarians.

Hence, it is no less misleading to make much of the similarity between the division of a word in “ism,” “fi’l,” and “harf” in Arabic and the analogous categories in Syriac or Greek. Obviously, the Arabic grammarians had to chalk out and proceed on their own lines and, in fact, they have given us a fair idea of how they applied their efforts on the problems, which was peculiarly their own. As hinted earlier, they began by observing the various positions of the words in a sentence and the particular i’rab taken by them in those positions.¹³ These rules went on developing in the direction of reducing further and further the number of exceptions which would not admit of their general application.

What helped the people of Iraq in this undertaking was a flair of ‘ilal and qiyas, which was exhibited in an equal measure in grammatical and literary studies as well as in Fiqh and jurisprudence.¹⁴ This flair certainly bears the impress of Hellenism. Nevertheless, it remains a mere conjecture that the early Muslims took over anything specific from Greek sources in grammar, in the same way as it is a mere wishful thought that Fiqh is indebted to anything specific in the Roman Law.¹⁵

The cornerstone of Arabic grammar is the correlation of the i’rab of the different parts of a sentence based on the theory of an ‘amil, i.e., an efficient cause supposedly resident in one of the parts and governing the whole. The earliest trace of it is perhaps in the Kitab al-‘Awamil of al-Khalil - a work known to us only by its title. But there is no reason to suppose that al-Khalil diverged in any way from the general line pursued thitherto by ‘Isa b. ‘Umar and others. Unless, therefore, this ‘amil theory is proved to have been formulated on a familiar pattern, the indebtedness of Arabic grammarians to any external source will remain highly problematic.

There is, however, yet another development of Arabic grammar which is clearly and directly traceable to Greek influence. The most notable and lasting effect of the assimilation of Greek logic and philosophy in the ‘Abbasid period was a general tendency to remould into logically defined systems almost all the nascent branches of learning, which until then lacked a rigid order. So far as Arabic grammar is concerned, the development took place when a Mu‘tazilite Mutakallim and a nahwi were combined in the person of Abu al-Hassan ‘Ali b. ‘Isa al-Rummani (d. 384/994).

Actually, the process reached its culmination in al-Rummani so as to justify his being credited with that highly conventional logical reasoning which has since formed such a notable feature of Arabic grammar. This new development is amply borne out by a saying that out of the three contemporaries the words of al-Sirafi (Abu Sa‘id al-Hassan b. ‘Abd Allah) were thoroughly understood without a teacher, those of Abu ‘Ali (al-Hassan b. Ahmad) al-Farisi were only partly so, whereas those of al-Rummani were not intelligible at all.¹⁶ Even though Abu ‘Ali al-Farisi, who, according to solve the above testimony, was himself partly affected by the innovation, is reputed to have commented that if Nawh be what was expounded by al-Rummani, then he had nothing to do with it, and vice versa.

Undoubtedly, al-Rummani, did not bring out a new system of grammar, he only applied the methods and the jargon of Aristotelian logic to the adumbration of those nebulous conceptions which, in the simple language of the old tradition as represented by al-Sirafi, were easily comprehended by the average student. There was a similar transformation in Arabic rhetorics, too. Further, it will be noted that by this time the Arabs had acquired some familiarity with Greek grammar, which warranted their indulging in a comparison of its merits with those of Arabic grammar. By the latter was considered to have already possessed a separate entity with a different development.

While the general trend to Basrah was to go ahead with the formulation of general rules, there also developed a reaction against the scant attention paid to the angularities of actual usage, which, however, came to the fore only when Abu Ja'far (Muhammad b. Abi Sarra 'Ali) al-Ru'asiyy took it over as the basis of the rival school of Kufah founded by him in the latter half of the second/eighth century. The Kufans would assiduously collect such instances as violated the general rules of the Basrans and would treat them not as exceptions but as the basis of another general rule opposed to that of the Basrans.

This school achieved a meteoric rise in importance under the favour of the 'Abbasid caliphs. Two of its very influential representatives at the Court were: (a) al-Kisa'iyy (Abu al-Hassan 'Ali b. Hamzah), the Persian student of both al-Khalil and Abu Ja'far al-Ru'asiyy, who came to be regarded as the compeer of Imam Abu Yusuf under Harun al-Rashid, and (b) al-Farra' (Yahya b. Ziyad), the Dailamite, who was appointed tutor to al-Mamun's sons and was designated as Amir al-Mu'minin in the realm of Al-Nuhw.

Ultimately, however, Baghdad proved a veritable crucible for the gradual fusion of the two schools through inter-change. From the end of the third/ninth century onwards there flourished at the metropolis scholars who were free from prejudice for or against any particular town or tribe and were actuated by sheer academic interest and reasonableness.

Just one more development may be noted. Abu 'Ali al-Farisi, who has been mentioned above, had an illustrious student called 'Uthman b. Jinni (d. 296/1002), the son of a Greek slave, regarded as the last of the philosopher-grammarians. But ibn Jinni did not help in clothing the 'amil theory with the armoury of logic; rather he submitted the 'amil theory itself to the scrutiny of reason. The result was a scathing attack on the false notion that one particular word in a sentence governed the whole.

The hint dropped by ibn Jinni was picked up in far distant Spain by "ibn Madda'," the Zahrite Qadi of Cordova under the Muwahhids, who in his al-Radd 'ala al-Nuhat attempted something in grammar akin to al-Ghazālī's Tahafut in philosophy. However, his attack, though not lacking in flashes of brilliance, remained a cry in wilderness as no alternative formulation of Arabic grammar on a basis other than the 'amil theory was ever achieved, far less accepted.

To sum up, the inspiration for Arabic grammar came from religion; the need for it was created by the commingling within Islam of the Arabs and the non-Arabs. The methods of observation and induction yielded the

discovery of the main body of “laws” in the working of language. The only snag was that the laws of language are not so uniform and immutable as the laws of nature. The older school of grammarians at Rasrah suffered from an immature pedantry which was aggravated by the desire of the non-Arabs among them to outdo the Arabs.

At a very early time ‘Isa b. ‘Umar had the temerity to boast in the presence of the Arab philologist, Abu ‘Amr b. al-‘Ala’, that he (‘Isa b. ‘Umar) was a greater master of Arabic than Ma‘add b. ‘Adnan, the progenitor of the Arabs! And both ‘Isa b. ‘Umar and Abu ‘Amr b. al-‘Ala’ exhibited a tendency to prefer such readings of the Qur’an as, in their opinion, were more a consonance with the general rule of grammar.¹⁷ This authoritarianism on the part of the “wisdom of the school seeking to improve upon the facts” (Noldeke) was checked by the rise of the rival school of Kufah. Rather, the latter erred on the other extreme. It is said of al-Kisa’iyy that in his avid search for the unusual and the exceptional he would not pause to test the reliability of his sources.

Nonetheless, a relieving feature of the situation was that dogmatism always felt compelled to bow before actual usage, as typically exemplified in the contest between Sibawaihi and al-Kasa’iyy at the Court of Harun al-Rashid.¹⁸ Ultimately, Baghdad provided the necessary atmosphere for the gradual shedding of prejudices and the engagement of all in a joint effort to erect a common edifice large enough to accommodate the conflicting viewpoints on most, if not all, of the established usage. The final success was vitiated by sporadic attempts at putting possible constructions on actual usage.

This tendency was decried at the very start by ‘Isa b. ‘Umar,¹⁹ but it reappeared prominently later on and is justly parodied by Abu al-‘Ala’ al-Ma‘arri in his *Risalat al-Ghufran*.²⁰ The instruments of Aristotelian logic helped to hammer out the crudities of enunciation and adumbration. Finally, there was an attempt to rebuild the entire system on a simpler basis other than the ‘amil theory, which, however, did not fructify. On the whole, the Arabic grammar remains a magnificent achievement - religious in spirit, linguistic in material, scientific in methods, and logical in form - which has been eminently successful in preserving the Qur’an and keeping its idiom unchanged yet alive throughout the centuries.

B. Lexicography

The preservation of the Qur’an involved the institution of such disciplines as would effectively safeguard not only the authentic rendering of the text but also the warranted understanding of its import against error, corruption, or ignorance overtaking those for whom it was “plain Arabic” at the time. The former purpose was achieved through al-‘Arabiyyah, which later on developed into a full-fledged science under the name of al-Nahw. The next concern was naturally the meaning conveyed by the text. In the beginning, there could have been little difficulty about it in the same way as about the vocalization of the text which was just a matter of natural aptitude.²¹

However, with the lapse of time and the changes in the social pattern, uncertainties began to creep in around words and expressions which had

gradually assumed an air of rarity. Obviously, the way to clearing such doubts and uncertainties was to search for the occurrence of those words and expressions in the speech of the Arabs elsewhere.²² In doing so, care had to be taken that the citations should faithfully reflect the idiom of the time of the Prophet during which the Qur'an was revealed. That is to say, either the citations should belong to the period contemporary with, or immediately antecedent to, the Qur'an or be called from the current usage of those whose social pattern had continued unchanged and who, therefore, could be relied upon to have preserved the idiom from the time uncorrupted and untainted by the extraneous influences.

Consequently, a zealous hunt was afoot to collect and preserve as much of pre-Islamic poetry, proverbs, and orations as could be salvaged from the memories of the people together with the current idiom of the Arab, i.e. the people of the desert impervious to influences from outside. The method of collection was identical with that of the collection of the Hadith.

The end of the first/seventh century witnessed the rise of a band of scholars especially noted for their profundity in the field of al-lughah (Arabic usage) with its ancillary branches of al-sh'ar (poetry), al-akhbar (historical annals), al-ayyam (accounts of tribal wars, and al-ansab (genealogies). The most prominent name among these scholars is that of Abu 'Amar b. al-'Ala (70/689 - 154/770), an Arab nobleman of Basrah and an associate of 'Isa b. 'Umar. His collection of Arabic philology, when piled up, touched the ceiling of his asceticism towards the end of his life. Yet he continued to be the primary source of knowledge for the next generation.

While the process of collecting the vocabulary and the illustrations of its diverse uses was still going on, the genius of al-Khalil, whom we have mentioned before, burst with the idea of arranging and fitting the vocabulary into the orderly scheme of a lexicon. Actually, al-Khalil is known as the author of the first Arabic lexicon called the Kitab al-'Ain, but the authorship is a bit disputed. This much, however, is certain that even if the actual compilation was not exclusively or partially the work of al-Khalil, the idea of a lexicon and the scheme thereof were first conceived by him. Let us now examine what the scheme is like.

Al-Khalil starts with (a) reducing all words to their roots, i.e., the radical letters (al-usul) which form an immutable kernel in contra-distinction to those that are added (al-zawa'id) in the course of derivation and inflexion. Next (b) he classifies the roots according to the number of letters comprised in them: 2, 3, 4, and 5. Each class of words is then arranged in a separate part and even within each class special treatment under distinctive heading is resorted to in the case of words containing one or more of the vowels, double letters, or a hamazah.

The above framework is in line with al-Khalil's attempt at a computation of Arabic vocabulary, which is a further proof of his originality. The quest he pursued on the same structural basis in a mathematical way. By multiplying the 28 letters of the alphabet by 27 (28 minus one, to drop out double letters) he got 756 forms of the bilateral (there being no uni-literals in Arabic). Dividing this number by two, he had 378 combinations irrespective of the order of the two letters. Taking these bi-literal forms as

one unit and adding a third letter to them, he worked out the number of trilateral forms and so on.

It will be observed that the above method yielded the theoretically possible combinations of letters, all of which are not in actual use (musta'mal). Consequently, al-Khalil had to mention each and every possible combination and indicate if any specific forms were unused (muhmal). A further peculiarity, which made reference so difficult and cumbersome, was that in the arrangement of the lexicon he concerned himself merely with combination of letters and mentioned all the forms yielded by a change of order of the letters under one and the same heading. For example, under MY one will find both MY and its reverse (maqlub) YM.

Within the above framework, intrinsically scientific but practically unhandy, the order was according to the opening letter of the alphabet in the words. But the order of the alphabet observed by al-Khalil was not free from novelty; the grouping was according to the part of the mouth, from down the throat right to the lips, which produced sound. This novelty has been aptly noted and the similarity between it and the practice of the Sanskrit lexicographers has aroused a good deal of speculation. There is no doubt that the present day arrangement, based on grouping of words according to the shape of the letters in writing, was the one in common use even at that distant date, though the Arabs were also familiar with the order according to the abjad system, which was originally taken over from the Syriac (and Hebrew) along with the art of writing.²³

The phonetic-physiological system of al-Khalil was neither common at the time nor did it achieve popularity afterwards. But any significance which its similarity to that of Sanskrit might suggest is whittled down by due consideration of the fact that in all probability it developed indigenously out of the practice of the recitation of the Qur'an. With the emphasis on recitation it was but natural the phonetics should receive special attention and that there be a grouping of letters on that basis. Actually, evidence does not want that the linguists did engage themselves in such a study; there were some differences too between the Basrans and the Kufans as to the order of the alphabet on the basis of phonetics.²⁴ Moreover, al-Khalil also paid some regard to the frequency of the letters in use. Otherwise, 'ain would not have come first in order.²⁵

No doubt, the general lexicon of al-Khalil represented an idea much in advance of his time. For the following century or so no one dared imitate, far less improve upon, his scheme. In the meantime, however, much valuable work was done in the form of small tracts comprising words, synonyms, and cognates with their fine shades of meaning grouped around particular subjects. Typical of such subjects are: al-ibil (the camel), al-matar (the rain), al-silah (the weapons), and the like. Similarly, special features of the Arabic usage were also singled out for monographic treatment: (a) al-muthallathat, (b) al-maqsur w-al-mamdud (c) al-itba' w-al-muzawajah, (d) al-ajnas, and (e) al-nawadir.

Some philologists wrote running commentaries (concerned merely with the meaning of selected words and phrases supported with illustrations from

other sources) on the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet under such captions as Gharib al-Qur'an, Gharib al-Hadith, Majaz al-Qur'an, Ma'ani al-Qur'an, etc.

1. Al-Asma'i (Abu Sa'id 'Abd al-Malik b. Quraib), an Arab of Basrah, was born in 122/739 or 123/740 and died in about 217/832. He amused Harun al-Rashid with his stock of interesting anecdotes about the life of the A'rab.

2. Abu Zaid (Sa'id b. Aus) al-Ansari was another Arab of the Basrah who reached Baghdad during the time of al-Mehdi and died about 215/830, then over 90 years of age. He was not inhibited by partisanship and eagerly learned from al-Mufaddal and other Kufans. By common agreement, he is regarded as thoroughly trustworthy, though his pedantry is often a source of amusement.

3. Abu 'Ubaidah Ma'mar b. al-Muthanna, a maula, said to have been of Persian Jewish descent, was born in 110/728 at Basrah where he spent most of his life. He was patronized by the Baramikah and was summoned to Baghdad by Harun al-Rashid to read his works to him. While rendering yeoman service to the Arabic philological studies, he collected the mathalib or the vices of the Arab tribes and caused such offence to tribal pride that at his death nobody attended his funeral.

4. Ibn al-A'rabi (Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ziyad) was the son of a Sindian slave and the foster-child of the famous Kufan philologist, al-Mufaddal al-Dabbi. His prodigious memory was a storehouse of Arabic philology and folklore. Remarkably enough, he relied on his own independent sources and questioned not without success the authority of al-Asma'i and Abu 'Ubaidah. He died about 231/845.

The special treatises referred to above naturally swelled to a considerable extent the volume of material which lay ready at hand for incorporation in a general lexicon. Another such lexicon was produced, rather dictated mostly from memory, by ibn Duraid (Abu Bakr Muhammad b. al-Hassan, born at Basrah in 223/837 and died 321/933) who enjoyed the patronage of the Mikalids of Fars. Though ibn Duraid claims that his work is much easier for reference than that of Khalil, the fact is that there is little improvement so far as the scheme, particularly the break-up of the vocabulary into structural categories, is concerned.

Even the irksome device which jumbles up all the orders, forward and reverse, of a combination of letters under one and the same heading, continues to be there. Only the phonetic order of the alphabet is discarded. Much of the confusion was caused by the nebulous state in which al-tasrif (etymology) happened to be at that time. There was so far no clarity as to the roots of words, particularly those containing a vowel, a double consonant, or a hamazah. Similarly, lack of clarity as to the distinction between al-usul and al-zawa'id caused the different categories to be mixed up. As a matter of fact, it was this uncertainty which made it expedient for ibn Duraid to insert a miscellany here and there, apart from the nawadir or peculiar usages and expressions listed under appropriate captions at the end.

There is indeed one important point of difference which is indicated by the very name, Jamharat al-Lughah. Ibn Durain included in it only the

familiar and the useful and eschewed the obsolete and the discordant. This was the beginning of a process of subjecting to criticism and sifting out the useful and the dependable from the large mass of material left behind by the early scholars, who were concerned with collecting and recording whatever they came across. At the time when the mistakes were being corrected, an attempt was also made to supply the omissions in the works of the early authors.

These, in short, are the new features noticeable in the lexicographical productions of the fourth/tenth century. Particularly notable in this respect is the Tahdhib, whose author, Abu Mansur Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Azhari (d. 370/980), a student of ibn Duraid, was urged to wanderlust in the desert for the collection of al-lughat. Incidentally, he fell captive into the hands of a Bedouin tribe; this provided him with desired opportunity. Equally important is al-Muhit of al-Sahib b. 'Abbad, who died in 385/995.

The culmination of the critical activity of the fourth/tenth century aiming at authenticity and comprehensiveness, was reached in the Sihah of al-Jauhari, Abu Nasr Isma'il b. Hammad (died about 398/1007), a native of Farab who settled down at Nishapur. The very name Sihah reminds one of the Sihah of al-Bukhari. It has already been hinted at that the method of collecting al-lughat was essentially the same as the one applied to the collection of the traditions, only a higher degree of stringency was observed in the case of the latter than the of the former.

This aptly illustrated by the example of al-Asma'i who is held to be trustworthy in regard to hadith, but he risks conjectures in matters pertaining to the lughat and even embellishes anecdotes for the sake of amusement.²⁶ Anyway, it is worthwhile to note that even the nomenclature of the hadith such as the mutawatir and the ahad was applied to the lughat and the degree of reliability of any particular usage determined accordingly. In the beginning it was not uncommon even to mention the isnadi or the chain of narrators and to discuss the personal character and reputation of the transmitters.²⁷

Thus, a compendium of the Sahih was sought to be arrived at in the field of lughat parallel to a similar, though much more scrupulously worked out, effort in the field of religious tradition.²⁸ It has, however, to be noticed that the Sihah suffered grievously from an unfortunate circumstance: the author was overtaken by a fit of melancholy which rendered him incapable of revising the manuscript. Further, due to the absence of any authentic copy of the text, a good of corruption also set in. All this necessitated a re-examination of the work in glosses and commentaries by later writers.

The work of al-Jauhari was still more remarkable in another way. In it the entire vocabulary was integrated (instead of being split up into structural categories) and arranged in alphabetical order with the first reference to the last letter and a second reference to its combination with the first. This new scheme at once became popular and was highly appreciated as particularly suited to a language in which the endings of the words and a unique importance for the purposes of rhyme (qafiyah and saj'). Apart from the merits of this integrated scheme, the development and standardization of al-

tasrif (etymology) at the hands of al-Mazini (Abu 'Uthman Bakr b. Muhammad, d., 249/863), ibn Jinni, and al-Rummani during the course of the fourth/tenth century removed a good deal of the confusion which marred the works of al-Khalil and ibn Duraid.

We have now reached a time when the Arabic vocabulary was supposed to have been exhaustively collected and the meanings of words established with reasonable certainty. Henceforth, efforts were directed at collecting the material scattered in the previous works either (a) in the form of large comprehensive dictionaries or (b) in concise handy volumes designed for the ordinary student. Naturally, the latter often dispensed with illustrations and citations. The most important works of the former category are:

1. Al-Muhkam by the blind Spanish scholar, ibn Sidah (Abu al-Hassan 'Ali b. Ahmad?, d. 460/1068), was held in great esteem for comprehensiveness and absolute reliability. But perhaps the author did not like innovations; hence, he went back to the earliest model of al-Khalil for its arrangement.

2. Al-'Ubab (incomplete) was composed by Radi al-Din Hassan al-Saghani, born in Lahore in 570/1174. He settled in Baghdad where he dedicated his work to ibn al-'Alqami, the minister of al-Musta'sim, whence he was sent out twice as ambassador of the 'Abbasid Caliph to the court of Iltutmish at Delhi.

3. The Lasan al-'Arab was compiled by ibn Mukarram/ibn Manzur (Jamal al-Din Muhammad), who was born in 690/1291 and died at Cairo in 771/1369. It is expressly based on the works of ibn Duraid, al-Azhari, al-Jauhari, and ibn Sidah.

Of the latter category, the work which achieved a high degree of popularity in the Qamas of Majd al-Din al-Firuzabadi (Muhammad b. Ya'qub) who died in 816/1413. It draws upon al-Muhkam and al-'Ubab.

Yet another work which deserves special mention is the Asas al-Balaghah of the well-known Mu'tazilite al-Zamakhshari (Abu al-Qasim Jar Allah Mahmud b. 'Umar, born 467/1074 and died 538/1143). The author was a native of Khwarizm who spent a long time in Mecca and Baghdad. He realized that the mere recording of meanings was an insufficient guide to the practical use of words. He, therefore, would give the occasions and the contexts in which the words were employed. What is still more remarkable is the arrangement of the Asas, which is in the alphabetical order with reference to the first (and the second and so forth) letter of a word. That is to say, its arrangement is exactly the same as has come into vogue in modern times since the impact of Western literary influences.

It is interesting to note that the early trend towards compiling treatises dealing with the words grouped around particular subjects did not die with the appearance of the general lexicons; it had an uninterrupted development on parallel lines. The greatest work of this kind is al-Mukhassas, the vocabulary is grouped under the subject headings, e.g., the hair, the eye, etc, which are classified into "books" such as that on "human body." Even if the position of al'Muhkam is not wholly unsurpassed, that of al-Mukhassas is definitely so.

Once the framework of a general lexicon was fixed, the running commentaries on the rare and difficult words in the Qur'an and/or the Hadith were also brought under that form.²⁹ Similarly, no time was lost in extending the facility and the benefits of a general dictionary to the other specialized branches such as zoology, botany, biography, geography, bibliography, and finally the encyclopaedias (al-mausu'at). It may be observed in this connection that interest in language and literature, which the scheme of a lexicon was originally designed to sub-serve, seldom disappeared in any of the works, however specialized and limited the scope of their treatment.

It would, for example be really odd to conceive of a zoologist or a geographer who was not familiar with the references in the Qur'an and the hadith or who would be unable to recall poetry, proverbs, and pith sayings concerning animals or towns. This all-pervading interest in humanities is perhaps the most valuable asset of Islamic culture.

In conclusion, it will be recalled that the early philologists were fully conscious of the sanctity of their tasks; they showed themselves to be scrupulous in method and honest in purpose. But the scope of the linguistic studies was bound in the course of time to extend beyond that was strictly relevant to the Qur'an and the Hadith. As the bounds of the sacred faded into those of the profane, the common failings of vanity, mere guess or conjecture or even unguarded reliance on genuine misunderstandings contributed to the interpolation of the spurious.

Also, as these studies came to be held in high esteem and patronized with abundant monetary gifts, the veterans in the field were sometimes tempted to window-dress faked rarities in their shop. But the probe into their personal weaknesses, so characteristic of Islamic religious and literary tradition, and the severe tests subsequently applied to their statements served to a large extent to clear the chaff from the grain. On the same way it is impossible to claim that the entire vocabulary and the usage were exhausted, yet there is no gainsaying the fact that an enormous part of them was actually encompassed.

The charge that the Arabic philologists concerned themselves too exclusively with the idiom of the Qur'an and showed no interest in contemporary deviations from the same, tantamount to questioning their objective or purpose, which has been steadily confirmed throughout the ages. In regard to the scheme and the arrangement of a lexicon, the early pioneers proceeded on the basis of a scientific etymological analysis of the structure of the vocabulary. Practical convenience was achieved later in the superbly original plan of al-Jauhari, which remains the one especially suited to the genius of the language. Even the model which has become so popular in modern time is traceable to al-Zamakhshari.

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Notes

1. This is amply borne out by the different versions of what prompted Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali to turn to grammar.

2. It is noteworthy that Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali, who showed himself genuinely anxious to help the non-Arabs learn Arabic and Islam, did so in spite of his jealousy of their prosperity and influence. There was not the slightest trace of any tendency among the Arabs to sit Brahman-like over the treasures of religious knowledge.

3. This applies equally to grammar and to al-ra'i in the realm of Fiqh.

4. Encyclopaedia of Islam, "Abu al-Aswad."

5. In the Islamic literary tradition, the written book long continued to serve merely as an aide memoire - a copy of what was preserved in memory and not vice versa.

6. It will be remarked that the other synonyms such as nasb, jarr, and raf' also refer to the same varied movement of the mouth. Closely parallel to the Arabic terms are the Persian equivalents: zir, zabar, and pish.

7. The Syrian Christians of the west had another Greek alphabet (five altogether: Y, E, H, O, A), instead of the dots, were used as vowel marks. At some later date, not exactly ascertained, the Arabs also replaced the dots with letters of their own alphabet albeit in an abbreviated form: ى from ي, ا from ا (somewhat doubtful), and و from و. Obviously, the change must have been necessitated by the use of dots for diacritical marks along with their use for vowel marks. The diacritical marks are said to have been brought into somewhat systematic use at the behest of al-Hajjaj b. Yusuf, the Governor of Iraq, by Nasr b. 'Asim (d. 89/708), who, remarkably enough, is also reckoned as one of the founders of Arabic grammar. For some time the two kinds of dots were distinguished by the different colours of the ink. The replacement of the vowel dots with abbreviations of ا, و, and ي is sometimes ascribed to al-Khalil b. Ahmad, which is supported by the title Kitab al-Naqi w-al-Shakl among his works.

8. Al-Syuti, al-Ashbah w-al-Nazash'ir, Hyderabad, 1359/1940, 1, p. 76.

9. Al-Jumahi, Tabaqat, Dar al-Ma'arif, Cairo, 1952, pp. 16 - 17.

10. J. Fuck, al-'Arabiyyah (Arabic translation), Cairo, 1951, pp. 26, 65, 74.

11. Ibid., p. 30.

12. The reading "Sibuyah" is not supported by comparison with "Niftawaihi," which the latter is in no doubt because of its occurrence in the rhyme of a verse. Vide ibn Khallikan, Wafayat, "Ibrahim b. Muhammad b. 'Arafah."

13. Cf. Fuck, op. cit., pp. 11 - 12.

14. What distinguished the Fiqh of Abu Hanifah was exactly the same: the probing into the "efficient cause" ('illah) governing a number of given instances and then applying the same to unforeseen circumstances. The people of the Hijaz were extremely chary of such reasoning and it is no mere chance that they came to be notorious for their ignorance of grammar. It is remarkable that the opponents of Abu Hanifah, who wanted to run down his school of Fiqh, thought it necessary to make fun of the application of his methods of grammar. Cf., Fuck, op. cit., p. 65.

15. M. Hamidullah, "Influence of the Roman Law on Muslim Law" - a paper read before the All India Oriental Conference, December 1941.

16. Yaqut, Mu'jam al-Udabi, "'Ali b. 'Isa."

17. It must be pointed out that it was merely a choice from among the various current readings; there was no attempt to "correct" the Qur'an in line with usage elsewhere. As pointed out by Wolfensen, it is an entirely wrong and unscientific approach on the part of some Western scholars to judge and criticize the Qur'an on the basis of pre-Islamic poetry. Apart from any religious sentiment, the Qur'an is the oldest and most reliable book. Other sources, though relating to anterior times, are posterior to it in point of actual compilation. Turikh al-Lughat al-Simiyyah, Cairo, 1926, pp. 169 et seq.

18. The reference is to what is known as "al-Mas'alah al-Zunburiyaah." When Sibawaihi challenged al-Kisa'iyy on a point of grammar, the matter had to be refereed for decision to the Arabs. It is alleged that the Arabs were bribed to save the face of the royal

tutor. The incident affected Sibawaihi so deeply that perhaps it caused his death prematurely.

19. Once when al-Kisa'iyy began giving the various grammatically correct readings of a particular phrase, 'Isa b. 'Umar rebuked him saying, "I want the actual way in which it is spoken by the Arabs," Yaqut, op. cit., "'Isa b. 'Umar," last paragraph. This tendency is to be compared with the *hiyat* - permissible tricks for evading the Law - in which some of the legists exhibited their acumen.

20. Al-Ma'arri contrives to bring the grammarians and the poets in the heaven together when the latter protests at the former's purely speculative interpretation of verses, e.g. p. 152 of the *Risalah*, ed. Bing al-Shati, Cairo.

21. In the words of Abu 'Ubaidah introducing his *Majaz al-Qur'an*, "The Qur'an was revealed in clear Arabic language and those who heard it recited by the Prophet had no need of asking for its meaning..."

22. Cf. the saying attributed to ibn 'Abbas, "When you be in doubt about any rare expression of the Qur'an, seek it in poetry." Al-Suyuti, al-Muzhir, ed. Muhammad Ahmad Jad al-Maula and others, Cairo, 2, p. 302. It was in consideration of this that linguistic studies were regarded an obligation on a par with the obligation of prayer; cf. the verses (*ibid.*). Ibn al-Qatta' (al-Af'al, Hyderabad, p. 3) went so far as to declare that anyone who decries the poetry of the Arabs is a sinner, and the one who runs down their language is an infidel (*kafir*).

23. It was in that original source that numerical values were assigned to the letters in that order, which is still adhered to in Arabic and other Islamic languages for purposes of chronograms. The assertion by later Arab philologists that *abjad*, *hawwaz*, etc., were the names of the inventors of the art of writing (al-Suyuti, op. cit., 2, p., 342) should be taken merely as a recollection of the old borrowing.

24. In *Duraid*, *Jamharat al-Lughah*, Hyderabad, cf. the Preface; cf. also al-Suyuti, op. cit., 1, p. 85.

25. Al-Suyuti, op. cit., 1, p. 90.

26. Cf. Ahamd Amin, *Duha al-Islam*, Cairo, 1952, 2, p. 301. Abu 'Ubaidah once ridiculed al-Asma'i's extreme cautiousness in the interpretation of the Qur'an by asking him whether he was sure of the meaning of *al-khubz* (bread). Cf. Yaqut, op. cit., "Ma'mar b. al-Muthana."

27. Al-Suyuti, op. cit., 1, pp. 118 et seq.

28. Just because the sciences of al-Hadith and al-lughah were recognized as twins, the highest academic title for the learned in either was the same, *al-hafiz*. *Ibid.*, 2, p. 312.

29. Cf. *Kashf al-Zunun* 2, pp. 1204 - 06.

Chapter 52: Arabic Literature: Theories of Literary Criticism

In this account of the Arab contribution to the theories of literary criticism, the term “Arab” is used in a wide sense to include all the Arabic-speaking peoples, and the writers who used Arabic as their cultural medium, regardless of their racial origins.

Literary criticism is also broadly used to cover the whole field of literary appreciation, analysis, judgment, and comparison on the practical as well as the theoretical side. In this broad sense, *Balaghah* - which concerns itself with the study of the figures of speech and the stylistic aspects of literature in general - may be included under literary criticism, at least of the golden era of the early centuries of Hijrah, although, generally speaking the relation between the two is a matter of controversy.

The period covered by our treatment is likewise a fairly long one. It extends from the first/seventh century to the present time, and it corresponds to the Islamic era in the history of Arabs. For, although the Arabs achieved a high measure of perfection in their poetry two centuries before Islam, they did not reach the mature stage of theorizing about literature and its excellence until their minds were stirred and stimulated by the call of the new religion that arose in their midst. The fact that the miraculous sign of the religion of Islam came in the form of a “Clear Arabic Book” was destined to play an important role in Arabic language and literature, and consequently in the enrichment of Arabic literary criticism.

From early times, the Arabs were noted for their literary excellence. Poetry and oratory were the chosen forms of their artistic expression. As early as the second half of the sixth century A.D. when Arabic poetry was in its flowering period, some rudimentary forms of practical criticism could be observed. These were preserved by narrators, and later recorded by the early authors of the general studies of the Arabic language and literature. Some time before Islam there grew a number of marketplaces in the Hijaz where people of different tribes used to assemble for trade as well as for literary contests.

Names of recognized arbiters in those contests, such as that of al-Nabighah al-Thubyani, and their judgments and criticisms were handed down to posterity by the *rawis* (transmitters). Naturally, very little explanation or justification was offered for such judgments, and very often one verse or one poem would be given as a ground for a high praise of a poet or for a comparison between two contestants in the marketplace. Some of the Prophet’s Companions were known for their appreciation and sound judgment of pre-Islamic poetry. The Second Caliph ‘Umar, for instance, was reported to hold that al-Nabighah was the greatest of the Jahiliyyah poets, and when he was asked the reason for this pronouncement, he answered, “Al-Nabighah never used redundant words, always avoided the uncouth in poetry, and never praised a person except for true merit.

By the end of the first/seventh century Arabic culture had spread outside Arabia in various directions with the spread of Islam. The mind of the new Muslim community was getting ready for a general intellectual awakening. The first to reap the benefit of those efforts were the religious fields on one

side and the linguistic and literary on the other. Some scholars busied themselves with the explanation of the Qur'an and the understanding of its challenge of miraculous literary excellence. Others concentrated on tracing pure linguistic usages of the Arabic language and standardizing its grammar and syntax. Some directed their efforts to collecting pre-Islamic poetry and preserving it against loss.

The stage was now set for the beginning of a golden era in authorship which lasted several centuries. The critical problems raised by the Arab authors during this period can be summed up under the following main headings:

1. Literary aspect of the Qur'anic i'jaz (eloquence of discourse), and the extent to which literary could aid in discovering the secrets of that i'jaz.
2. Unique and sometimes obscure usages of the Qur'anic style.
3. Authenticity of literary texts transmitted by the rawas from pre-Islamic and early Islamic times.
4. Classification of the Arab poets, both Islamic and pre-Islamic.
5. Merits and demerits of the ancients and moderns in Arabic literature, and controversies between traditionalists and innovators.
6. Claims of meaning and expression to literary excellence.
7. Originality and imitation, and the phenomenon of plagiarism.
8. Nature of speech and articulation.
9. Meaning and essence of literary excellence, in structure, signification, effectiveness, and formal beauty.
10. Definition of the figures of speech.
11. Standards for the comparison between rival poets.
12. Norms of excellence in the chief poetical arts, such as panegyric, satire, and elegy.
13. Linguistic aspects of literary art.

These various problems of literary criticism were treated sometimes separately in a specialized fashion, and sometimes together in manuals or textbooks. The stylistic aspects in particular received a large share of the Arab authors' attention, and the researches around them grew until they formed a separate critical branch under the name of Balaghah. This was mainly the outcome of the Muslims pre-occupation with problems of the Qur'anic exegesis and i'jaz. Greek writings on rhetorics which were translated into Arabic as early as the third/ninth century also contributed to the growth of the science of Balaghah. In fact, that science dominated the Arabic critical field all through the later centuries of Islam from the seventh/13th to the 12th/18th.

The above enumeration of the different aspects of Arabic literary criticism will indicate the immensity of its wealth, and the difficulty of separating the Arab contribution in this field from their contribution to the development of Arabic language and literature in general. Many a general book on literature, such as the Kitab al-Aghani (Book of Songs) by Abu al-Faraj, would also claim a place among the books of literary criticism. The same can be said by the unique excellence of the Qur'an.

But the following survey of the main features of Arabic literary criticism we shall limit ourselves to singling out some of its outstanding landmarks and making a brief halt at each of them.

1. On the early grammarians, philologists, and literary critics of the first stage in Arabic authorship was ibn Sallam (d. 231/845). His book *Tabaqat al-Shu'ara'* is representative of the critical attainments of his period. Criticism, he maintains, needs long training and experience, and a critic must be an expert on his subject and well versed in the practice of his art. In other words, taste alone does not meet the requirements of criticism, and must be supplemented by experience and long study. He also adds that poetry, like the sciences and other arts, needs its own special technique and culture. He was aware of the established truth that abundance of practical study is worth more than all academic knowledge.

The second point stressed by ibn Sallam in his book is the importance of verifying the poetical texts and of ascertaining their origin. This is the first step in textual criticism and must be taken as its foundation. He directed a violent attack on the manner in which some Arab chroniclers accepted and narrated ancient poetry, and, therefore, questioned the authenticity of many of their texts.

The other important point in ibn Sallam's book is the division of poets into classes. With regard to time, poets were either Islamic or pre-Islamic. He tried to classify the poets of either era according to the abundance and excellence of their poetry. In his classification he also took into consideration the place of origin.

Although ibn Sallam failed to support judgments he passed on poets and poetry by analyzing the texts or describing the qualities of each particular poet, yet it must be admitted that Arabic criticism was taken by him a step further, especially as regards questions of verification and classification of poets. What we miss in his book, however, is criticism in the sense of a discerning study and a methodical approach. The first attempts at methods are not to be found earlier than the fourth/tenth century.

Al-Jahiz (d. 255/869), who was one of the leading Mu'tazilites and writers of the third/ninth century, tried in his book *al-Bayan w-al-Tabyin* to give a picture of criticism in pre-Islamic times and the first/seventh century. The criticism of that period, he maintained, was elementary, but, to a marked degree, sound and convincing, as it emanated from genuine practical literary taste. The critics of that period, according to him, managed to discover a number of defects in poetical craftsmanship and to give valuable practical advice to orators and poets.

Al-Jahiz's book was an echo of the intellectual life of the Arabs of the third/ninth century. At that time the mosques of Kufah and Basrah were not only places for worship and administration of justice, but also schools for the teaching of language, grammar, Hadith, and jurisprudence, as well as platforms for narrators to relate to the assembled audiences the story of the Prophet's life and conquests. Leaders of theological schools and religious divisions used to go there for dialectical discussions, and a large number of people attended them in quest of knowledge.

Anyone who spoke in the mosque had to possess the ability to express himself clearly, to attract and persuade the audience. Thus, a new kind of study came into being to show the qualities an orator needed, and to point out the defects of different speeches. Observations on effective and defective public speaking contained in al-Jahiz's book can be grouped under the following headings:

(1) Correctness of pronunciation and defects caused by deformities of the vocal organs.

(2) Proper and improper employment of language and harmonious and disharmonious use of words.

(3) Syntax and the relations between words and their meanings, clarity, conciseness, suitability of expression to different occasions and audiences, and of speech to its intended objective.

(4) The appearance of the orators and the agreeableness of their gestures and mannerisms.

Another third/ninth century literary celebrity was the writer ibn Qutaibah (d. 276/889), and the author of many books on literature and Qur'anic usages. In one of his books, *al-Shi'r w-al-Shu'ara'*, he urged people to form independent judgments and use their own power of appreciation. He attacked the philosophers' approach to criticism and their use of logical method in the appreciation and analysis of literary texts. One of the critical problems he raised was that of the division of poets into those who deliberate upon, revise, and perfect their poetical works, and those who depend on the spontaneity and easy flow of their poetic inspiration.

He also opposed the tendency always to give preference to the ancients just because they were ancients. Literary talent, he argued, was not confined to any particular period. A modern poet might easily surpass an ancient in literary creativeness and workmanship.

The contribution of the poet Prince 'Abd Allah ibn al-Mu'tazz (d. 296/908) to the development of Arabic criticism and his influence on it were of a different character. He made a study of *badi'* which was considered in his days an innovation in the poetical art, and set out to prove that it was not a new creation at all. His book *al-Badi'* was the first attempt at a systematic treatment of the figures of speech, which he divided into three main categories: (1) the metaphor which is the pillar-stone of poetry, (2) artifices connected with the form only and not with the essence of poetry, such as assonance (*tajnis*) and anti-thesis (*mutabaqah*), and (3) the dialectical style which takes the form of a logical argument (*al-mabhath al-kalami*).

By quoting copious examples from the Qur'an, the Hadith, the speeches of the Prophet's Companions, and the language of the Bedouins, ibn al-Mu'tazz tried to show that the use of the figures of speech was inherent in the nature of poetry, and that the Arabs practised the art long before the time of Bashshar, Muslim ibn al-Walid, and Abu Nuwas. These modern poets of the 'Abbasid period did not invent the art but simply extended its use until it was thought a new creation. It is an open question whether ibn al-Mu'tazz was influenced, in his *Badi'*, by Aristotle's writing, especially the *Rhetorics* translated into Arabic during the third/ninth centuries.

But the treatment of ibn al-Mu‘tazz has the unmistakable stamp of originality, and the subject seems to have begun to interest Arab critics in the second/eighth century as an Arabic literary phenomenon. The influence, if any, might be sought in the prominence given to metaphor and in the attempt at definition and division of literary artifices.

But the real disciple of the philosophical sciences and the author who manifested Aristotle’s influence very clearly was Qudamah ibn Ja‘far (d. 337/948). His book *Naqd al-Shi‘r* is perhaps the first Arabic book to carry in its title the word *naqd* which is the Arabic equivalent of criticism. It is conceived and planned in the Aristotelian fashion of logical divisions and definitions. The author begins by defining poetry as regular speech with metres, rhymes, and meanings, proceeds to explain and justify this definition on logical grounds, and then adds words as the fourth element constituting poetry.

Out of the relations between these four simple elements he creates four complex ones, which evolve out of the harmony between them. He points out those earlier Arab authors have neglected the critical side of the studies of the poetical art, and directed their energies to the less important aspects, namely, prosody and linguistic considerations. His, then, was an attempt to create a real science of criticism and set the norms of excellence for the principal categories of Arabic poetry.

2. Arab contribution to literary criticism assumes clearer and mature forms in the fourth/tenth century. On the specialized side we meet with al-Baqillani (d. 403/1012), who gives a scholarly account of the Qur’anic i‘jaz, al-Amidi (d. 371/981), who leaves us the best classical Arabic comparison between two great poets, representatives of two schools of poetical art, and al-Qadi al-Jurjani (d. 366/976) the writer of the earliest critical treatise on a great Arabic figure in the literary history of the Arabs. On the general side, at least two contributions must be mentioned here. The first is that of Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani (d. 356/956), the writer of *Kitab al-Aghani* (The Book of Songs), and a unique book of its kind in the literatures of the world. And the second is that of Abu Hilal al-‘Askari (d. 365/1004), who attempted to give a complete systematic manual of Arabic rhetorical and critical principles as they were known at the time.

Now, to take the general contributions first. The ‘Book of Songs is a literary encyclopedia, in 20 volumes, dealing essentially with lyrical poetry which was set to music and singing by the musicians and singers of the early centuries of Islam. But around this theme the author collected a large amount of critical and biographical information of a great number of Arab poets. The critical aspect of al-Aghani has received the attention of modern academic research. The wealth of narratives and biographical data contained in the book has been a boon to modern Arabic play and story writers.

Al-‘Askari made the two arts of poetry and prose the subject-matter of his treatment and tried to systemize and enlarge upon the earlier general attempts of al-Jahiz, ibn Mu‘tazz, and Qudamah. The two Arabic rhetorical conceptions of *fasahah* and *balaghah* received at his hands satisfactory definitions, the first being connected with elegance and purity of style, and the second with communicating and conveying the desired meaning in a

convincing and effective manner. Long chapters on distinguishing the good from the bad in speech, on the nature of literary art, and on the technique of composition and good description, with copious examples of excellent poetry and prose, occupy about half the book. The rest is an enumeration and elucidation of literary artifices, the number of which al-'Askari raised to 35, which is more than double the number given earlier by ibn al-Mu'tazz.

Al-Jurjani's treatise on i'jaz takes its place among Arabic critical books on account of its attempt at applying the critical conceptions to reveal some of the secrets of the Qur'anic literary excellence. In doing this the author subjected some of the highly esteemed Arabic poems to severe test of criticism to show the fallibility of human products. The Qur'anic i'jaz, he maintained, was something more than and above that which critical standards could explain, something that could be felt more than known by the expert and cultured reader or listener. This theory of i'jaz, peculiar to Muslim culture, we meet again in a different setting when we come to 'Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani.

The two treatises which exemplify Arabic criticism proper in its methodical form are those of al-Amidi and al-Qadi, Al-Jurhani referred to earlier. Al-Amidi's Muwazanah (Comparison) between Abu Tammam and his disciple and kinsman al-Buhturi is the first systematic treatment of its kind in Arabic criticism. The author collects the common meanings between the two poets and, on the basis of a rigid comparison between each pair of words of similar meanings, decides which is more poetical in that particular context. He takes account of the supporters of each poet, reproduces the reasons given by them for their stand, and brings into relief the faults and plagiarisms of each of the two great poets.

Although the subject of al-Amidi's study is a particular case of comparison, and the features it concentrates on are the artistic and poetic ones only, it claims a high value because of its success in going beyond the particular comparison to a more general comparative study. It adopts the method of adducing comparable examples from the poetry of the forerunners of the two poets, thus enlarging its scope and claiming for it a larger share of critical accuracy. It exhibits the traditional literary models and reveals its author's wide knowledge of Arabic poetry and his cultivated analytical literary taste. It also gives one of the best practical accounts of the phenomenon of plagiarism, which greatly occupies the attention of Arabic critics, permeates a good deal of their comparative studies, and to some extent, colours their judgments of literary values.

Another valuable contribution in the fourth/tenth century to methodical criticism is the "Arbitration" (Wasatah) of al-Adi al-Jurjani between al-Mutanabbi, the famous Arab poet of the eastern Arab world of Islam, and his antagonists. Al-Mutanabbi, by his arrogant personality, wide ambition, and forceful poetry, created adversaries as well as staunch supporters wherever he went. Many grammarians, linguists, critics, and rival poets, shared in finding faults with his poetry and revealing plagiarisms, which, they claimed, he committed against previous masters of Arabic poetry, while others hailed him as the greatest Arab poet that ever lived.

Many treatises were written about him. The situation called for a sympathetic arbiter, and al-Jurjani tried to play the role. His introduction to *Wasatah* contains a good deal of theorizing about literature. An example of this is his interesting, and almost modern, analysis of poetical ability into four component factors: Natural aptitude, intelligence, acquaintance with and memorization of past models, and practical training. These, he maintained, were factors of a general nature, applicable to all humanity, and not confined to a certain age or generation. Another example is the discussion of the influence of environment on poetry, with illustrative examples from the poetry of Bedouins and city dwellers.

All the different aspects of al-Mutanabbi's poetry, viz, his philosophizing tendency to complication, occasional leaning on previous poets, the system of building up his poem and the use of *badi'*, all received a masterly analysis at the hands of al-Jurjani. The book succeeds in giving a general picture of literary criticism in that period. It abounds in opinions of critical scholars and recalls many famous comparisons held between poets, both post and contemporary. In short, the *Wasatah* of al-Jurjani along with the *Muwazanah* of al-Amidi represents the peak of practical Arabic criticism and illustrates the Arabs' mature efforts in that field of literary study.

3. The claims of the Arab contribution of the theories of literary criticism is still to be reached in the fifth/11th century at the hands of 'Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani (d. 471/1078), the author of the two well-known critical books: *Dala'il al-I'jaz* and *Asrar al-Balaghah*. The first book, although primarily concerned with explaining the secrets and signs of the Qur'anic *i'jaz*, faces the wider issue of literary excellence in general and reaches a fundamental theory of structure, while the second searches deep into literary images and discovers, in the form of a psycho-literary theory, what the author takes to be the real secret of eloquence.

Each of the two volumes advances a thesis, explains it, discusses its applications indifferent rhetorical species, and answers any adverse criticism which it might arouse. They survey the field of Arabic literary criticism in the author's time, point out the lack of true scientific thinking, and the pre-occupation of authors with the non-essentials in literary art, and try to lay the foundations for a new science which would satisfy both the objective and the subjective aspects of literary appreciation. A modern reader of the two books feels inclined to presume that 'Abd al-Qahir thought of literary composition in terms of its two-fold division of structure and beauty.

But it is also possible that when the author wrote his first book he was mainly occupied with and guided by the thesis that eloquence is a product of correct structure and signification. At a later stage, and perhaps owing to other cultural influences and maturation of thought, he found that an important aspect of literary art, namely, its impact on the reader or the listener, still called for a separate and fuller treatment. The starting point in his line of thinking in *al-Dala'il* was the consideration of the place of words and meanings in the art of expression. Some of the ancients, e.g. al-Jahiz, had considered eloquence to be mainly dependent on the quality of the verbal elements, that is, the words.

But, argued ‘Abd al-Qahir, words in themselves do not make language. They do so only when organized in a system of construction according to the requirements of the meaning. The important element in literary composition, then, is structure, and the essence of structure of meaning. Once meanings are defined in the intellect in their proper order, their verbal expressions follow faithfully in a determined fashion. A literary composition achieves its end if it is properly suitably constructed. It becomes vague, obscure, complicated, and generally defective when the verbal element does not harmonize with the meanings, or when the meanings themselves are not clear and coherent in the mind of the speaker or the writer.

Hence, it follows that our main concern in rhetoric should be with techniques of structure, such as junction and disjunction, mention and omission, definitiveness and in-definitiveness, etc. Our chief occupation here should be the study of the characteristics of meanings in construction, which is a combination of language and grammar. This new technique was ably and effectively applied by ‘Abd al-Qahir to the study of the Qur’anic composition, and consequently to the analysis and appreciation of specimens of the highest literary models, and it yielded a complete system which later authors turned into a definite rhetorical branch, namely, the science of meanings (ma‘ani).

In this analysis of the Dala’il, ‘Abd al-Qahir found himself repeatedly resorting to the process of introspection, and suggesting that the best way to discover the secret of literary excellence is to look inwardly into oneself and find out what impressions, satisfactions, emotions, and excitements the whole composition leaves on one’s soul. It appears as if this aspect of literary art directed ‘Abd al-Qahir, in his second book *Asrar al-Balaghah*, to go deeper into the aesthetic side of literature and find out the secrets behind the felling of enjoyment produced by beautiful literary works. Thus, the field of research was transferred to the laws of human thought.

What goes on in our minds and souls when we hear a beautiful literary passage? Why do such artifices as alliteration and assonance please us? And, why do such phenomena as superfluity and obscurity of expression displease us? What is the secret behind the aesthetic effect of a good metaphor or a cleverly conceived compound simile? Which is more appealing to our taste - the spontaneous and easy flowing poetry of al-Buhturi or the deep and meditative poetry of Abu Tammam? And why? If we can refer such questions to some inherent characteristics in our perceptions and conceptions, in our cognition and imagination, we can be assured of a solid foundation for a study of literary appreciation.

In this part of his inquiry ‘Abd al-Qahir shifted the emphasis from constructing the meaning to communicating it in an effective and pleasing manner. The new domain of his study becomes the variety of ways and means for expressing the meaning in an artistic fashion. In this he showed himself to be clearly aware of the fact that literature is part of a wider field, namely, art. Occasionally, in his analysis and argumentation he would appeal to other fine arts such as painting and sculpture. His approach in this second inquiry gave later authors the basis for creating the two separate

rhetorical sciences, the science of exposition (bayan) and that of embellishment (badi').

Put together, the results of his two inquiries could be summarized as follows:

(a) Excellence in literature should be judged from the quality of the structure of the meaning expressed and its pleasing effect on the mind and soul of the reader (or listener) rather than from its verbal aspects.

(b) The beauty of metaphors lies in the fact that they give to style novelty, vigour, and movement, and that they bring out the hidden shades into a perceptual relief.

(c) Composite comparisons by similitude please the human understanding for a variety of reasons: all abstract to the concrete, and from what is known by reflection to what is known intuitively or through sense-perception; man naturally enjoys seeing different things unified by links of similarities and the enjoyment is enhanced when the discovery is reached after a reasonable amount of intellectual activity - if the intellectual activity involved is too little or too exacting, the enjoyment is diminished or marred.

The functions of the intellect are thinking, reflection, analogy, and inference, and all these are exercised and perceiving relations between different things; the rhetorical figures are the embodiments of all these considerations.

In assessing the value and place of 'Abd al-Qahir's contribution to the theories of Arabic criticism, we must bear in mind two considerations: the first is that certain Arab scholars of the flourishing period of the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries did anticipate 'Abd al-Qahir in some aspects of his theory. Al-Jahiz, for example, discussed at length the art of oratory from the point of view of its relation to the audience and expressed, though briefly, the idea that good speech affects the heart in a variety of ways. Al-Qadi, al-Jurjani also showed his interest in the psychology of literature and, as mentioned earlier, analysed in a psychological fashion the poetical ability into natural and acquired elements.

The second consideration which has been explored by modern research is that 'Abd al-Qahir must have been acquainted with the Arabic versions of Aristotle's *Poetica* and *Rhetoric* where the First Master probes the affective side of literature both in his treatment of tragedy and in his exposition of the art of metaphor. These various probable anticipations, however, did not diminish the claim of our later Arab author to originality. It is to his lasting credit that in the sphere of a literary study he tried to harmonize the rigour of scientific thinking with the spontaneity of literary taste, and succeeded in this to a remarkable degree.

4. We do not come across another great figure in the study of rhetoric during the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries A.H., like 'Abd al-Qahir, nor even a vigorous follower of the founder of the science to develop further his ideas and widen the scope of their application, yet during this period much was added to the wealth of Arab contribution to literary criticism, mostly in general comprehensive surveys. One of the great minds of that period is ibn Rashiq al-Qairawani (d. 436/1044), the author of a standard book on the art of poetry entitled *al-'Umdah fi Mahasin al-Shi'r wa Adabih*. It is one of the

fullest treatments of the technicalities of Arabic poetry and its principal kinds.

Another fifth/11th century critic is ibn Sinan al-Khafaji al-Halabi (d. 466/1073), the author of *Sirr al-Fasahah*. Ibn Sinan's chief contribution is in the domain of linguistic criticism where he deals with the sounds of the Arabic language, their classifications, and their characteristics. Al-Zamakhshari of Khwarizm (d. 538/1144), the Qur'anic commentator, deserves a special mention here because of his consistent application of the rhetorical approach to the explanation and interpretation of the Qur'an. His book *al-Kashshaf* claims a high place among the Qur'anic commentaries.

He is also the compiler of *Asas al-Balaghah*, an Arabic dictionary, which is unique in its attention to original and metaphorical usages of the Arabic language. A later author and critic, Dia' al-Din ibn al-Ayhit (d. 637/1239), left us a most valuable and interesting book on the two arts, of the writer and of the poet, entitled *al-Mathal al-Sa'ir*. He dealt with the literary art in two sections: one on verbal expression and the other on meaning, and managed to include under these two headings all the artifices and figures of speech which previous authors since the beginning the third/ninth century had been exploring, defining and illustrating.

He also restated the problems of word and meaning, plagiarism, and norms of comparison in a masterly manner, exhibiting searching, analytical power and independence of thought. Moreover, he invented a practical method for the training of the undeveloped literary talent, which relied on the two factors: the natural aptitude and the nourishing of the ability on classical models. The method is explained in detail, and illustrated from the history of literature as well as from the personal experience and literary works of the author. Ibn al-Athir was so convinced of the originality and applicability of his method that he claimed for himself the title of *mujtahid* of Imam in the same way as the founders of Muslim schools of jurisprudence, Malik and al-Shafi'i, for example, were regarded by posterity.

We may end this series of the great minds with Yahya ibn Hamzah al-'Alawi (d. 729/1328), one of the Imams of Yemen and the author of *al-Tiraz al-Mutadammin li Asrar al-Balaghah wa 'Ulum Haqa'iq al-I'jaz*. The author criticizes books on the subject of literary criticism for being too detailed and thus tedious, or else too brief and consequently insufficient. He acclaims 'Abd al-Qahir as the founder of the science but confesses that he knew of his two books only indirectly through references to them in the writings of other scholars. He mentions some of the authors with whose books he was acquainted, including ibn al-Athir.

The motive for writing his book, he indicates, was to help his students understand al-Zamakhshari's approach to the Qur'anic exegesis and *i'jaz*. According to al-'Alawi, the Arabic literary sciences are four: the science of language which deals with the significance of separate words, the science of grammar which deals with words in composition and predication, the science of syntax which deals with the morphology of single words and their conformity to regular patterns in the Arabic language, and lastly, the combination of the two branches of *Fasahah* and *Balaghah* which are called

ma'ani and bayan respectively, and which are the highest of the literary sciences.

After a long introduction, the book proceeds to deal theoretically with the cardinal questions in the rhetorical sciences, such as truth and metaphor, kinds of truth, kinds of significance, divisions of metaphor, linguistic sounds, single words and compound words and their characteristics, and requirements and examples of excellence in the various literary artifices.

But here we seem to have reached a parting of the ways between rhetoric and criticism. The separation is supposed to have been started by Abu Ya'qub al-Sakkaki al-Khwarizmi (d. 626/1228), the author of Miftah al-'Ulum. He is credited with the delineation of the boundaries of literary sciences in the manner referred to above which al-'Alawi must have followed in al-Tiraz. In the third division of these sciences, al-Sakkaki puts 'ilm al-ma'ani and 'ilm al-bayan conjointly, the first dealing with the characteristics of speech composition by virtue of which they conform to the requirements of the occasion, and the second with the different ways of expressing the meaning to complete the desired conformity.

By this division al-Sakkaki seems to have carried a logical conclusion the distinction which 'Abd al-Qahir indicated between questions of speech structure and composition and those of signification and effectiveness. To this dual division, al-Sakkaki appended a small section on the special aids to speech beautification, which later became the domain of a third separate science, namely, badi'. This process of narrowing the critical field to Balaghah and of demarcating its sciences was completed and standardized a century later by al-Khatib al-Qazwini (d. 739/1338) who condensed al-Sakkaki's Miftah into a textbook called Matn al-Talkhis.

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Chapter 53: Persian Literature

A. Persian Literature of Early Times

The earliest remnant of the Aryan languages of Iran which antiquity has bequeathed to us is the language of the Avesta, the sacred book of the Zoroastrian religion.

For About 900 years the people of Iran had no script in which they could write the Avesta. So they continued to learn it by heart and thus communicate it from generation to generation right from the seventh century B.C. to the third century A.D.

A special script was at last invented for this book in the third century A.D. The Avesta written in this particular script has been known as the Zend Avesta. At times it has been just mentioned as the Zend. The French scholar Anquetil du Perron who was the first to have studied it in India at the end of the 12th/18th century, introduced it to the West. For a considerable time it continued to be known as the Zend language in Europe. At present, however, the more accurate term of “Avestic language” is in vogue. The script in which the Avesta was recorded should be known as the “Zend script.”

Much as been speculated on the origin and times of Zoroaster, and different theories have been advanced in this respect from the earliest times. What appears to be most authentic at present, however, is that Zoroaster preached his religion between 660 and 583 B.C. in the north-eastern zone of the Iranian plateau in Central Asia. It is plausible that he sprang from the Median stock, lived in the north-west of the present day Iran, and from there he travelled east to Central Asia. Of the extant languages and dialects of the Iranian plateau Pashto or Pakhto has the closest affinity with the Avestic language.

This lends support to the view that the Avestic language was spoken in the north-eastern regions of the Iranian plateau in the seventh century B.C. The Avesta is a massive work, a major portion of which has been destroyed and forgotten owing to the vicissitudes of time and the domination of Iran by foreign nations. What remains today of this book was compiled in the early days of the Christian era. It comprises 15 out of the 21 original parts and if the extinct parts were proportionate in volume to those present about one-fourth of the book may be said to have perished.

From the philological point of view, the extant parts of the Avesta were not written in one period of history. On the contrary, its composition may be divided into three sections. The Gathas, which are composed in poetry, doubtlessly constitute the earliest part of the book. The Avesta is a collection of the Canon Laws and decrees of the Zoroastrian faith which were formulated in different ages. The last of these is contemporaneous with the rise of the Achaemenian power in the sixth century B.C. Possibly when Old Persian, i.e. the language of the coins and inscriptions of the Achaemenians, was current in the western and southern regions of the country, namely, Media and Parsa, Avestic happened to be the language of the eastern or at any rate of the north-eastern provinces of Iran.

Philologically speaking, the Avestic language runs parallel to and is contemporaneous with Sanskrit and, apparently, the origin of both these

languages can be traced back to yet another ancient language which was perhaps the original language of the Indo-Iranian Aryan stock.

The language of the coins and inscriptions of the Achaemenians, ever since they came to power in the middle of the sixth century B.C., is distinctly Aryan in character and is known as Old Persian. This language is also contemporaneous with Avestic, and the growth and development of the two dates back to the same age. There are reasons to believe that when Avestic was passing through the early stages of development in the eastern provinces of the Iranian plateau the Old Persian language was also making headway in the west and south-west of Iran.

With the establishment of the Achaemenian Empire the people of Iran suddenly found themselves to be the neighbours of various Semitic nations of western Asia including the regions of western Iran. The Semitic languages made an inroad into the country and their influence was so strong that the Aramaic language and script were officially adopted by the Iranians. The Achaemenian kings were men of liberal views and they guarded full freedom of belief to their subject races as well as liberty to develop their own languages. That is why the cuneiform Achaemenian inscriptions are recorded not only in Old Persian but also a parallel translation of the same runs of Syriac, Elamite, Nabataean, and Aramaic languages.

The establishment of the Achaemenian Empire saw the people of western Iran divided into two main groups, namely, the Medes and the Persians ("Parsis"). It appears certain that either they spoke the same tongue, i.e. Old Persian, or their languages had very close kinship with each other. We find no traces of the Median language in the Achaemenian inscriptions. Apparently, if the Medes had spoken a different language, the Achaemenian emperors who had employed the Syriac, Elamite, and Nabataean languages in their inscriptions would certainly not have ignored Median. Moreover, a couple of words of this language and the names of the Median chiefs that have come down to us suffice to establish the close affinity of Median with Old Persian.

From 330 B.C. when the Macedonians conquered Iran, Greek became the official language of the country and continued to enjoy the status for a long time. Right down to the Christian era Greek is the only language to be seen in the Seleucid and Parthian writings. Needless to say that during this span of three and a half centuries the Iranian languages continued to flourish. Old Persian, however, is an exception, which gradually went out of use. We can witness definite marks of decay in the Old Persian writings of the later Achaemenian period in contrast with those of the earlier one.

At the dawn of the Christian era we find two languages in the Iranian plateau running parallel to each other. One of these grew and developed in the eastern regions. This has always been called "Dari" by the Iranians. The other which flourished in the western parts of the country was known as "Pahlawi." These two languages have come down to our own times. Many dialects of "Dari" still continue to exist in the eastern regions of the Iranian plateau as far as the Chinese frontiers: the most important of these are spoken in the Pamir region.

The Pahlawi language has lived in the form of verse known as “Fahlaviyyat,” in the books written in Persian on the art of poetry and in dialects spoken in the north, south, and west of the country.

The above-mentioned two languages have very intimate relationship and these have apparently stemmed from the same origin. A number of Aramaic words, however, entered Pahlawi and these have been known as “Huzvaresh” or “Zuwarishn.” These words found their way also into books of lexicography. In the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent these have been erroneously given the name of the “Zend and Pazard” language. “Dari” was too far away to receive the impact of the Aramaic language. On the contrary, it accepted the influence of the eastern languages such as Tukhari, Sughdian, and Khwarizmi.

At first the Aramaic script was adopted for both the languages. Later, however, a change took place and certain Aramaic letters were put together in Pahlawi to form what later came to be known the Pahlawi script.

The Orientalists did not fully grasp the significance of these subtle technical differences and they have been treating old Pahlawi and Dari as one language. Consequently, they have been employing the terms Northern Pahlawi or the Parthian Pahlawi for the later language. In recent times, however, some of them have defined it as the Parthian language whereas Pahlawi itself has been referred to as the Southern or Sassanian Pahlawi.

The number of the extant pre-Islamic works of these two languages is very small. The most important ancient work in Dari consists of the Manichaean texts and translation of parts of the Avesta into old Dari known as “Pazand.” The contemporary Dari has also been employed in some of the inscriptions of Sassanian kings.

Both Dari and Pahlawi possessed literature of their own before the advent of Islam. This literature, unfortunately, has not come down to us.

The history of the earliest Iranian dynasties during the Islamic period begins from the year 205/820. The dynasties which sprang up in the eastern regions raised the structure of their national politics on the basis of language. Since the language of these tracts was “Dari,” the literature produced in it was bound to outshine Pahlawi literature.

In 429/1038 the Saljuq Turks poured out of Turkestan to invade Iran. They gradually conquered the whole country. Since they hailed from the east and their officials also belonged to this region, it was natural that they should adopt “Dari Persian” as their Court language, which they carried to the farthest corners of Iran. Consequently, in the first quarter of the fifth/11th century, Dari had attained the status of the common literary language of the whole country. It gained supremacy in other regions also where Pahlawi had been the popular spoken language until then.

From this date Dari became the undisputed literary language of Iran and, like many other dialects prevalent in the country, Pahlawi was reduced to the status of a dialect. The last vestige of Pahlawi in the form of inscriptions and coins in Tabaristan in the north of Iran date back to the middle of the fifth/11th century.

The first specimens of Pahlawi literature which belong to the early centuries of the Hijrah consist of a number of books of religious nature

which the Iranian Zoroastrians had written with the specific object of preserving their Canon Law. These books were taken to the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent when the Zoroastrians migrated there. European scholars have been publishing their texts since the last century. Amongst these, certain books are claimed to have belonged originally to the pre-Islamic Sassanian era. There is ample evidence, however, to prove that these were composed during the Islamic period.

What is now known of Pahlawi literature is confined to these very books and treatises. They suggest that Pahlawi literature had, at any rate towards the end of the Sassanian period, flourished on a vast scale. It is an undeniable fact that, while during the 400 years which immediately preceded the Saljuq period, Dari had been recognized as the literary language of the country; Pahlawi had flourished on the north, south, and west of the present day Iran. Of this only a specific form of verse known as "Fahlaviyyat" has come down to us, the quatrains of Baba Tahir-i 'Uryan of Hamadan being its most remarkable specimen.

B. The Beginning of Modern Persian Literature

The present day language of Iran is the latest evolutionary of "Dari" and is known as "Farsi" or the Persian language. The people of Iran themselves, however, have always employed the word "Persian" for whatever languages have flourished in the country. In the past the two languages under discussion which flourished simultaneously have been known as the "Dari Persian" and the "Pahlawi Persian."

The Persian language of today, namely, Dari, originated, as mentioned above, during the Muslim period in the east of Iran. The important centres of this language were the cities of Tranoxiana and Khurasan, to wit, Samarquan, Bukhara, Balkh, Merv, Herat, Tus and Nishapur. These centres extended even to Sistan. This explains why the most eminent poets of this language down to the Saljuq period hailed from these particular cities. Gradually, Dari expanded from Khurasan and Transoxiana to other parts of Iran, so that by the Ghaznawid period it had extended to Gurgan, Damghan, and Rayy, and by the Saljuq era it had travelled as far away as Adharbaijan, Isbahan, and Hamadan.

In the province of Fars it did not achieve the status of a popular language even in the days of Sa'di and Hafiz. That is why these two great poets have revelled in the mastery of this language and in the expression of their poetic genius through it. Both of them also composed verse in the Pahlawi dialect of Fars, popularly known as the Shirazi language.

The rules of prosody of Arabic poetry were formulated by Khalil ibn Ahmad. These were assiduously observed by the Iranian writers in their Persian works. Considerable literature was produced on the subject both in Iran and in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. Consequently, the same Arabic names were retained for Persian metres and rhymes, so much so that even the same Arabic word *afa'il* was employed for purposes of scansion. Metres can be classified into three groups, i.e. metres common to both Arabic and Persian, metres which were the outcome of the Iranian genius and did not exist earlier, and metres which were, on the reverse, typical of and exclusive to Arabic poetry.

Amongst the exclusively Persian metres the most well-known is the one employed in the quatrains of Baba Tahir 'Uryan of Hamadan. In the pre-Islamic times right up to the Achaemenian period the only verse known was the blank verse. Specimens of poetry preserved in the Avesta and Old Persian are all composed in blank verse. This type of poetry was also in vogue in Pahlawi and Dari, the two languages so closely related to each other.

The forms of Persian verse have also an independent character and they have not always followed the Arabic pattern. The "mathnawi," "tariji'-band," "tarkib-band," "musammat," "muthallth," "murabba'," "mukhammas," "mustazad," and "ruba'i" are all exclusive to Persian poetry, and they have originated solely in the Persian genius. Persian verse has also influenced Urdu and Turkish poetry. Similarly, the rhymed verse and many figures of speech own their origin to the creative genius of the Iranian mind. "Muwashshah" and "mulamma'" are also Persian in origin.

C. Different Epochs of Persian Poetry

The oldest extant specimens of Persian verse date back to the middle of the third/ninth century. But these fragments are not sufficient to afford us a true picture of the contemporary Persian poetry. What emerges beyond doubt, however, is the fact that the Tahirids (205/820 - 259/872) and later the Saffarids (254/867 - 296/908) played a worth role in ushering in a new era of Persian literature.

Throughout the fourth/tenth century Persian literature continued to flourish with remarkable success at the Samanid Court and in the vast regions lying between the Chinese frontiers and Gurgan on the Caspian Sea. The court of Nasr bin Ahmad, the Samanid ruler, is especially famous for the large number of poets associated with it. Since then the current of Persian literature has flowed continuously.

Modern Persian poetry, in its earliest stages, was characterized by a note of realism. The realist school held its own for 200 years until the end of the fifth/11th century. The greatest Iranian poets of this school who flourished during the fourth/tenth century were Rudaki (329/941), Shahid Balkhi (325/937) and Daqiqi (341/952). Early in the sixth/12th century it gave way to naturalism. Meanwhile, the Iranian Sufis had discovered in poetry a most suitable vehicle to disseminate their philosophical message to the people. Sufism or Islamic mysticism had become popular in Iraq in the middle of the second/eighth century. In the earliest stages it merely laid emphasis on piety and godliness and no elaborate system had yet evolved.

Kufah and Basrah were the earliest centres of this movement. Later, however, Baghdad stole the limelight and became associated with great names in mysticism. From Baghdad it spread out in two directions, viz, North Africa and the "Maghrib" on the one side and north-east of Iran, that is, Khurasan and Transoxiana on the other. In the West it came to be linked up with Greek thought, especially with Neo-Platonism and with certain Israelite doctrines. In the East, especially in Khurasan and Transoxiana, it developed kinship with the teachings of Manichaeism and Buddhism which had enjoyed wide popularity in these regions for centuries. From here it

travelled to India and developed in what may be called the Indo-Iranian school of mysticism.

This latter school gained immense popularity and through Iran it spread to Western Asia and even to North Africa. It still continues to exist in the entire Islamic world from the borders of China to Morocco. The great mystics of Iran chose Persian for imparting their noble thoughts to all classes of people. That is why most of the books of the Indo-Iranian school of mysticism were written in Persian prose or verse and the language of mysticism in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent has always been Persian. Symbolism inevitably enjoys profound importance in the mystic cult. For fear of opposition at the hands of the devout the mystic poets were constrained to express their views and beliefs in the language of symbols.

They were, thus, destined to contribute to the special school of symbolism in Persian poetry. The earliest amongst the great Sufis to compose verse in this fashion is the celebrated poet Abu Sa'id Abu Khair (357/967 - 440/1049). Sana'i (437/1046 - 525/1131), Farid al-Din 'Attar (627/1229), and Maulana Jalal al-Din Rumi (604/1208 - 672/1273) may be considered the greatest of the symbolists among the poets of Iran. Hadiqat al-Haqiqah of Sana'i, Mantiq al-Tair of 'Attar and the Mathnawa of Rumi may be regarded as the most important books of mysticism ever written in Persian.

On account of this great tradition Persian poetry produced during the whole of this period in Iran and the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent is steeped in mysticism. The recital of this kind of verse in the assemblies of prayer and devotion among different sects of Sufis, at times to the tune of music and occasionally to the accompaniment of dance, has been regarded as one of the most important observances of the mystical creed. Even men who did not belong to any school of mysticism had to compose, whether they liked it or not, their poetical works, especially their "ghazals," in a mystical strain.

Mystic poetry of Iran and the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent forms a subject that requires a very elaborate discussion. In fact, it is one of the most profound literary and philosophical themes of all times. The Iranian mystics, apart from expounding the fundamental doctrines and essential principles which have deep academic and philosophical significance and are the especial concern of those wholly steeped in mysticism, have also instructed the common folk on what is popularly termed as generosity and manliness (futuwwat).

This teaching mainly consisted of certain moral precepts and aimed at inculcating amongst the common mass of people the feeling of manliness, courage, forgiveness, and generosity, and might be compared with the institution of knighthood or chivalry prevalent in Europe in the Middle Ages. Many books were produced on this subject in Arabic and Persian and these have been known as books of generosity and manliness (Futuwwat Nameh). This particular institution travelled from Iran to all the Islamic countries as far away as North Africa and the "Maghrib" and is still lives in many parts of these lands.

It may be pointed out that mystical verse in the Persian language has provided the civilized humanity with the most cosmopolitan type of poetry,

and this branch of Persian literature excels all other kinds of poetry both in sweep and charm.

In the pre-Islamic Iran epic poetry and national sagas had always enjoyed wide popularity. In the Islamic period this tradition was not only maintained but it also received further impetus. Initiated by a few earlier poets it found its culmination in Firdausi's (411/1020) great classic Shah Nameh, which remains to be one of the most outstanding epic poems of all times. He completed its first narrative in 384/994, and the second in 400/1010. In this field, as in many others, Persian literature is immensely rich. A number of epic poems were composed in successive ages in Iran and in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent, and this tradition was maintained until a century and a half ago.

Amongst the most important of these are, chronologically speaking, Garshasp Nameh of Asadi (465/1073) which was completed in 458/1066, Wis-o Ramin of Fakhr al-Din Asad of Gurgan (middle of the fifth century A.H.) and the quintet (khamseh) of Nazami of Ganjeh who remained devoted to its composition from 572/1176 to 599/1202. Nizami's style in epic poetry won especial favour both at home and in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent and a number of poets wrote under this unique influence, amongst the most notable of them being Amir Khusrau of Dhelhi (651/1253 - 725/1325), Khwaju-i Kirmani (689/1290 - 763/1362), and Jami (817/1414 - 898/1493).

This typical epic style has left a deep impress on the Turkish language, and many Turkish poets have imitated it, some of them merely translating the same contents into their own language. Amongst these may be counted the epic poems of Mir 'Ali Sher Nawa'i (844/1440 - 960/1500) composed in the Chaghata'i, i.e. the eastern dialect of Turkish, and the epics of Fuzuli of Baghdad (970/1562) in the Azari, i.e. the western dialect of the Turkish language.

Among the other chief characteristics of Persian poetry are the composition of philosophical verse and the introduction of philosophical generalities in poetry composed in simple language. We have it on the authority of the oldest specimens of Persian poetry that poetry and philosophy had forged a close link together ever since Persian poetry originated in Khurasan and Transoxiana. The most important book on practical philosophy to have gained immense popularity amongst Muslims in general and the Iranians in particular in the early Islamic period was Kalileh wa Dimneh which was at first translated from the original Sanskrit work Panchatantra into Pahlawi and presumably brought to Iran in the sixth century A.D. in the reign of Khusrau Anushirwan (Nushirwan the Just).

It was translated from Pahlawi into Syriac about the same time. In the early Islamic period the famous Iranian scholar ibn al-Muqaffa' rendered it from Pahlawi into Arabic. It was later versified by Rudaki, the greatest poet of the Samanid period and one of the great names in Persian poetry in its whole history of the last 1200 years. Only a few couplets of this long poem have survived.

Another book which dealt with practical philosophy like Kalileh wa Dimneh was the famous work Sindbad Nameh. This was also rendered into

verse by Rudaki. That is why his name has been prefixed with Hakim or philosopher since old. This also suggests that there was a considerable element of philosophy in this poetical works. Another great contemporary of Rudaki, namely, Shahid Balkhi, was known as one of the famous philosophers of his time. He had also entered upon a controversy with yet another famous physician-philosopher Muhammad bin Zakariya Razi and composed some treatises in refutation of his views.

Afterwards, many Iranian poets expounded valuable philosophical themes in their works and were known as philosophers. Kisa'i of Merv was one of them. Firdausi and 'Unsuri also enjoyed the title of Hakim or philosopher for having introduced philosophical themes in their works. The great poet Nasir Khusran (394/1004 - 481/1088) expounded philosophical thought in all his poetical works in addition to a few books of philosophy that he wrote in Persian prose from the Isma'ite point of view. The Isma'ilites of Iran always attached great importance to the Persian language in disseminating and inculcating amongst others the philosophy of their own sect. That is why they were even known as the "educationists" or "Ta'limites."

The poets of this sect always introduced an element of philosophy in their works. Amongst the eminent Iranian philosophers and thinkers, Persian verse has been ascribed to Abu Nasr Farabi (d. 339/950), ibn Sina (d. 428/1037), Khuwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi (597/1201 - 672/1274), Imam Fakhr al-Din Razi (554/1159 - 606/1209), Afdal al-Kashani (d. 615/1218), Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi Maqtil (d. 587/1191), Jalal al-Din Dawwani (830/908 - 1426/1502 - 1503), Mir Sayyid Sharif Gurgani (740/816 - 1339/1413), Mir Muhammad Baqir Damad (d. 1041/1631), Sadr al-Din Shirazi, i.e. Mulla Sadra (d. 1050/1640 - 1641), and Haji Mulla Hadi Sabziwari (1212/1295 - 1797/1878).

One can say that there was hardly any philosopher in Iran who did not express his beliefs in poetry. Some of them like Afdal al-Din Kashani composed a considerable amount of verse. Philosophical thought also found expression in the quatrains of the famous scholar and philosopher 'Umar Khayyan (d. 517/1123 - 1124). The collection of these quatrains forms today one of the most famous books in the world, and has been translated into almost all the civilized languages including many dialects of Pakistan and India. One of the most important features with which we are confronted in Persian literature, irrespective of prose or poetry, is the effort on the part of the Iranian philosophers to affect Plato, Aristotle, Plotius, the Stoics, Zeno, and scepticism as well as a part of the philosophical teachings imparted in Alexandria and Edessa, and the fundamentals of Islam. Some of them harmonized mysticism with philosophy and divine law, and in this field Persian is decidedly the richest language in the world.

In the eighth/14th century Hafiz, the great immortal poet of Iran, while following the naturalist school which had reached its highest point of glory in Rumi's poetry (606/1200 - 691/1292) had laid the foundation of impressionism in Persian poetry. This school did not find its roots in Iran for about a hundred years and it was only at the end of the ninth/15th century that a few great Persian poets lent it a new charm and colour. This was the

time when the Mughul dynasty had reached the height of its power and splendour in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. Persian enjoyed the status of official language of the Mughul Court. All notable men of the sub-continent had fully imbibed Persian culture in all walks of life.

Every year a large number of Iranian intellectuals and artists would travel to the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent either to settle down there permanently or to make it a temporary home. These scholars introduced this school of poetry in India where it won immense popularity. It found its highest expression at the Courts of Jalal al-Din Akhbar (r. 963/1556 - 1014/1605) and his successors, namely, Jahangir (r. 1014/1605 - 1037/1628), Shahjahan (r. 1037/1628 - 1068/1658), and Aurangzib (r. 1069/1658 - 1118/1707). Under the patronage of these Courts, rich and exquisite works of poetry were produced. There are a large number of poets who attained eminence in this style, popularly known in Iran as the Indian School of Poetry.

Among them ‘Urfi (963/1556 - 999/1591), Naziri (1023/1614), Zuhuri (1024/1615), Talib Amuli (1036/1627), Qudsi (1056/1646), Kalim (1061/1651), and Sa’ib (1012/1603 - 1083/1672) had been attracted from Iran and they provided both stimulus and schooling in numerous well-known poets of the local origin. The most brilliant amongst this galaxy of poets were Faidi (953/1546 - 1004/1596), Abu al-Barakat Munir (1055/1645 - 1099/1688), Ghani (1072/1661), Nasir ‘Ali (1108/1696), Ghanimat (1107/1695), Ni‘mat Khan ‘Ali (112/1709), Bidil (1134/1722), Nur al-‘Ain Waqif (1191/1776), Siraj al-Din ‘Ali Khan Arzu (1169/1756), Ghalib (1213/1798 - 1285/1868), ‘Ubaidi Suhrawardi (1306/1889), Shibli Nu‘mani (1274/1857 - 1332/1914), Girami (1345/1926) and many others. The literary tradition bequeathed by them still lives in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent.

The last great poet of the Persian language in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent was Muhammad Iqbal (1289/1873 - 1357/1938) who infused a new life in Persian poetry, rejected the impressionist school that had preceded him, and revived the symbolist traditions with magnificent results.

In Iran a new movement in poetry made itself manifest at the end of the 12th/18th century which promised pastures anew. As a consequence, most of the poets returned to naturalism. The tendency to revitalize and revivify Persian verse and to bring it closer to Western poetry is distinctly visible in Iran. There are even attempts at going to such extremes as surrealism. The younger Iranian poet is, however, passing through a period of transition and has yet to determine his final attitude. Nevertheless, one comes across exquisite pieces of poetry produced by some of the poets and poetesses of the younger generation. This augurs well for a great future. It is not unlikely that a new school of poetry will emerge before long.

One who wishes to study the evolution of Persian poetry and its different schools and styles in minute detail will perforce have to make a deep study of the works of quite a few hundred poets of Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Pakistan, India, and Turkey - men who selected this language as their medium of expression and stuck to the Iranian tradition of poetry.

It may be observed that all the important poets of Persian language, whether they were of the Iranian or Indo-Pakistani origin, or whether they hailed from certain Central Asian and Caucasian regions formerly treated as

parts of Iran, were Muslims. Only with regard to Daqiqi, the celebrated poet of the Samanid period, it has been contested by a few scholars that he belonged to the Zoroastrian faith. Be even this cannot be taken for granted. In the eight/14th century, however, a Zoroastrian poet Bahram bin Puzdhu rendered two books of the Zoroastrian religion into verse, namely Zartusht Nameh and Arda Viraf Nameh.

D. Persian Prose

Modern Persian is today one of the richest languages in the world. It retains a link, close or distant, with all the Aryan languages in the East as well as those in the West. It, thus, bears a close resemblance to all these languages in respect of grammar, syntax, and composition. However, on account of the deep attachment of the Iranian scholars to Islamic learning and sciences on the one hand and to Arabic language on the other, Persian became progressively richer and vaster language.

In the middle of the first/seventh century when the people of Iran embraced Islam, the Arabic language gained a complete hold on that country. It came to be looked upon not only as the language of religion but also one of arts and letters. During the early period of the 'Abbasid Caliphate when a strong movement was launched to produce scientific and literary works in Arabic, the Iranians played a very important role in it. They were also conspicuous in rendering translations of Pahlawi, Syriac, and at times even Greek works. They also composed a large number of original works in Arabic. After this Arabic became so widely popular and gained such an immense hold on Iran that the most important books in the field of Arabic grammar and lexicography were written by the Iranians.

Many of the Persian poets composed Arabic verse and some of their works have been acknowledged amongst the finest and most exquisite specimens of Arabic poetry. The Iranian philosophers adopted Arabic as the medium of their expression from the very beginning. Only a few of them ever attempted to compose their philosophical works in Persian. Books produced in Iran on the subjects of astronomy, mathematics, and medicine was mostly written Arabic. Some of the Iranian historians also selected Arabic as their vehicle of expression. Most of the religious literature, including jurisprudence (Fiqh), Hadith, and commentary on the Holy Qur'an, were also produced in Arabic.

From the earliest period the Persian language had imported Arabic elements. Especially in the domain of technical terms Persian was completely overwhelmed by Arabic. Incidentally, the Iranians have given special meanings to many Arabic words which have also passed into Urdu in their changed Persianized sense. The overwhelming influence of Arabic on the Persian language is traceable in different epochs of Iranian history.

However, we find that some of the great scholars of Iran like ibn Sina, Nasir Khusrau, Afdal al-Din Kashani, and Abu Raihan al-Biruni have at times shown in their Persian works a tendency to coin fresh Persian words instead of employing the current technical and scientific Arabic terms. Certain other writers have also shown a tendency to employ new compound epithets of purely Persian origin in their works. The outstanding specimens

of this trend in the Indo-Pakistani Persian literature are visible in A'in-i Akbari of Abu al-Fadl.

The excessive use of Arabic words in Persian prose started in the fifth/11th century. Kalileh wa Dimneh which was rendered into Persian by Nasr Allah b. 'Abd al-Hamid from the Arabic version of bin al-Muqaffa' may be regarded as the first specimen of this type of writing. Amongst other books written in this style may be enumerated Marzban Nameh of Sa'd al-Din of Varavin, Tarikh-i Wassaf, Tarikh-i Mu'jam, and Durrah-i Nadirah, the last being the work of Mirza Mehdi Khan, the historian of the Court of Nadir Shah. But the number of such books is very small. In fact, 99 Persian books out of 100 have been written in simple and direct style and they have always reflected the contemporary idiom, except where a writer has deliberately digressed from the natural style to employ Arabic phrases, a tendency which had been regarded as a kind of literary treat.

As a result of the systematic development of Persian poetry and use of symbolism, Persian prose evolved a new style in which the writer would lay the highest emphasis on allusions, metaphors, and rhetorical devices. We notice the same trend in the recent prose styles of some European languages. This is exceedingly sophisticated style of Persia prose in which the content was obscured by vague rhetoric and long repetitious sentences reached its zenith in the ninth/15th and tenth/16th centuries. It also penetrated into the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent where we find in Seh nathr-i Zuhuri and Rasa'il-i Tughra-i Mashhadi its most outstanding specimens.

This style won remarkable popularity in the field of Court documents, royal commands and decrees, and official correspondence. The tradition passed on to the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent and found its finest expression in Manshaat-i Abu al-Fadl Allami. It also found its way to Turkey and during this period the official correspondence of the Ottoman Caliphs was wholly conducted in the same style as that in Persian. The "Court style" originated in Iran in the sixth/12th century, enjoyed a large, uninterrupted era of popularity and found its best specimen in Manshaat-i Mirza Tahir Wahid composed in the 11th/17th century. It was, however, dealt a fatal blow by Mirza Abu al-Qasam Qa'im Maqam Farahani (1193/1779 - 1251/1835) whose prose was distinguished for the simplicity and purity of its style.

The contemporary Persian prose has a highly simple, facile, and elegant expression. It has freed itself from the conventional ornate and abstruse style. Today it has drawn itself far closer to the idiomatic and colloquial Persian expression than ever before.

During the long history of Persian prose a very large number of books have been written in all branches of knowledge such as jurisprudence, commentary on the Holy Qur'an, scholastic theology, mysticism, philosophy, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, arts, ethics, tales and fables, and even such subjects as handicrafts. However, a majority of prose works in Persian have always been confined to history and practical ethics. That also explains why all books on the history of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent during the Islamic period have been produced in Persian. On this very account some knowledge of Persian may be regarded as an essential

pre-requisite for learning history of some of the Asian countries. In fact, Persian literature may be divided into poetry and history as its two main component parts.

E. Persian Grammar and Lexicography

For a long time the Iranians paid no heed to Persian grammar since they were no strangers to the rules of their mother tongue. The only expositions of Persian grammar in the past consisted of brief notices which some of the grammatical works started in right earnest when during the Mughul rule in India Persian became the literary as well as the Court language of the subject were for a considerable time confined mostly to the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent alone.

In the field of Persian lexicography as in grammar, not much interest was shown in the past. The works produced contained a rather limited number of uncommon words employed in poetry. When a proof was required regarding the authenticity of a certain word, it was furnished from the couplets in which it had been used.

It is quite apparent that at first the necessity for such dictionaries arose in the western parts of Iran where Dari was not the language of the people. The first dictionary to have ever been produced in Persian was compiled by Qatran Urumawi, the famous poet who lived in Tabriz and died in 465/1075. This book is now extinct. After him Asadi of Tus, who also lived in Adharbaijan and died in the same year as Qatran, completed his famous dictionary which is the oldest extant work on the subject.

As mentioned earlier, the Saljuqs had carried their official language, Dari, right into Adharbaijan in the wake of their conquests. Since the people of this province spoke Pahlawi, they found it difficult to understand meanings of certain words which were familiar to Dari but did not exist in Pahlawi. Hence, the urge to compile these works in Adharbaijan.

The most important role in the compilation of dictionaries was undoubtedly played by lexicographers of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. During the Mughul period the Court language of the Empire was Persian. People, for whom it was not the mother tongue, stood in need of books for guidance and help. In the 11th/17th century special attention was paid to this work, though dictionaries had been in the process of compilation since a hundred years earlier.

For a long time the works of the Indo-Pakistani lexicographers or those of the Iranian scholars who had migrated to the sub-continent continued to be the most authentic source of reference even for the Iranians themselves. The most outstanding of these books are Farhang'i Jahangiri of Jamal al-Din Inju, Farhang'i Rashidi of 'Abd al-Rashid of Thatta, Burhan-i Qati' of Muhammad Hussain Tabrizi, Asif al-Lughat of 'Aziz Jang Bahadur, Bahar-i 'Ajam of Tek Chand Bahar, Chiragh-i Hidayat of Siraj al-Din 'Ali Khan Arzu, Ghiyath al-Lughat of Muhammad Ghiyath al-Din, Farhang-i Anand Raj of Muhammad Padshah Shad, and Mustalihat al-Shu'ara compiled by Varasteh.

The number of lexicographical works compiled in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent exceeds 100 of which the oldest, viz. Adab al-Fudala' of Qadi Khan Badr Muhammad of Delhi, was completed in 822/1419. In other

words, the period during which these works were diligently and assiduously produced extends to about 500 years.

The necessity of compiling such dictionaries was also felt in Turkey where Persian enjoyed the status of a literary language at the Turkish Court of the Ottoman Caliphs and many a Turkish scholar produced literary works and composed poetry in Persian, so much so that even some of the Turkish emperors composed poetry in the language. As a consequence, a few dictionaries, to wit, Lughai-i Halimi, Lughat-i Sha'uri, Dasinah-i Kabir and Lughat-i Shah-nameh of 'Abd al-Qadir Baghdadi, were edited in Turkey. But as against the dictionaries produced in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent in which the meanings of words were also explained in Persian, in Turkey the meanings and explanations were given in Turkish. The Iranians themselves, therefore, have not been able to utilize these works.

To no other area of the world does the Persian language and literature owe so profusely as to the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. Not only have the scholars there written hundreds of very useful books on subjects as varied and diverse as history, lexicography, grammar, mysticism, biographies of poets, and commentaries on certain Persian texts, and have preserved and jealously guarded many books lost to posterity in other countries and even in the Persian language. There is hardly any big city in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent where a number of Persian books have not been published. The number of such published works stands at 2,000.

F. Influence on Persian Literature

The history of modern European powers in the East dates back to the Renaissance period. Iran was one of the earliest countries to have come into contact with the West. At first it was the Christian missionaries who set foot on Muslim lands with a view to propagating their religion. They were, thus, introduced to the rich treasure of advanced sciences that had accumulated there through centuries but were unknown to the West. They learnt the Arabic and the Persian languages in order to acquaint themselves with the rich philosophical thought and the subtle beauties and artistries of Persian literature. At first works of Persian classics were rendered into Latin and soon after these were published in some other prominent European languages such as French, English, German and Italian.

The earliest Persian work to have translated into a European language was Gulistan of Sa'di. Gradually, the works of Firdausi, Hafiz, 'Umar Khayyajm, Nizami, Jami, Jalal al-Din Rumi, Farid al-Din 'Attar, Nasir Khusrau, and others were translated. These eminent stars on the firmament of Persian literature are now regarded in all Western countries as amongst the great immortals of world literature. It was the dissemination of their thought which provided stimulus to numerous European poets and writers of the 13th/19th century to take inspiration from Persian writers. This influence was at times fully revealed in their works and at others was reflected in their thought.

One of the earliest amongst them was Dante, the Italian poet, who was inspired to write his Divine Comedy in which he describes his spiritual flight into heavens and the next world under the influence of Iranian literature. Next, it was the great German poet Goethe who was thrilled by

the sheer beauty of Persian literature through German translations of Persian poetry, and who had even pursued for some time the study of Persian language in order to have a fuller appreciation of its literature. He even dedicated to it one of his works *West-ostlicher Divan*, and gave to a section of this book the title of “*Kitab-i Hafiz*.”

The well-known English poet Edward Fitzgerald also published a small collection known as *Rub‘iyat-i ‘Umar Khayyam* which he claimed to have translated from the Persian collection of Khayyam’s quatrains. Actually, however, not all these quatrains are by Khayyam himself; some of these are the work of other Persian poets. As such, this collection reflects the thought of a number of Iranian philosophers.

Many of the European poets and writers who acquainted themselves with the thought of Persian poets through translations in Western languages have produced delightful works associated with Persian literature. Mainly, however, they have come under the spell of Khayyam, Sa‘di and Hafiz.

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Chapter 54: Turkish Literature

A. Development of Turkish Prose and Poetry

The earliest surviving written documents of Turkish literature date from the first/seventh century. They consist of short inscriptions in the so-called “Runic” letters in the Upper Yenisei Valley in Siberia. Lengthier documents of the same linguistic type and in the same script survive in the valley of the Orkhon in Outer Ungolia and date from the second/eighth century. These consist of inscriptions in two steles in honour of two princes of the Turkish dynasty of the Eastern Kok Turk State, and a third erected in honour of its old minister. The history of the Eastern Kok Turk is here related in a semi-legendary and artistic way. Other inscriptions in the same script, large and small, are known in Mongolia, Siberia, and Western Turkestan. Manuscripts too, belonging probably to the third/ninth century, have been found. The language of the Turkish runes is characterized by a certain archaism in its phonetics, morphology, and vocabulary.

From the second/eighth century onwards the Uygur Turks became acquainted with Manichaeism, Buddhism, and Syrian (especially Nestorian) Christianity in Northern China and East Turkestan and developed a high culture within the framework of Far Eastern civilization which lasted until the seventh/13th century. The surviving Uygur manuscript and xylographic literature is very extensive and proves a high cultural activity in the fields of religion, philosophy, and other sciences. The script used for these literary works was mainly the Uygur alphabet, derived from the Soghdian script. In addition to the Uygur alphabet, however, these Turks used, besides the ancient Turkish runes, the Manichaen, Syraic, and Brahmi runes.

The Uygur alphabet remained in use until the 12th/18th century among the Turks of China who did not adopt Islam. The conversion to Islam (from the fourth/tenth century onwards) of the Turks of Central Asia was followed by the adoption of the Arabic alphabet. However, the Uygur alphabet remained in use as the Court script. It was given a new lease of life in the Muslim territories by the Mongol conquest, and was used in the seventh/13th to the ninth/15th centuries among the Golden Horde and the Timurids for the Kipchak and Chaghata'i languages. As late as the early tenth/16th century there were still in the Imperial Chancellery in the Istanbul scribes skilled in writing the Uygur script.

The Uygur Turkish or, to use a more suitable term, the old Turkish literary language (for the civilization that used it was wider than the geographical or historical limits of the Uygur State) shows, broadly speaking, the same dialectical peculiarities as the Kot Turkish monuments. The few dialectical divergences are obviously in the main due to the passage of time and to influence from the outside.¹

The conversion to Islam of the Turks of Central Asia began in the fourth/tenth century. Throughout history the Turks proved to be devoted Muslims and zealous defenders and promoters of Islam. Founded on the literary Uygur of the pre-Islamic period, there developed in the fifth/11th century under the Karakhanids, converts to Islam, the Muslim Turkish literary language of East Turkestan written probably from the first in the Arabic alphabet. The best known documents in this language are two

didactic poems, the Qutadhghu Bilig (The Science of Happiness), composed by Yusuf Khas Hajib, and the 'Atabat al-Haqa'iq (The Threshold of Facts), composed by Adib Ahmad. There is, further, a translation of the Qur'an. Besides these works there is another dating from the same century, the Diwan-o Lughat al-Turk of Mahmud al-Kashghari composed in Baghdad in Arabic in order to acquaint the Arabs with the Turkish world. It is a very valuable source for the investigation of the various Turkish tribes, dialects, folk literature, customs, culture, etc. of this time.²

Islam was established in the fourth/tenth century in the Bulghar kingdom of Kama also. But data are lacking to enable us to decide if there also existed any literature. In any case Bughar elements are found in the sepulchral inscriptions of the eighth/14th century in the Volga region.³

The development of literary Turkish in central Asia went on without interruption, but its centres changed from time to time.

The absence of early manuscripts prevents us from giving a definite name to the language of the Hikmats (theological didactic poems) of Ahmad Yasavi, the founder of Turkish mysticism, who lived in the sixth/12th century in West Turkestan.

In the seventh/13th century the various literary dialects of the Muslim Turkish world were not yet clearly differentiated from one another. The formation of the Mongol Empire, which embraced almost the whole Arabic world of the period, created for a time an atmosphere favourable to the development of uniform language for a considerable section of the Muslim Turkish peoples. At first Turkish literary activity under the Saljuqs in Asia Minor was to some degree bound up with that of Central Asia and Eastern Europe. The seventh/13th century, however, is an epoch of political agitations in Asia Minor and Eastern Europe. It is, therefore, only in the next century that literary works are mainly to be found.⁴

Literary activity on the northern shores of the Black Sea, in Khwarizm which included the mouth of the Sir Darya, in the Capital Saray, and in the Crimea attained a considerable development by the beginning of the eighth/14th century but no uniform literary language developed. The elements of the literary language of the Karakhanid period were combined with those of the local spoken dialects. In Syria, Egypt, and Persia under Turkish or Turkicized rulers there grew an interest in Turkish. Thus, we find a series of grammar books and lexicons in Arabic from the sixth/13th century until the beginning the tenth/16th century. They all deal with the Kipchak but contain elements from other Turkish dialects in varying degrees.

The prose work Qisas al-Anbiya' (Stories of the Prophets), with passages in verse written by N. Rabghuzi, finished in 710/1310, although lacking aesthetic value, is of great literary importance. Another religious work in verse is the Mu'in al-Murid of Sheikh Sharif Khuwaja (713/1313). The very attractive romance in verse, Khusraw wa Shirin of the poet Qutb (742 - 743/1341 -1342), although based on the corresponding Persian work of Nizami, has nevertheless many original passages. Khwarizimi's poem Mahabbatnamah (The Book of Love), composed in 754/1353, is another work of high literary merit. Seif-i Saray's translation of Gulistan (The Rose

Garden) that appeared in 782/1380 is another prose and verse book of high literary value. The religious work Nahj al-Faradis (Way to the Paradise) of Mahmud b. 'Ali (716/1316) is, properly speaking, a "40-Hadith" book in simple prose with no aesthetic aims. Finally, it may be mentioned the religious prose work of Mi'rajnamah (Book of the Ascension) composed for didactic purposes.

Further, there are other works written in Egypt and Syria which are: a Siyar book composed in 784/1382, Irshad al-Muluk w-al-Salatin composed by Barka Faqih in 789/1387, Kitab fi al-Fiqh bi al-Lisan al-Turki, originating probably from the ninth/15th century, Kitab fi 'Ilm al-Nashshab wa Kitab fi Riyadat al-Khail, a book on the art of horsemanship translated from Arabic for soldiers in about 808/1405, Kitab al-Da'wa, another book on the art of horsemanship also translated from Arabic in 844/1440.⁵

We may date to the eighth/14th and ninth/15th centuries the beginning of the development of the different literary languages in different parts of the Muslim Turkish world.

The Chaghata'i language and literature which developed under the Timurids, the descendants of the second son of Chingiz Khan, represent the most brilliant phase of the development of Central Asiatic Turkish literature. Names are known of a few Turkish poets who lived to the first half of the ninth/14th century. Sakkaki was a panegyrist. Another famous poet was Lutfi. To the same period belong the panegyrist Mir Haidar Majdhub (Turkish Tilbe), Amiri, Sayyid, Ahmad Mirza, Gada'i, Yaqini, and 'Ata'i.

In the second half of the century Chaghata'i literature reached its zenith in Mir 'Ali Shir Nawa'i. In his Diwan (Book of Poems) as well as in his numerous other verse and prose works he does not merely imitate the Persian poets, as was the case with his predecessors, but knows how to suit the taste of his contemporaries. He has, therefore, enjoyed great popularity right down to the present day all over the Turkish world. Of importance is his Muhakamat al-Lughatain (The Contest of Two Languages) in which he endeavours to show that the Turkish language is no less suitable than the Persian for poetical works and intellectual purposes. He is also the first composer of Turkish collection of the biographies of poets. Nawa'i is considered to be one of the greatest personalities and intellectuals in Turkish literature. The prince and patron of Nawa'i, Sultan Hussain Baiqara, was also a poet.

The founder of the Timurid empire in India in the first half of the tenth/16th century, Babur Shah, was also the author of a number of poems, but he is most celebrated for his Khatirat-i Babuir (Memoirs of Babur) or Buburnamah (Babur Book) very vividly relating his life and expeditions as well as describing the life and topography of India. He is considered the second great personality of Chaghata'i literature.

Minor personalities of the classical period are Hamidi, Muhammad Salih, Shabani, etc.

Under the Uzbeks, who drove the Timurids out of Central Asia and eastern Persia in the second half of the tenth/16th century, Turkish poets and writers stuck to old Chaghata'i models without producing anything new or original. The historian Abu al-Ghazi Bahadur Khan in the 12th/18th century

probably stands alone in endeavouring to avoid in his work Persian and Arabic as well as Chaghata'i Turkish words.

Of importance in Mirza Mehdi Khan's Sanglakh (Stony Place), a Turkish Persian dictionary composed in 1174/1760 with its extensive preface on classical Chaghata'i Turkish grammar containing comparisons with Anatolian Turkish.

The same Turkish literary language as was written in the land of the Uzbeks is written to the present day in Chinese Turkestan. Here also Turkish culture has been influenced by Persian.

In the 14th/20th century a new Turkish literature based on the local dialects has been founded under Russian and Kazan Turkish influences. It includes dramatic works among its productions. In accordance with the State policy of the new regime, a special alphabet in Cyrillic letters has been created for the Uzbek language.⁶

From the fifth/11th century onwards Turkish tribal and military units began to make raids into Asia Minor, so that Anatolia lay totally open to the Turks. Thus, the colonization of Asia Minor and Eastern Europe went on with great success. Thanks to the ability of these Turks to adapt themselves in course of time to the changing circumstances of life, they succeeded in founding on very firm bases a strong and lasting State.

Parallel to the political and social development, Anatolian Turkish literature has had an uninterrupted development from the time of the Saljuqs down to the present day. It has, therefore, become the most important and richest branch of all the Turkish literatures and has exercised an influence on the literature of other dialects.

Seventh/13th Century

Already in the seventh/13th century there developed in Anatolia a Turkish literature based mainly on the Oghuz dialect. The well-known Persian mystic Jalal al-Din Rumi and his son Sultan Walad produced some Turkish verses, Ahmad Faqih wrote a fairly long mystic poem, and Shayyad Hamzah left poems of different genres.

Yunus Emre was the greatest figure in this century. He is regarded as the best Turkish popular mystic poet. His art is essentially one of the people, i.e. it is Turkish. It was through his mystical verses that there developed a tradition of writing poems in the language of the people and in the popular syllabic metre, which did not lose its power even in the period when Persian influence was at its highest.

Classical profane literature had its first representative in Dahhani. His poems were in an elaborate style and attained a high degree of perfection from the technical point of view.

Another poem of this century was 'Ali's Qassah-i Yusuf (Story of Joseph), representing linguistically a mixture of Central Asian literary Turkish and the vernacular Oghuz dialect. Moreover, other works of this and even next century had more or less the same peculiar features, and the rather pure Oghuz dialectical features in the manuscripts of works of these centuries are probably to be ascribed to the later copyists.⁷

Eighth/14th Century

The literary development followed the same line in the eighth/14th century. A certain number of feudal princes in Asia Minor lacked Persian or Arabic culture, and this was the reason why the language of the people became important, why books were written in Turkish, and also why a number of Muslim works were translated from Arabic and Persian into Turkish. During this century there developed in Anatolia several cultural centres, such as Qunyah, Nigde, Ladik, Kastamonu, Sinop, Sivas, Kirsehir, Bursa, and Iznik.

Among the leading poets Ahmad Gulshahri should be mentioned for his artistic merit. He put into Turkish the Mantiq al-Tair (Speech of Birds) of the Persian poet 'Attar, expanding it with stories from various sources. We also possess a number of isolated poems of his. Although a mystic, his literary aims were purely artistic.

The great mystic of this century is, however, 'Ashiq Pasha with his long poem Gharibnamama (Book of the Stranger). He is a mere imitator of Jalal al-Din Rumi and Sultan Walad. There also exist a number of detached mystical poems from the pen of 'Ashiq Pasha, but all are far from showing the lyrical merit of Yunus Emre.

In the second half of the century we find classical mystic poetry attaining high perfection in Nasimi. He is a great poet whose mystic lyrics are most expressive. His style is simple but full of power and harmony. In his Diwan we find tuyughs a verse-form peculiar to Turkish classical poetry and foreign to Persian literature.

Romantic tales and fables were also taken from Persian literature. Among them is to be mentioned Mas'ud's love story in verse, Suhail wa Naubahar (two proper names), a translation or rather an expanded adaptation from an unknown Persian work. This story has considerable literary value.

But, with the exception of Nasimi, Ahmadi is the greatest poet of this period. He is the author of the Iskandarnamah (Book of Alexander). The subject is taken from Persian sources, but he adds a long section dealing with world history including the Ottoman dynasty. His Diwan is more interesting from the artistic point of view. Among his poems there are some which are of local interest.

Further, we must mention Qadi Burhan al-Din who has left a Diwan also containing tuyughs. His poems have a note of sincerity and passion of their own. He is the first to have attained perfection by the standards of classical rhetoric.

Of the prose works are to be mentioned an anonymous translation of Kalilah wa Dimnah and the legendary tales of Dede Qorqut mainly about the Muslim-Christian struggle during the Turkish invasion of Anatolia and its vicinity, reflecting vividly the life, customs, and ideals of the Turks of the fifth/11th and sixth/12th centuries.⁸

Ninth/15th Century

In the ninth/15th century Turkish increased in importance as a literary and official language. In the first half of the century there were three great princely families who were patrons of scholars and poets: Karamanoghli at Aunyah, the Jandaroghli at Kastamonu, and the Ottoman Princes in Edirne

and Bursa. As in the preceding centuries, the literary activity under them was not confined merely to the translation of Muslim works of a classical character.

In popular religious literature we may mention the Maulid (Birth of the Prophet) poem of Sulaiman Chalabi and Ahmad. This fine work has all the qualities of a masterpiece. It has been read by the people, for centuries particularly on the occasion of the religious commemoration of a dead person. In every century many similar poems have been written in imitation of it.

The most important classical poet of this period is Sheikhi. His version of Khusrau wa Shirin of the Persian poet Nizami is more than a mere translation. The Kharnamah (Story of the Donkey) is a masterpiece of satire. He is also the author of a Diwan which contains a considerable amount of panegyrics and love poems. His part in the establishment of classical poetry is great. His influence continued down to the tenth/16th century.

Another great classical poet of the period is Ahmad Pasha. He surpassed his contemporaries in panegyrics and love poems exercising, thus, a great influence on the poets of his time. Next to him in this field is Najati.

A certain number of chronicles in verse belong to this period.

Prose also developed considerably. In this connection we may mention the anonymous commentary on the Qur'an, Jawahir al-Asdaf (Gems of Mothers of Pearls), and the more popular book Qirq Vezir Hikayalari (The Tales of the Forty Viziers).

But it was mainly artistic prose that was cultivated, its most brilliant representative being Sinan Pasha with his Tadaru' Namah (Book of Supplication). His style is artistically elaborated, yet natural and sincere. Other representatives of artistic prose are Sari Kamal, Ahi, Masihi, and Ja'far Chalabi.

As a reaction to this ornate language the first representative of the turki-i basit (simple Turkish), Wisali who wrote in 'arud metres but used exclusively Turkish words deserves to be noted. However, only one couplet of his has come to us.

The writing of history in prose also began to develop. We have many anonymous specimens of Ottoman history. They show us that there existed in the ninth-15th century among the people and especially among the soldiers chronicles which were almost of the nature of epics. The historical works of 'Ashiq Pashazadah, Oruch Beg, and others do not differ much in point of style from these anonymous chronicles. The works of Tursan Beg, Bayati, and some others, on the other hand, were written rather with the object of displaying a particular style and an extensive literary ability.

A fine specimen of unaffected prose of this period is the treatise by Deli Lutfi, which is one of the oldest works of humour in Turkish literature.⁹

Tenth/16th Century

In the tenth/16th century the apogee of Ottoman political power is also reflected in the sphere of literature. Literary activity flourished not only in Istanbul, but also in Baghdad, Diyar-i Bakr, Qunyah, Kastamonu, Bursa, Edirne, Yenije-u Vardar, and Uskup. Philological commentaries and

lexicographical and grammatical works were produced. Books without number were translated from Arabic and Persian.

The greatest figures in poetry in chronological order are: Dhati, Khayali, Fuduli, and Baqi. Dhati wrote a large number of works in poetry and prose which are unequal in merit. His imagination and new ideas made him very popular. Khayali surpasses Dhati as a poet. His Diwan contains all his works. His most original poems are his love poems. Fuduli must be regarded as the greatest lyrical poet of Turkish literature. Although he used the dialect of Adharbaijan, he exercised such an influence in Anatolia that literary historians regard him belonging to the realm of Anatolian literature.

His love poems and love romance Laila wa Majnun have secured him a special place in literary history. Love in his works is never entirely profane in character, thanks to mystic inspiration. No other poet except Nawa'i has acquired a like reputation throughout the whole Turkish world. He exercised an influence even on the musician poets of the lover classes. Baqi was undoubtedly the most reputed poet of his time, has fame stretching as far as India. In the expression of sentiment he is below Fuduli, but the musical charm and faultless ease of his poems have given him the reputation of an inimitable master of classicism. His elegy on the death of Sulaiman the Magnificent is a masterpiece of deep sentiment and grief.

At this period Anatolian Turkish poetry attained the highest point in artistic elaboration and rhetoric. It is true that this was in the main an imitation of Persian poetry. But the Anatolian Turkish poets imitated rather the Indo-Persian poetry and went even further in fineness and abstraction. In the next centuries we see this refinement perfected on its own lines.

Poets belonging to different dervish orders composed didactic works, mystic poems and collections of legends of saints, along with translations of Arabic and Persian mystical works.

Prose in this century assumed a heavier and more artificial form. Outdoing the Persian models, the simplest ideas were expressed by the most complicated images to the detriment of the subject. This lack of taste is found in the greatest stylists of the period: Lami'i, Kamal Pashazadah, Jalalzadah, Faridun Beg, 'Azmi, Qinalizadah, Khuwaja Sa'd al-Din and others. This tendency to artificiality had a much more disastrous effect on prose than on poetry. In very long works, however, it was only the preface that was written in this turgid and clumsy style.

Many literary, historical, religious or moralizing works of the period were in fact written in a simpler language. The same applies to official correspondence and other State documents. In religious works intended for the people every endeavour was made to write as simply as possible. The examples which we possess of the prose of Fuduli and Baqi show an elegant and relatively simple language.

As a reaction to the ornate language, the movement called turki-i basit (simple Turkish) has its second well-known exponent in Nazmi of Edirne whose Diwan, though, again, in 'arud verse, contains only Turkish words. But he has no artistic abilities.

In the field of historical works great progress was made. Besides rhymed chronicles, we find historical works in prose in continuation of the Saljuq

tradition. A number of historical works were written in verse. With the exception of the Ottoman history by Hadidi they always deal with a single event or the victories of a single emperor or commander. General histories were composed by ibn Kamal, Jalalzadah, Mustafa Chalabi, Muhi al-Din Jamali, Lutfi Pasha, Khuwaja Sa'd al-Din, and 'Ali. Some of these works are the sources for our knowledge of the social history of this period.

Among historical works those which deal with literary history occupy an important place. The first Ottoman collection of biographies of poets was produced by Shahi Beg on the model of Nawa'i's work. This was followed by the works of Latifi, 'Ashiq Chalabi, 'Ahdi, and Hassan Chalabi. 'Ali also gives important notices of poets in his historical work.

It is in this century that there appeared geographical works and accounts of travels. Some are mere translations. The celebrated Bahriyyan (Maritime Work) of Piri Ra'is and Muhit (Ocean) and Mir'at al-Mamalik (Mirror of lands) of Saidi 'Ali Ra'is are the best works of this type. We have further records of voyages both in verse and in prose.

The first grammar of Anatolian Turkish, planned on the model of Arabic grammars, by Qadri of Pergamon, was also written in this century.

Alongside classical literature we find popular literature increasing in every form. Wondering musician-poets were to be found wherever people congregated, and love songs, heroic tales, elegies, and folk-songs were recited.¹⁰

11th/17th Century

In the 11th/17th century knowledge of the Ottoman literary language spread among the Muslim lower classes generally and also through districts to the non-Turksih population or Turks of speaking a non-Ottoman Turkish dialect. The influence of Turkish literature and culture is found as early as the tenth/16th century in the use of Arabic script by the Muslim Hungarians and Croats. There are also found dictionaries of Turkish-Serbian, Turkish-Bosaniak, and Turco-Greek in verse. Istanbul was always the centre to which men of letters and learning flocked from all parts of the Ottoman Empire and from beyond its frontiers.

The classical Turkish poetry of the 11th/17th century was in no respect below the level of the Persian models. The Turkish poets by this time were working on original themes, though the influence of the Persian and Indo-Persian poets was still felt.

Naf'i may be regarded as the greatest master of eulogies (qusidahs), on account of the power of his imagination, the richness of his language, and the elevation and harmony of his style. His love poems and his satires (hajwiyyat), on the other hand, are less successful.

Another very important classical poet was Nabi who is renowned for his refined didactical poems and descriptions. His verses are still quoted as proverbs. He was also the one who protested against artificial language, saying, "The ghazal book is a dictionary."

The greatest figure in romance poems (mathnawi) is Nav'izada 'Ata'i who takes his subjects from the life of his time.

The number of religious and mystical works, lives of saints, and didactic works connected with different orders is very great in this century. Poetical forms were often used for them.

Literary prose follows the same lines as in the preceding century. The great stylists like Vaisi, Narkisi Oqchizadah, and others carried affectation of language to still greater lengths. Yet works which were in their days considered to have no literary value are now being greatly appreciated.

As an encyclopaedist, Katib Chalabi's name must be mentioned.

Histories in this century also took the first place among prose works. There are several which have the character of semi-official chronicles. Mainly, though they are translations of general histories of Islam, there are also original works on the same subject, and general and special works and monographs on Ottoman history. The best historians are Katib Chalabi, Pachavi, Na'ima, and Qochi Beg. The verse chronicles are much below the level of those of the tenth/16th century. The most notable are those of Riyadi and Qafzadh Fa'idi.

In the field of geography the most important works are those of Katib Chalabi and Abu Bakr Dimashqi. They use European as well as Muslim sources. The Sayathatnamah (Voyage Book) of Avliya Chalabi is important as history of all aspect of social life.

The great popularity of the literature of the people continued in this century in all classes of society. The musician-poets became very numerous. We find them in the military classes and in the religious orders. The most important of them are Karaja Oghlan Gavhari and 'Ashiq 'Umar. The influence of this popular literature is felt even among the upper classes.¹¹

12th/18th Century

Literature and culture continued in the 12th/18th century to follow the same lines as in the preceding centuries. There was a fast output in prose and poetry, while the cultural links with Persia and Transoxiana continued. But the tendency to a more individual development gained in strength. Endeavour was made to simplify the language.

Among the poets Nadim in particular acquired a great reputation. By his original themes, rich imagination, sparkling wit, and the harmonious language he surpassed his predecessors and contemporaries. He was the poet who brought much local colour to Turkish literature. He was famous with his sharqis, another verse-form peculiar to Turkish classical poetry and foreign to Persian literature. One of his poems he composed in the Turkish syllabic metre and the national form turku.

Among the great poets of this century special mention must be made of Raghıb Pasha, the last great poet of the classical period.

The poets of this century practiced all forms of poetry, but special attention was devoted to genres characteristic of an epoch of decadence. On the other hand, true religious inspiration still contained. The last masterpiece of romantic poetry was Sheikh Ghalib's Husn-o 'Ishq (Beauty and Love) with its mystical inspiration and very fine style.

Literary prose tended to become gradually simpler, although imitations of the old artificial style were still found. A well-known stylist, 'Uthmanzadah Ta'ib openly denounced exaggerated artificiality in prose.

Historical works occupied the first place, but they could not be compared to those of the preceding century.

The political and military decline of the Ottoman Empire stimulated the writing of a large number of memoirs investigating its causes. The most remarkable of these is that of Qoja Segban Bashi.

From the point of view of geography we may note a number of important descriptions by ambassadors of which that of France by Yirmi Sekiz Muhammad Chalabi is a typical and very interesting example. We may also notice a number of translations of European works on geography.

The writings celebrating the splendid festivals held by the Sultans are important sources for sociological research.

The collections of biographies of poets are even more numerous than in the preceding century.

Popular literature continued to enjoy the same popularity among all classes of society. The works of the musician poets were also well known. Taste for such literature penetrated more into the upper classes.

In this century Ibrahim Mutafarriqah inaugurated printing in Turkish script, but for several reasons printing remained confined to a very restricted sphere throughout the century and did not exercise any particular influence on intellectual and artistic life.¹²

13th/19th Century

At the beginning of the 13th/19th century Ottoman literature sank to a very low level which continued until the period of political reform. It was only natural that the old literary tradition could not disappear at one stroke.

The prose of the period before the political reforms was not of much value, although its production was not less in quantity than that of the preceding centuries. The historical work by Mutarcim 'Asim was remarkable for its style and critical analysis. He used even simpler language in his translation of Burhan-i Qafi' (The Definite Proof) and the Qamus (Lexicon). Lastly, mention must be made of the celebrated poet and stylist 'Akif Pasha who, on account of several poems written in the popular metre and some works in simple prose, could be regarded as the first to have spread literary innovations.

We also had representatives of popular literature. The best known musician-poets were Dertli, Dhihni and Amrah.

B. Development of Turkish Grammar and Lexicography

1. Turkish is an agglutinative language. The root which is either verbal or nominal and which (except in the case of certain pronouns) is never inflected always appears at the beginning of the word. Verbal forms are built from the verb-stem, which may be a simple root or a root modified by formative suffixes. The verb-stem is followed by suffixes indicating aspect and tense ("voice" and "negation" being shown by aspect suffixes), to produce the tense-stem which, without further suffixation, expresses the third person singular; other persons are indicated by the addition of a personal suffix. The resultant word is a unit as regards stress, intonation, and sound harmony, i.e. assimilation of sounds tending to conform the sounds to

the suffixes to the root in general. Phonetic changes in the root or suffixes do not imply semantic modifications.

Nominal forms again are built out of the noun-stem, which may be a simple root or a root modified by formative suffixes.

Prefixes and infixes do not exist in Turkish.

The syntax of the language is based essentially on the following principle. The governing parts of grammatical statement or of a group of statements follow the parts governed. Hence the principal part of the statement or of a group of statements, i.e. the finite verb or predicate, is usually placed at the end, the completed parts follow the complement, the qualified elements (nominal or verbal) are put after their qualifiers (adjectival or adverbial), and the principal statement follows the subordinate.

Turkish in its original form did not include conjunctions. The only subordinate clause which is attested from the earliest documents onwards is the conditional.

The characteristics of the Turkish language outlined above are to be found in the earliest surviving Turkish documents, which date from the first/seventh century.

2. This “pure” language, however, underwent a considerable change when pagan Turks came into contact with the Far Eastern civilizations and religions. The Turkish literary output of the period before the adoption of Islam was mainly translations of the scriptures of various religions. Such translations of sacred texts had to be as literal as possible. Of course, it is no wonder that under the influence of the non-Turkish structures of the languages so translated, this literary dialect, while preserving its native participial and gerundial constructions, acquired new types of sub-ordinate clauses, partly with defective constructions and developed conjunctions formed from Turkish roots. In the field of vocabulary also we find technical expressions, borrowed from the more developed languages of the Far East. This does not, however, mean that such borrowings were numerous. On the contrary, a great number of expressions were mere Turkish translations from these languages.

3. As to linguistic peculiarities of the first Islamic literary dialect in Central Asia, it differed but slightly from Old Turkish. Religious terms markedly connected with the Far Eastern religious were no more to be found. In their place, we find Islamic terminology. But this latter was not as widespread as one would expect or find in later literary works. Instead Far Eastern terms or Turkish calques from them were still common. The development in the direction of one analytical sentence structure was less pronounced. Though sub-ordinate clauses of the Indo-European and Semitic types began to develop in general, the Turkish sentence with its participial and gerundial forms still prevailed. Nevertheless, new conjunctions were created out of Turkish words or borrowed from Arabic and Persian, and these to a great extent encouraged the development of new Turkish subordinate clauses.

On the other hand, popular words of the Karakhanidian period show very little foreign influence. Both in syntax and lexicography, this influence was

restricted to the minimum. In this respect the popular literary products of the earliest Turkish Islamic literature resembled the runic inscriptions.

4. In Khwarizmain period, Arabic and Persian exercised an increasing influence on Turkish syntax. Both in verse and in prose, the basically fixed Turkish word-order became more flexible and the rich stock of terminations that henceforth developed in the language prevented ambiguity and gave it greater clarity. The borrowings from the two main Islamic culture languages, Arabic and Persian, increased. Vocabulary was further enriched by the use of Arabic and Persian loan-words, though the Far Eastern loan-words were still common, and inversion, particularly in verse, was now used to a greater extent. Until the ninth/15th century, Anatolian Turkish also reveals the same characteristics.

5. During the classical period of Ottoman literature, the syntactical influence of Persian in the construction of sentences did not increase. Rather, it diminished in the course of time.

The old Turkish type of sentence with only a single finite verb, but using many participial and gerundial forms was particularly in use in Ottoman prose. This made the formation of very long sentences possible. Inversion, however, particularly in verse, was greatly practiced. Persian and Arabic loan words and grammatical forms became more numerous and Far Eastern loan words were totally forgotten.

6. In modern Turkish, the syntactical influence of Persian in sentence constructions has left few traces. On the other hand, modern writers have drawn fully on the resources of popular speech; the language has thus been greatly enriched and rendered much more expressive, thanks to the harmonious combination of the synthetic structure of the old language with the freer construction and more vivid turns of expression of everyday spoken Turkish.

New constructions of sub-ordinate clauses with conditional or temporal force, formed from a finite verb followed by the interrogative ending, have become meaningless.

In the Turkish vocabulary, Persian and Arabic loan words have become much less numerous, giving place to Turkish words, some of which have even been invented. Loan words from the European languages, mainly at first from Italian then from French, are to be noticed.

7. Thus, we see that in the process of evolution, owing partly at least to the influence of languages of other structural types, both Eastern and Western, Turkish has developed conjunctions, other types of sub-ordinate clauses, and a freer word order in the sentence.

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Part 2: Language and Literature

Chapter 55: Architecture

Chapter 56: Painting

Chapter 57: Music

Chapter 58: Music (continued)

Chapter 59: Minor Arts

Chapter 55: Architecture

A. The First Three Centuries of Muslim Architecture

Arabia, at the rise of Islam, does not appear to have possessed anything worthy of the name of architecture. Only a small proportion of the population was settled and lived in dwellings which were scarcely more than hovels. Those who lived in mud-brick houses were called ahl al-madar, and the Bedouin, from their tents of camel's hair cloth, ahl al-wabar.

The sanctuary at Mecca, at the time of Prophet Muhammad, merely consisted of a small roofless enclosure, oblong in shape, formed by four walls a little higher than a man, built of rough stones laid dry. Within this enclosure was the sacred well of Zamzam.

When Prophet Muhammad, as a result of the hostility of the unbelieving Meccans, migrated to Medina, he built a house for himself and his family. It consisted of an enclosure about 100 cubits square of mud-bricks, with a portico on the south side made of palm trunks used as columns to support a roof of palm leaves and mud. Against the outer side of the east wall were built small huts (hujarat) for the Prophet's wives, all opening into the courtyard. We have the description of these huts, preserved by ibn Sa'd,¹ on the authority of a man named 'Abd Allah ibn Yazid who saw them just before they were demolished by order of al-Walid. "There were four houses of mud-bricks, with apartments partitioned off by palm branches, and five houses made of palm branches plastered with mud and not divided into rooms. Over the doors were curtains of black hair-cloth. Each curtain measured 3 x 3 cubits. One could reach the roof with the hand." Such was the house of the leader of the community.

The Dome of the Rock of Jerusalem, the oldest existing monument of Muslim architecture, was built by the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik and completed in 72/691. It was an annular building and consisted of a wooden dome, set on a high drum, pierced by 16 windows and resting on four piers and 12 columns, placed in a circle. This circle of supports are placed in the centre of a large octagon, averaging about 20.59 m a side, formed by eight walls, each pierced by five windows in their upper half. There was a door on each of the four sides of the octagon.

The space between the circle and the octagon being too great to be conveniently spanned by single beams, an intermediate octagon was placed between the two to provide the necessary support for the roof. The two concentric ambulatories thus formed were intended for the performance of the tawf. The piers and columns were so planned that, instead of concealing one another, they permit from almost any position, a view of right across the building. A twist of about two and half degrees was given to the central ring of supports, with the result that an observer entering any door can see not only the central column in front of him but also the column on the far side.

The exterior was always panelled with marble for half its height, as it is today, but the upper part was originally covered with glass mosaic (fusafisa-) like the inner arcades. This was replaced by the present coating of faience by Sultan Sulaiman in 959/1552. The harmony of its proportions and the richness of its decoration make the Dome of the Rock one of the most beautiful buildings in the world.

The Great Mosque of Damascus

‘Abd al-Malik died in 86/705 and was succeeded by his son al-Walid, who immediately began the construction of the Great Mosque of Damascus. A curious situation had prevailed here since the conquest. A great sanctuary of a Syrian god existed here, consisting of a temenos, or sacred enclosure, measuring 100 m from the north to south and 150 m from the east to the west, set in an outer enclosure over 300 m square. Within the temenos was a temple.

In the fourth century Christianity became the State religion and Theodosius (379 - 395 A.D.) converted the temple into a church.² After the Arab conquest, the temenos was divided between Muslims and Christians. Ibn Shakir says that they both “entered by the same doorway, placed on the south side where is now the great mihrab; then the Christians turned to the west towards their church (i.e. the converted temple), and the Muslims to the right to reach their mosque, presumably under the southern colonnade of the temenos where is now the “mihrab of the Companions of the Prophet.”

As for the corner towers, ibn al-Faqih (p. 108) says, “The minarets (mi’dhanah) which are in the Damascus Mosque were originally watch towers in the Greek days. . . . When al-Walid turned the whole area into a mosque, he left these in their old condition.” Mas’udi³ says, “Then came Christianity and it became a church, then came Islam and it became a mosque. Al-Walid built it solidly and the sawami‘ (the four corner towers) were not changed. They serve for the call to prayers to the present day.” This state of affairs lasted until al-Walid, after bargaining with the Christians, demolished everything except the outer walls and the corner towers and built the present mosque.

The mosque had a court (sahn), an oblong rectangle, surrounded on three sides by a portico. On the South side was the sanctuary nearly 136 m in length and a litter over 37 m in depth, formed by three arcades running parallel to the south wall. A broad transept, running from north to south, cut these arcades into two nearly equally halves, each half consisting of 11 arches. Above these arcades was a second tier of small arches, there being two of these small arches to every one of the main arches below. The arched openings were filled with stucco lattices, and must be regarded as windows. The interior was adequately lit, even when the doors of the main arches next to the sahn were closed.

The decoration consisted of marble panelling (some parts of the original panelling exist next to the east entrance) above which ran a golden karmah or vine-scroll frieze, and above that was glass mosaic (fusaifisa) right up to the ceiling. A considerable amount has survived the three fires of 462/1069, 804/1401, and 1311/1893, and may still be seen under the west portico (over 34 m in length and nearly seven metres high), where the famous panorama of the Barada (the river of Damascus) is in full view. When intact the surface of the fusaifisa must have been greater than in any building in existence! The Great Mosque of Damascus was rightly regarded by medieval Muslims as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Al-Walid also enlarged and rebuilt the great Mosque of Medina in 89/708 wherein the concave mihrab appeared for the first time.

Another building due to al-Walid was the audience hall and hammam, known today as Qusair 'Amrah, in Transjordan. It consists of an audience hall about ten metres square, with two slightly pointed transverse arches supporting three tunnel-vaults. There is a vaulted recess on the side opposite the entrance, with a small vaulted room on either side of it. A door on the east side gives access to the hammam, which consists of three small rooms successively covered by a tunnel vault, a cross vault, and a dome. The latter was the calidarium, or hot chamber, and under the floor are hypocausts exactly as in a Roman bath.

But the most remarkable of all are the paintings which cover the walls, mostly scenes from daily life, a hunting scene, and figures symbolizing history, poetry, and philosophy with the words in Greek above their heads. The dome of the calidarium was painted to represent the vault of heaven, with the Great Bear, the Little Bear, the signs of the Zodiac, etc. But most important of all was the painting of the enemies of Islam defeated by the Umayyads, with their names written above them in Greek and Arabic: Aaisar (the Byzantine Emperor), Rodorik (the Visigothic King of Spain), Chosroes, Negus (the King of Abyssinia), and two more names which have been obliterated.

Painting, contrary to the popular idea, is not forbidden by any passage in the Qur'an, and hostility to it took proper theological form only towards the end of the second/eighth century.⁴

To sum up, the monuments of Umayyad architecture are really magnificent structures of cut stone with arcades resting on marble columns, splendidly decorated internally with marble panelling and mosaic (fusaiifisa). The mosques are nearly always covered with a gable roof. The minarets were tall, square towers, derived from the church towers of pre-Muslim Syria, and the triple aisled sanctuaries were due to the same influence. Umayyad monuments exhibit a mixture of influences, Syria occupying first place and Persian second, while Egyptian influence is definitely demonstrable at the end of this period at Mushatta.

Umayyad architecture employed the following devices: the semi-circular, the horse-shoe and the pointed arch, flat arches or lintels with a semi-circular relieving arch above, joggled voussoirs, tunnel-vaults in stone and brick, wooden domes, and stone domes on true spherical-triangle pendentives. The squinch does not appear to have been employed. But we know from the descriptions of early authors that a type of mosque which prevailed in Iraq had walls of bricks (sometimes of mud-bricks) and its flat timber roof rested directly on the columns without the intermediary of arches. Here we have a direct link between the ancient Persian audience-hall (apadana) and the flat-roofed portico (talar) of more recent Persian palaces.

At about this time the Aqsa Mosque at Jerusalem was partly rebuilt by the Caliph al-Mahdi. Recent research enables us to affirm that it then consisted of a central aisle, 11.50 m wide, with seven aisles to the right and seven to the left, each about 6.15 metres in width, all covered by gable roofs and all perpendicular to the qiblah wall. There was a great wooden dome at the end of the central aisle. On the north side was a large central door with

seven smaller ones right and left, and 11 “unornamented” ones on the eastern side.

This mosque had a great influence on the Great Mosque of Cordova built in 170/786 - 787 by ‘Abd al-Rahman I, the last survivor of the Umayyad family. It was added to on three occasions but this earliest part still exists, as at Jerusalem, the aisles, of which there are 11, all run perpendicular to the back wall, they are all covered by parallel gable roofs, and the central one is wider than the rest. The influence of Syria in Spain at this time is not surprising, for Spain was full of Syrian refugees.

Another building of this period of great importance in the history of architecture is the Cistern of Ramlah in Palestine; it consists of a subterranean excavation eight metres deep divided into six aisles by five arcades of four arches each, all of which are pointed and appear to be struck from two centres, varying from one-seventh to one-fifth in span apart. And there can be no doubt about the date, for on the plaster of the vault is a Kufic inscription of Dhu al-Hijjah 172/May 789. It is, therefore, centuries earlier than the earliest pointed arches in Europe.

The Arabs first set foot on the North African soil as conquerors in 19/640 under the courageous command of ‘Amr ibn al-‘As. The whole of Egypt was occupied within less than two years and ibn al-‘As made the military camp at al-Fustat, a site south of modern Cairo. Al-Fustat continued to be the capital of Egypt until the Fatimids in 360/969 founded Cairo. ‘Amr constructed a simple mosque at al-Fustat, the first in Africa, in 20 - 21/641 - 642. Enlarged and improved under the Umayyads, this structure, in the course of time, grew into the celebrated mosque of al-Fustat.

The mosque of ‘Amr was first enlarged at the order of Caliph Mu‘awiyah in 53/6735 and four minarets were introduced in any Muslim structure.

The next major enlargement of this mosque took place during the reign of Caliph al-Mamun in 212/827 at the hands of ‘Abd Allah ibn Tahir, Governor of Egypt. Since then it has been repaired and rebuilt more than once.

The mosque of ‘Amr is now a big enclosure. The side walls were each pierced by 22 windows lighting the 22 aisles. There were three mihrubs and seven arcades in the sanctuary, each arcade consisted on 19 arches on 20 columns. The arcades were all braced with decorated tie-beams.

We must now speak of the great mosque of Susa on the gulf of Gabes which the inscription of its wall tells, was built by Abu al-‘Abbas ibn al-Aghlab in 236/850 - 51. It consists of a perfectly regular rectangle measuring 49.39 m x 57.16 m internally, and irregular annexes to east and west. The sahn, measuring roughly 41 m x 22.25 m is surrounded by low arcades of slightly horse-shoe form, resting on squat T-shaped piers. There are 11 arches to the north and south and six to the east and west. These arches are of horse-shoe form, the maximum span of each being equal to the space between the piers below. The sanctuary consists of 13 aisles, formed by 12 arcades of six arches running from the north to the south, each divided into six bays by other arcades running from the east to the west.

Internally, it is perfectly plain except for a splay-face moulding, immediately above which is a fine inscription frieze in simple undecorated

Kufic, the maximum height of the characters being 28 m. The frieze in which they are carved curves forward slightly to compensate for the fore-shortening and thus help the observer at ground level. This is the earliest known example of this treatment which passed into Egypt with the Fatimids and appears in the Mosque of al-Hakim, 380 - 403/990-1013.

The Great Mosque of Samarra was built by the Caliph al-Mutawakkil; the work began in 234/848 - 49 and finished in Ramadan 237/February - March 852. It was the largest mosque ever built, for its outer walls form an immense rectangle of kiln-baked bricks measuring roughly 240 m deep internally by 156 m wide (proportion approximately as 3:2); its area, therefore, is nearly 38,000 metres square. Only the enclosing walls have been preserved. The mosque proper as surrounded by an outer enclosure, or ziyadah, on the east, north, and west sides and air photographs show that the great rectangle thus formed stood in a still greater enclosure measuring 376 m x 444 m. The minaret, the famous Malwiyah, stand free at a distance of 27 ½ m from the north wall of the mosque.

There is a socle three metres high on which rests a spiral tower with a ramp about 2.30 m wide, which winds round in a counter-clockwise direction until it has made five complete turns. The rise for each turn is 6.10 m but as the length of each turn is less than the previous one it follows that the slope inevitably becomes steeper and steeper. At the summit of this spiral part is a cylindrical storey, decorated with eight recesses, each set in a shallow frame. The southern niche frames a doorway at which the ramp ends; it opens onto a steep staircase, at first straight then spiral, leading to the top platform, which is 50 metres above the socle. From eight holes to be seen here Herzfeld concluded that there was probably a little pavilion on wooden columns. A few years later, between 246 - 247/860 - 861, another immense mosque was built by the same Caliph at Abu Dulaf to the north of Samarra.

Ten years later, important works were carried out in the Great Mosque of Qairawan by Abu Ibrahim Ahmad, who reduced the width of the central aisles by about 1.20 metres by constructing two new arcades in contact with the old ones. The arches of these arcades are pointed horse-shoe arches instead of round horse-shoe arches like those with which they are in contact. He also built three free-standing arches and one wall-arch of the same type to carry a fluted dome in front of the mihrab. They rise to a height of 9.15 metres and the square thus formed is terminated above the cornice, its top edge being 10.83 meters from the ground. On it rests the octagonal zone of transition, 2.15 metres in height, which is formed by eight semi-circular arches springing from colonnetes resting on little corbels inserted in the cornice just mentioned.

The dome, which is 5.80 metres in diameter, has 24 ribs, each springing from a little corbel, between the ribs are concave segments, 30 cm deep at the base and diminishing to nothing at the apex. The whole composition is charming. Externally, the dome resembles a cantaloupe melon, with 25 convex ribs (corresponding to the 24 concave segments) which taper to nothing at the apex. Abu Ibrahim's work was carried out in 248/862. He also lined the mihrab with a series of very beautiful carved marble panels

assembled in four tiers of seven panels each, the total height being 2.70 m. He also decorated the face of the mihrab and the wall surrounding it with lustre tiles about 21 cm square. The marble panels and the tiles were imported by him from Iraq and the latter constitute the oldest examples of lustre pottery of certain date.

It was during the reign of Ahmad ibn Tulun (254 - 270/868 - 884), the first Muslim sovereign of independent Egypt, which Muslim architecture properly developed in the Nile Valley. He was son of a Turkish slave and was born and brought up in Samarra. He proved to be a great administrator and a great builder. Al-Qata'i, the new quarter of al-Fustat, was adorned as there was a vast ground in front of the palace where polo matches took place. The palace had nine gates and one of them was called Bab al-Salat (Gate of Prayer). He also built a hospital at an expense of 60,000 dinars.

But his greatest work, which still stands, is his famous mosque; it cost him 120,000 dinars.⁶ It exhibits strong influence at the Samarra school as ibn Tulkun himself came from Samarra and his architects and craftsmen too were mostly Iraqis.⁷ This Iraqi impact is clearly visible in the piers of the mosque and in its ornamental work in wood and stucco.

The mosque of ibn Tulun is built on the outcrop of a rock and impresses the visitor by its great size and the noble simplicity of its plan. It consists of a sahn 302 square feet surrounded by riwaqs, five aisles deep. There are 13 pointed arches on each side. The sanctuary is formed by five arcades 17 arches each. The arches are surrounded by a continuous band of ornament. Above runs a broad frieze of stucco rosettes each in an octagonal frame.

The varieties of designs some composed of straight lines, others triangular, and still others circular and interlacing, are extra-ordinary. The windows form one of the most beautiful features of the mosque. They are 128 in number. Their pattern is a mesh of equilateral triangles by grouping six of which we can form hexagons. The minaret, which is built of hives-stone, is almost a copy of the Malwiyah of Samarra. About 1/17th of the Qur'an is inscribed in beautiful Kufic characters on the wooden frieze round the inside of the building just below the flat timbered roof.⁸

Tulunid Egypt could also boast of a very unusual structure; it was the palace of Ahmad ibn Tulun's son, Khumarawaih (271 - 282/884 - 895). The walls of its golden hall were covered with gold and decorated with bas-reliefs of himself, his wives, and his songstresses.⁹ These life-size figures were carved in wood.

Under the 'Abbasids the Hellenistic influence of Syria was replaced by the surviving influence of Sassanian Persia, which profoundly modified the art and architecture, and this gave birth to the art of Samarra, the influence of which extended to Egypt under ibn Tulun and even Nishapur and Bahrain. In palace architecture there was a vast difference between one of the Umayyads and that of the 'Abbasids, partly due to the adoption of Persian ideas of royalty which almost deified the king; hence, elaborate throne-rooms, generally domed, for private audience, preceded by a vaulted liwan (or four radiating liwans) for public audience. The baits also were different, following the type of Qasr-i Shirin and not the Syrian type of Mushatta and Qasr al-Tuba.

The scale was immense and axial planning was a marked feature. But all are built of brick and a great part of the basest of materials - mud-brick - hidden by thick coats of stucco. A new type of pointed arch appears - the four centred arch. The earliest existing squinches in Islam date from this period. An important innovation was the introduction of lustre tiles, the earliest examples being those brought to Qairawan from Iraq in 248/862. Bands of inscription were usually made to stand out on a blue background. But the wide-spread influence of the 'Abbasid art did not extend to Spain where the Umayyad art, brought thither by Syrian refugees, was still full of life.

B. Muslim Architecture in Later Centuries

1. Muslim Architecture in North Africa

The Fatimids

When the Fatimids came to power in Egypt in 358/969, they built a new city north of al-Fustat and called it al-Qahirha (Cairo). Since then Cairo has always been the capital of Egypt. The great mosque of al-Azhar was also built almost at the same time (361/972). The original sections of al-Azhar, which still exist, are built in brick and have pointed arches. The minaret is of the heavy square type. The next Fatimid mosque, completed by al-Hakim in 403/1012, follows the al-Azhar plan and has a cupola of brickwork supported on an octagonal drum above the prayer niche. The triumph of stone over brick, initiated by al-Hakim, was not affected until the beginning of the sixth/12th century. The first appearance of corbelled niche is found in the mosque of al-Qamar (519/1125). This pillared mosque displays bold designs and austere Kufic inscriptions.

The grandeur of Fatimid architecture may well be imagined from the testimony of the massive gates of which three are extant in Cairo: Bab Zawilah, Bab al-Nasr, and Bab al-Futuh.¹⁰

The Mamluks

While the Tulunid and Fatimid architecture in Egypt was inspired by Iraq and Iran respectively, the Mamluk monuments were influenced by the Ayyubi School of Syria. The Mamluks produced some of the most exquisite structures. Made of fine and durable stone, these monuments are distinguished for their strength and solidity. Their simple decorative motif assumes infinite grace.

Mamluk monuments may be roughly divided into three categories: the madrasah-mosque monuments, the citadels, and the hospitals, besides other public works like canals and aqueducts. The madrasah type was first introduced in Egypt by Sultan Salah al-Din Ayyubi of the Crusade fame. Although none of these institutions exist today, their impact may easily be noticed in the collegiate mosque of Sultan al-Hassan (748 - 63/1347 - 61).

One of the early monuments of the Mamluk period is the Great Mosque of Baibars (658 - 676/1260 - 1277). It was built in 668/1269. Napoleon used it as a fort when he was in Egypt. Al-Malik al-Mansur Saif al-Din Qalawun (678 - 689/1279 - 1290), a great builder, erected a hospital connected with a madrasah and a mausoleum with its remarkable arabesque tracery and fine

marble mosaic. This hospital, known as al-Maristan al-Mansuri, was completed with the mosque and the attached school in 683/1284. It had special wards for segregating patients of various diseases and contained laboratories, dispensaries, baths, kitchens and store-rooms.¹¹

His son and successor al-Nasir (692 - 740/1293 - 1340) surpassed him in the construction of public works. He dug a canal connecting Alexandria with the Nile employing 100, 000 men, built an aqueduct connecting his far-famed citadel al-Qasar al-Ablaq (the place of varied colour) at Cairo with the river, founded 30 mosques at various places in his kingdom, and provided for the public use drinking fountains (sabils), baths, and schools. Inside his citadel he built a mosque the material for which was brought from 'Akka.

Another noteworthy builder among the Mamluks was al-Nasir's son, Sultan Hassan, whose collegiate mosque is the most splendid example of Mamluk architecture. It consists of a square sahn (central court) which is flanked by four liwans (halls) forming the four arms of a cross. Perhaps these unique cruciforms were each meant for the four major schools of Muslim theology. Behind the qiblah wall of this mosque is the mausoleum of Sultan Hassan which was built in 767/1363. It is surmounted by a large dome made of bricks. The pendentives are in wood. In its general appearance it seems to have been inspired by the Sultaniyyah tomb of Sultan Khuda Bandah (d. 706/1306).

During the Mamluk period the use of brick was abandoned in minaret construction in favour of stone. The cruciform plan of school-mosque structure was perfected. Domes, renowned for their lightness, beauty of outline, and excessively rich decoration, were constructed. Stones of different colours in alternate courses (ablaq) were utilized for striped masonry and decorations. Geometrical arabesques and Kufic letterings were also profusely used.

Although the last hundred years of the Mamluk rule are a period of decline, several impressive monuments of that period have escaped the ravages of time and turmoil. For instance, the mosque and mausoleum of Barquq (785 - 800/383 - 1398), the Mosque of Qa'it Bay (873 - 900/1468 - 1495) and the mosque of al-Ghauri (906 - 922/1500 - 1516). The Mosque of Qa'it Bay consists of a mosque proper, a tomb, a fountain, and a school. It is made of red and white stone and the dome is decorated with a charming network of foliage and rosette. Elaborate arabesque ornamentation does not seem to have affected its traditional vigour and virile elegance.

Qairawin

During the reign of Caliph Mu'awiyah, his famous general, 'Uqbah ibn Nafi' invaded the Magrib (the land west of Egypt) and founded the famous military city of al-Qairawan (49/670) south of Tunis. 'Uqbah built the mosque and his headquarters in the centre and grouped dwellings around them just as it had been done at other military towns of al-Kufah, Basrah, and al-Fustat.¹² The famous mosque of Qairawan, the fourth most sacred Muslim sanctuary in the world, was built several times by the successors of 'Uqbah and finally by the Aghlabid ruler, Ziadat Allah I (202 - 223/817 - 838).

The Qairawan mosque is a big oblong enclosure. The sahn, trapezoidal in shape is entirely paved with marble. The arcades on the north side rest on columns, but the others rest on rectangular piers with two friezes with standing columns attached to their front face. The sanctuary, like the Cordova mosque sanctuary, is a hall of columns. It is divided into 17 aisles by 16 arcades. Each of these arcades consists of seven arches. They are all of the round horse-shoe type. The mihrab as well as the surrounding structure from top to bottom is constructed of white marble covered with carvings. Part of this decoration consists of inscriptions; the rest forms arabesques of various patterns.

Round the mihrab are exquisite columns, also made of marble. There is a fine pair of orange-red marble columns situated in front of the mihrab which is actually a recess, horse-shoe in plan. It is lined with a series of marble panels, 28 in number. The semi-dome has a wooden lining covered with a coating to which is applied the painted decoration consisting of vine scrolls forming loops, filled in most cases by a five-lobed vine leaf and a bunch of grapes.

The face of the mihrab is decorated with lustre tiles, 139 in number.

At the northern end of the sahn stands the famous minaret in great prominence on a square base. It has three storeys all squarish or rectangular. At the top is a dome. The minaret is made of bricks. This is the oldest minaret on the African soil and is quite different from the spiral malwiyahs of the mosques of Samarra and the mosque of ibn Tulun.

In this region of al-Maghrrib is found perhaps the earliest monument of Muslim military architecture. It is known as Qal'ah Bani Hammad. This citadel was built by Hammad bin Yusuf al-Barbari in the province of Constantine (Algeria) in 370/980. It contains a grand mosque, a reservoir, a palace, and some other constructions that were probably used for administrative purposes. The mosque contains a square minaret in the style of Qairawan but, unlike Qairwan, there are no corridors. The citadel is in ruins now.

2. Muslim Architecture in Spain

Muslim architecture in Spain is considered a great marvel of aesthetic ingenuity. The magnificent mosque and palaces, gardens and citadels, fountains and aqueducts, public baths and private dwellings that 'Abd al-Rahman I (139 - 172/756 - 788) and his successors built at Cordova, Seville, Granada, and other cities of this western most outpost of Islamic culture, were unparalleled in the entire civilized world.

Spain was conquered by the Arab generals of the Umayyad Caliphs between 93/711 and 527/1132. The capital of the Spanish province of the Empire was Cordova. Soon Arab settlements, especially Syrian, sprang up everywhere. It was these Syrians whom the Governors of Cordova employed as artisans and architects for new constructions,¹³ and "the city was adorned with numerous beautiful structures."¹⁴ It is, therefore, natural that Muslim architecture in Spain mostly exhibits Syrian features.

But a systematic embellishment of Spanish towns, with exquisite structures, actually started when 'Abd al-Rahman I found the independent

Umayyad Kingdom of Spain. This process lasted until the death of ibn Ahmar (d. 671/1272), builder of the famous castle and palace of Alhambra.

During the reign of the Umayyad Caliphs, Cordova grew into the most magnificent city in the West. "The jewel of the world," according to a contemporary Saxon nun,¹⁵ contained 113,000 homes, 21 suburbs, 700 mosques,¹⁶ and 300 public baths.

One of the first projects of 'Abd al-Rahman I was to build an aqueduct for the supply of pure water to the capital. He also built a wall around the city and erected for himself a palace called Munyat al-Rusafah outside Cordova in imitation of the palace built by his grandfather, Caliph Hisham, in northern Syria.

'Abd al-Rahman also laid the foundation of the great mosque of Cordova in 171/786. It was finished in a year at a cost of 80,000 dinars (£40,000).¹⁷ It is the third largest mosque in the world covering an area of 26,500 square yards. It is a vast rectangle, free on all sides. Covered porticoes surround it on every side except the southern where there are 17 arches. The sanctuary is a huge hall of 19 aisles, the roof of which rests on 18 arcades. It could once be entered from the street by 13 doors. The sahn is surrounded by porticoes.

The sanctuary of this mosque is a forest of columns. They exhibit great variation of types. Some are smooth, others fluted, and a few even have spiral flutings. The arcades, too, are of a remarkable design.

The mosque underwent several improvements and enlargements at the hands of successive rulers. For instance, 'Abd al-Rahman III built a minaret 73 cubits high "measured to the highest point of the open dome pavilion. On the summit of this dome are golden and silver apples. Two were of pure gold and one of silver. Below and above each were lilies very beautifully worked out, and at the end of the span was a little golden pomegranate."¹⁸ Similarly, al-Hakam built a dome in front of the mihrab and it was decorated in gold mosaic.

Although the architectural pattern of the great mosque, with its aisles running parallel to the back wall, the horse-shoe arches, the parallel gable roofs, and the arcades around the sahn, show clear Syrian inspiration, the double tier of arcades are the most original features of the great mosque.

'Abd al-Rahman III (207 - 238/822 - 852) also erected a palatial mansion and called it al-Zahra', naming it after his wife. It stood on one of the spurs of the Sierra Morena overlooking the Guadalquivir (Wadi al-Kabir). It was started in 221/836. Marble was brought from Carthage and Numidia. Columns as well as basins, with golden statues, were imported from Constantinople. It took 10,000 workmen to build it in about 20 years. The palace had 400 rooms and apartments. The eastern hall was adorned with fountains, in which were placed golden statues of animals, set with precious stones. Water flowed through the mouth of these beautiful figures. The audience chamber was an exquisite piece of workmanship in marble and gold studded with jewels.

The seventh/13th century citadel-castle of Alhambra (the Red Palace) built by ibn Ahmar (671/1272) in Granada is another great architectural legacy of the Muslims in Spain. It is situated on a hilly terrace on the

remains of an earlier Umayyad citadel. It was enlarged and embellished by his three successors.

“This acropolis of Granada with its exquisite decoration in mosaics, stalactites and inscriptions, was conceived and constructed” on a grand scale and is without dispute “the last word in such workmanship.”¹⁹ In the words of Amir Ali, “The towers, citadels, and palaces (at Alhamabra), with their light and elegant architecture, the graceful porticos and colonnades, the domes and ceilings still glowing with tints which have lost none of their original brilliancy, the airy halls, constructed to admit the perfume of the surrounding gardens, the numberless fountains over which the owners had such perfect control, that the water could be made high or low, visible or invisible at pleasure, sometimes allowed to spout in the air, at other times to spread out in fountains, and serene azure sky, the lovely arabesques, paintings and mosaics finished with such care and accuracy as to make even the smallest apartments fascinating, and illuminated in varied shades of gold, pink, light blue and dusky purple.

The lovely dados of porcelain mosaic of various figures and colours, the beautiful Hall of Lions with its cloister of 128 slender and graceful columns, its blue and white pavement, its harmony of scarlet, azure and gold, the arabesques glowing with colour like the pattern on a cashmere shawl, its lovely marble filigree filling in the arches, its beautiful cupolas, its famous alabaster cup in the centre, the enchanting Hall of Music, where the Court sat and listened to the music of the performers in the tribunes above, the beautiful seraglio with its delicate and graceful brass lattice work and exquisite ceilings, the lovely colouring of the stalactites in the larger halls and of the conical lining in the smaller chambers,”²⁰ made this architectural monument one of the wonders of the world.

There was another royal villa within the walls of Granada. It was called al-Generaliffe (a corruption of Jami‘ah al-‘Arif). It also was considered a marvel of beauty with fountains, groves, and flowers. The gardens were terraced in the form of an amphitheatre.

The Alcazar (al-Qasr) of Seville is another notable contribution of the Muslims. It was first built by a Toledo architect for the Muwahhid Governor in 596 - 597/1199 - 1200. Of the many Alcazars in Cordova, Toledo, and other Spanish towns, the Seville Alcazar is the most renowned and the only one surviving. This gracefully decorated castle was until recently used as residence by the Spanish rulers. There is another Muwahhid monument in Seville, the Giralda tower, which was originally the minaret of the great mosque. It was erected in 580/1184 and was decorated with cusped arcading.²¹

3. Muslim Architecture in Iran

History records that the earliest mosque in Iran was Masjid al-Thaur built at Qazwin in 81/700, but the earliest Islamic monument so far discovered in Iran is the mosque known as Tariq Khanah at Damghan, halfway between Teheran and Meshed. It was built between 133/750 and 170/786. According to M. Goddard, “by the harmony of its proportions and masses, it is still one of the most magnificent buildings of Islam.” It was constructed on the vault system.

Iranian buildings throughout the Muslim period were known for their exquisite domes. These domes never arose from the Roman pendentive employed by the Byzantines but from the more primitive squinch arch which spanned the angles of the square and were converted into an octagon. The earliest Muslim dome in Persian is that of the Great Mosque at Qum, south of Teheran. It was built by Abu Sa'dain Hussain in 256/878 and was 80 feet high.

Since then three different types of domes have been built in Iran: (1) single domes, (2) true double domes, and (3) an inner dome concealed by a polyhedral tent dome or a conical roof. Single domes were popular during the Saljuq period and were direct descendants of the Sassanian domes. The most conspicuous and representative dome of the second type may be seen over the tomb of Sultan Sanjar at Merv (552/1157) while the most renowned earlier example of the third type is the Gumbad-i Qabus (398/1007).

The Gumbad-i Qabus was built by Shams al-Ma'ali 'Abd al-Hassan Qabus, the ruler of Gurgan and Tabaristan in 397/1006. This mausoleum is actually a cylindrical tower with a conical top. The inside is empty, a continuous void from the ground to the roof where it is domed with a tent like cone. The total height of the tower is a little over 167 feet. It is built of burnt brick. There are two Kufic inscriptions also, one 26 feet three inches above the ground and the other just under the corbel.

These tomb-towers hold an important place in the Saljuq architecture. They are mostly found in Adharbaijan and across the border in Qunyah. Prominent among these are Khalifah Ghazi at Amasia, the tomb-towers at Akhlat and Kaisari.

These tomb towers are dressed in stone. They are usually octagonal in shape with conical roofs. The exterior faces are decorated with arcading cut in high relief on the stones of the structure. Most of the tombs have four windows or portals. The interior is usually plain and the chamber is always covered by an inner dome of cut stone. Built flights of stairs to these chambers are rarely found. They were entered probably by means of a ladder.

The Saljuqs concentrated mainly on the construction of mosques and it was during their reign that the basis for the standard Iranian mosque was firmly laid. Its features were: at the beginning of a longitudinal axis an ivan portal leads into an open court, arcades surrounding the court are interrupted by four ivans, two on the longitudinal axis and two on the cross axis with prayer halls at the back of the arcades, the major ivan opens into a square sanctuary chamber crowned by a dome with a mihrabi in the rear wall of the chamber.

The earliest Saljuq mosque containing all these elements is the small Masjid-i Jami' at Zauara, north-east of Ispahan, which was erected in 530/1135.

During the Saljuq period vaults over the square or rectangular bays of the prayer hall of mosques display a considerable variety of types. In the earliest surviving Iranian mosques, the bays were covered by barrel vaults. This resulted in complication of construction at the corner angles and did not offer any opportunity for display of technical skill. The Saljuq builders

replaced the barrel vaults by domical type vaults. In order to enhance the decorative quality of vaults, they built groin vaults, cloister vaults, vaults on groin squinches, vaults on triangular false pendentives, domical lantern vaults, saucer domes and flat vaults. Examples of these experiments may be seen in those areas of the Jami' Masjid at Ispahan which are assigned to the Saljuqs.

Surface enrichment of the Muslim architecture in Iran was of three types: brick patterns, plaster, and mosaic faience. Decorative brick-lay appeared in pre-Saljuq work, reached its maximum effectiveness under the Saljuqs, and tended to die out in the eighth/14th century. Stucco was an important feature of decoration even in the earliest Muslim monuments and held its popularity throughout. Faience, first used by the Saljuqs on a large scale, developed considerably during the Il-Khanids and reached its zenith under the Timurids and the Safawids.

A number of Saljuq monuments contain mihrabs executed in small cut bricks. Brick end plugs were also utilized for decorative purposes but it was stucco, and to some extent sculpture in stone, that played the most important role in the exterior and interior embellishment during the Saljuq period. The arabesque and monumental inscriptions in Kufic and nasta'liq writing became an essential part of decoration. For instance, in Merv there still stand the ruins of the tomb of Sultan Sanjar (511 - 552/1117 - 1157) the last of the great Saljuqs, decorated on the inside with panels of fine arabesque and inscriptions, both Kufic and naskh in cut terra-cotta.

One of the most beautiful Kufic inscriptions of the Saljuq period is known from a ruined madrasah at Karghid in Khurasan. It contains the name of Nizam al-Mulk, the Grand Vizier of Sultan Alp Arsalan (455 - 485/1063 - 1092). The Jami' Masjid at Qazwin, built in 509/1116, and the mihrab of Imamzadh Karrar at Buzun (528/1134) exhibit the most developed Saljuq style of decoration in stucco and stone. The Jami' Masjid at Ardistan (555/1160) has three mihrabs rich in stucco decorations. Here, several systems of arabesque are intervened or placed one above the other, the heavy or baroque arabesque in high relief usually forming the background.

Stucco was used extensively in the Saljuq era not only for the decoration of mosques, but also for that of palaces and houses of nobles. Compositions consisted of hunting scenes and Court scenes. Occasionally, the relief of figures was so high and thick that it approached sculpture. These stucco reliefs were chiefly found in Rayy (Teheran) and Sawa.

Fifteen Saljuq monuments display, on the interior or the exterior, glazed tiles used in the inscriptions of patterns. Mosaic faience developed in Gumbad-i Kabud at Maraghah (593/1196) reached a stage at which strips of glazed tiles were set in a plaster ground to form an elaborate strap-work pattern, splendid calligraphic friezes of lusted faience surmounted dadoes composed of star tiles in golden brown lustre on a white ground, and mihrabs were executed in the same material, for instance, the famous mihrab of the Maidan Mosque at Kashar (623/1226).²²

Mention may be made of Malik Shah, a great Saljuq monarch (465 - 485/1072 - 1092) who made Ispahan, his capital, one of the most beautiful cities in Asia. He built the famous Jami' Mosque and for the first time

introduced the tapering fluted style of tower in Iran. The finest example of this cylindrical minaret is found in Iran. It is called Mina-a 'Ali and was built by Malik Shah. It is decorated with geometrical patterns and bands of inscriptions on glazed tiles.

Persia suffered the greatest disaster at the hands of Mongol invaders at the beginning of the seventh/13th century. Merv and Nishaput fell to Chingiz Khan in 617/1220, and within 25 years the entire country was not only occupied but cities were completely burnt, buildings were totally razed, and, at places, the entire population was slaughtered like animals with the result that very few buildings erected between the Arab invasion of Iran and the rise of Il-Khan Mongols stand today.

The Mongols ruled over Iran for about 143 years (644 - 791/1246 - 1389). Hulagu, the founder of the Mongol Empire, assumed the title of Il-Khan and made Tabriz his capital.

The first Mongol construction in Iran was an astronomical observatory built at Maraghah, the summer capital of Hulagu Khan, at the instance of his famous minister, Nasir al-Din Tusi, in 678/1279.

But it was Hulagu's successor, Arghun, who revived the great architectural tradition of Iran. He began the construction of Arghuniyyah, a splendid suburb of Tabriz. Work was also undertaken at Sultaniyyah near Qazwin and summer palaces were built at Alatagh, Mansuriyyah, and Lar.

The Golden Age of Il-Khanid architecture was, however, ushered in by Ghazan Khan, who embraced Islam and came to the throne in 694/1295. Ghazan was not only a great builder but was himself an architect. He designed and built Shenb, a suburb west of Tabriz, in 696/1297. The observatory was crowned with a cupola shaped to his own design.²³ He also built his lofty tomb at Shenb. It was 12-sided in plan and had a crypt at ground level. A great mausoleum was encircled with a golden inscription. Some 14,000 workmen were employed in its construction. Besides, there was a monastery for dervishes, a Shafi'i and Hanafi college, an academy of philosophy, a residence for the descendants of the Holy Prophet, a hospital, a palace, a library, and a splendid garden kiosk called Ardiliyyah.

The tomb was the focal point of the entire built-up area. It was surrounded by gardens which were encircled by a suburb called Ghazaniyyah. Near each of the gates of this town, which soon rivalled Tabriz, was built a caravanserai, markets, and public baths. The name of the chief architect of Ghazaniyyah was Taj al-Din 'Ali Shah.

Although Ghazaniyyah is a heap of bricks today and Ghazan's famous tomb a crumbling mound of debris, very detailed account of Ghazan's extensive construction comes to us from the works of Rashid al-Din, Wassaf, Hamd Allah Mustaufi, and Shams Kashani.

Ghazan was succeeded by his illustrious brother Olejeitu (705 - 18/1305 - 18) who embraced Islam and assumed the name of Muhammad Khuda Bandah. Olejeitu far surpassed his predecessors in architectural achievements. As a matter of fact, most renowned buildings of the Il-Khanid period belong to his reign.

Soon after he came to the throne, Olejeitu ordered work at Sultaniyyah, a site near Qazwin. Plan for this new capital was prepared by his father

Arghun but he died before it could be executed. Olejeitu built a wonderful city at Sultaniyyah. The citadel was 500 gaz on a side. It was protected by a wall and 16 towers of cut stone. The principal mosque was ornamented with marble and porcelain. There were a hospital and a college also. Surrounded by 12 smaller palaces was the royal palace, a kind of high pavilion or kiosk. The entire ensemble was set in a marble-paved court.

These palaces have since disappeared but the mausoleum of Sultan Muhammad Olejeitu Khuda Bandah still towers over the surrounding area. According to Goddard, this tomb “is certainly the finest example of known Mongol architecture, one of the most competent and typical products of Persian Muslim building and technically perhaps the most interesting.”²⁴

The second most famous monument of Il-Khanid period was the mosque in Tabriz of Taj al-Din ‘Ali Shah, Olejeitu’s minister. Only a very small section of this mosque exists today, but Mustaufi, writing in 736/1335, stated that the main ivan of this mosque was a tremendous structure. It was 30.15 metres wide, with side walls 10.40 metres thick. The height up to the vault was 25 metres. The pointed arch of the mihrab was supported on two columns of copper and the mihrab frame was embellished and pointed with gold and silver. According to ibn Battutah, the open court of the mosque was paved with marble, the walls covered with Kashani (faince decoration) and there was a square pool in the middle with fountains.

Mention must also be made of the largest the most revered shrine of Imam ‘Ali Rida at Meshed and of his sister Fatima at Qum.

During the Mongol rule, two very renowned dynasties flourished in central and southern Iran: the Atabeks and the Muzaffarids. The Atabeks were the autonomous rulers of Ars with Shiraz as their capital and the Muzaffarids controlled the entire region south of Teheran with their capital being Yazd. History records that Shiraz possessed many buildings constructed by the Atabeks but hardly any of structures exists today. The Muzaffarids seem to be more fortunate in the several very famous buildings that owe their existence to these potentates are still extant in Yazd and Kirman.

Like Iranian art in all its forms, Iranian architecture during the Il-Khanid Mongols were decorative, characterized by precision, clarity and lucidity. However, contrary to the Saljuq period, the Il-Khanid construction places a decided emphasis upon verticality. A look at the portal of Jami’ Masjid at Ispahan and its north side arches, the portal of Khanqah at Natauz, the tomb shrine at Ziarat, the niche of Bayazid’s shrine at Bistam, and Pir-i Bakram portal proves the point. Chambers too become loftier in relation to their horizontal measurements. Ivans also become narrower but higher.

The Safawid Emperor, Shah ‘Abbas the Great (995 - 1038/1587 - 1628), was one of the greatest builders Persia has ever had. He was a wonderful town planner. His achievement in this field can be seen at Ispahan, the capital, which he built anew. The scheme included the Great Maidan surrounded by vaulted bazaars, with the portal of his mosque opening in the centre of the south side, the Ala-Qapu palace on the western side, and the avenue, over two miles long, known as the Chahar Bagh.

Shah ‘Abbas also built the Jami‘ Masjid of Ispahan. It has four ivans and a domed chamber with a mihrab on the qiblah side. The south-east ivan is flanked by two halls, each with eight dome covered bays and a mihrab. The entire building including the main dome is splendidly decorated with enamelled tiles and faience mosaic.

4. Muslim Architecture in Central Asia

The starting point of Muslim architecture in Central Asia is the extant tomb in Bukhara of Sultan Isma‘il (279 - 294/892 - 907), the founder of the Samanid dynasty. It is a cubical structure with a dome. Its decoration is almost entirely of brick work. The spandrels of the central arch bear square-shaped motifs. The central hemi-spherical dome is surrounded by four small cupolas on its four corners.

Uskend in eastern Farghanah was another centre of the Samanids where four important monuments - one minar and three mausoleums - still stand. The minar is a tapering tower gradually diminishing in circumference as it reaches the top. It is cylindrical and fluted and has lost its top. It is the oldest specimen of its kind which later became very popular in Iran and Turkey. The decoration consists of tiles combined in geometrical patterns, the ground between them filled with small stucco leaves.

Merve was another great Muslim cultural centre in this region. The oldest monument in this town is a mosque built in 131 - 138/748 - 755. It is called the Hamadani Masjid in memory of Haji Yusuf of Hamadan. Still in good condition, it is used for daily prayers.

The capital of Amir Timur (737 - 807/1336 - 1404) was, however, Samarqand and he made it one of the most splendid cities in the east by building palaces, mosques, and shrines there. The style of these Timurid buildings follows Khurasanid tradition although Chinese and Turkish motifs are also visible. They included the famous mosque of Khuwaja Ahmad Uassavi constructed in 800/1397 near Samarqand. The architect of this mosque was a Persian from Ispahan. It is an enormous square structure, a cubic block from which rose two domes, one covering the mosque proper and the other the tomb of the saint. The second dome is melon shaped a characteristic of Timurid monuments. The entrance is flanked by two towers like that of a fortress, a product of Timur’s warlike mind.

Timur was greatly attached to Kish, his birth place, where he built a palace which was considered a marvel by contemporary visitors. The description given by Clavijo the Spanish ambassador, sent to the Timurid Court by King Henry III, shows that this place followed the style of ancient palaces at Nimrud and Khursabiad. Its surface was completely covered with enamelled tiles like the Ishtar Gate of Babylon.

But it was Samarqand which received Timur’s fullest attention. The most prominent building in the city is the mosque of Bibi Khanum, which Timur built in memory of his wife in 801 - 808/1398 - 1405, with its monumental gateways and the double dome. This mosque is the first known specimen of the classical Jami‘ Mosque in Turkestan. The second masterpiece of this period is Timur’s own mausoleum at Samarqand, known as Gour-i Amir (Amir’s grave). It was constructed by Timur himself. It has an immense dome almost completely covered with glittering tiles. Its walls are

resplendent with multi-coloured slabs which are transformed by points into beautiful mosaics forming numerous Arabic and Persian inscriptions. To the right and the left arose two circular minarets. Ulugh Beg, who had inherited a passion for buildings from his grandfather, Timur, added to this tomb a series of other buildings. He also built a grandiose portal to the shrine.

Timur's son and successor, Mirza Shah Tukh (807 - 851/1404 - 1447), transferred his seat of government from Samarquand to Herat in Khurasan. He built there a citadel surrounded by a wall with four gates. The Jami' Mosque of Herat, which stood in the midst of the chief market, was the most beautiful in the whole of Khurasan. Shah Rukh's wife, Gauhar Shad Aqa, was also a great builder. She constructed a college at Herat (820 - 840/1417 - 1437). Its architect was Ustad Qawwan al-Din of Shiraz. The original marble slab of this college is still preserved in the Heart museum. It is calligraphed in thulth style by the renowned calligraphist Ja'far Jalal of Herat. Besides, Herat could boast of Musallah, the mausoleum of Gauhar shad Aqa and the madrasah of Hussain Baiqrah.

5. Muslim Architecture in Turkey

The Muslim architecture in Turkey (Anatolia) was inaugurated by the Saljuqs in the fifth/11th century. During the course of 250 years of their rule, the Suljuqs constructed many monumental buildings at Siwas, Quniyah, Kaiseri, Erezrum, Divrigi, Karman, and other important towns. These structures include mosques, tombs, mausoleums, palaces, castles, hospitals, caravanserais, market halls, public baths, public fountains, bridges, aqueducts and reservoirs. Quite a few are still extant. The Saljuq architectural traditions were not only maintained by the Ottoman Turks but reached their zenith both in quality and number in the tenth/16th and fifth/11th centuries.

The oldest mosque in Anatolia (fifth/11th century) built by the Turks is supposed to be the Ulu Cami at Siwas.²⁵ It is a rectangular structure surrounded by a wall. It has a covered portico, an open court, a flat roof with a layer of earth raised upon horizontal wooden rafters and stone pillars.

The richest and most impressive of the Saljuq mosques is the Ulu Cami at Divrigi (626/1229). It has two gateways. The applique motifs of the northern gate are suggestive of knitted or woven design. In the middle of the mosque is an octagonal water basin and above it a dome open to the sky. Outside the exterior walls is a ground minaret and inside a hexagonal conical dome.

The Saljuq mausoleums follow the style common in Khurasan and Merv - a high drum and a dome - with this difference that stone is used instead of bricks and the decoration takes the form of relief. These mausoleums are generally polygonal in shape. The polygons are joined by means of triangular surfaces to a square base resting on the ground. The roof consists of a flat dome inside a conical structure outside. They look like a tent in stone. The tomb of Khalifah Ghazi at Amaisia is one of the oldest monuments (541/1146) and the Douer Gumband (675/1276) is the richest one in decoration. It is a dodecagonal structure formed of blind arcades, side by side with geometrical designs we find fan-shaped palmettes and birds and lions in relief. The mausoleum of Khudaband Khatyun at Nigede

(712/1312) contains, besides floral and geometrical ornamentation, reliefs representing birds, stags, and other animals with human heads.

No complete Saljuq palace has survived, but history records several such buildings at Alaniya, Siwas, and Quniyah. For the pavilion and main building of the Saljuq palaces in Anatolia, the Khurasan house plan, with a courtyard and four ivans, served as a prototype. As a matter of fact, the same plan is followed in subsequent Ottoman palaces also - a number of pavilions (kiosks) and groups of buildings set among a succession of courtyards and gardens with ponds, the entire structure being surrounded by a wall.

There were medical schools also and these were attached to hospitals, for instance, the one at Siwas (614/1217), the largest of all Saljuq hospitals, had a medical college attached to it.

The Saljuq caravanserais, like their madrasahs, had strong gateways for security reasons, with the wall decoration concentrated upon them.

The Saljuq baths differ from those of Damascus in having a plan centred on an octagon with four ivans, and the washing arrangements without a common pool. The Sultan Hammam at Quniyah gives a good idea of Saljuq baths. There are separate twin buildings for men and women. The first room to be entered is the disrobing room (camegah) with marble floor and a fountain in the middle. From here a passage leads to the tepidarium (sogu kulul) for repose and massage. Then comes the hot room (sic alik) a domed octagonal hall round which are recesses (ivans) containing water basins and private rooms (khalwah).

With the downfall of the Saljuqs (654/1256), Anatolia was divided into more than a dozen independent principalities (beyliks) which ruled over various parts of the country for about 200 years. They were overcome by the Ottoman Turks.

The Ottoman Turks ruled over Turkey for almost 600 years (699 - 1342/1299 - 1923). During the Bursa period (699 - 907/1299 - 1501), which is also called the foundation period, the old Ulu Cami type of mosques continued to be constructed but the roofing consisted of co-ordinated domes. For instance, the Ulu Cami at Bursa, first capital of the Ottomans (745 - 801/1344 - 1399), had 20 domes and 12 piers all co-ordinated. But mosques with single domes were also built, for instance the "Ala al-Din Mosque at Bursa (726/1326) and the Green Mosque at Iznik (780/1378).

The mosque that set the pattern for the monumental mosques of the tenth/16th century was that of Bayazid II with a second half dome opposite to and in the same axis with the half dome that supported the central dome on the side of the mihrab. This principle was accepted by the famous Turkish architect Koca Sinan whose masterpiece is the Sulaimaniyyah Mosque (957 - 964/1550 - 1557). The mosque of Sinan Pasha, Ahmad Pasha, Sokkolu Muhammad Pasha, Mihrimah Khatun, and Rustam Pasha built by Sinan follow the same style. His great masterpiece, Sebiniyyah Mosque (977 - 983/1569 - 1575) at Edirne, however, had only one dome.

In the 11th/17th century, Turkish mosques followed the style of Shehrzadeh Mosque (950 - 955/1543 - 1548) which was also built by Sinan. It has a central dome supported and surrounded by four half domes. This

style may be seen in Sultan Ahmad's Mosque (1018 - 1025/1609 - 1616) and the Walid Mosque.

Under the Ottomans, madrasahs and hospitals followed the traditional style but the mental hospital of Bayazid II is quite original. It has separate rooms for mental patients and a communal hall of hexagon shape with dome open to the sky for psycho-pathical cases. At one end of the hall, there is a dais for musicians, and the acoustics are excellent.

The Ottoman mausoleums are invariably roofed with a dome. Decoration is restricted to coloured patterns, and facing of glazed tiles is applied inside instead of outside. Nearly all Ottoman Sultans are buried in Istanbul. One of the oldest mausoleums (868/1464) there is that of Mahmud Pasha, the Grand Vizier of Muhammad the Conqueror. It is octagonal in shape with its facade of geometrical patterned tiles inlaid in stones. The tomb of Sultan Sulaiman the Magnificent (974/1556) is a masterpiece of ornamentation. The tombs of Salim II (982/1574) and Murad III (1003/1595) are also the finest specimens of Turkish faience ornamentation. The marble tomb of Sultan Hamid (1203/1789) is a baroque.

Covered market is a special feature of Ottoman rulers. The covered market of Bursa has a colourful interior of stone and brick masonry that of Edirne (821/1418) has six piers and 14 domes. The famous market of 'Ali Pasha at Edirne (977/1569) built by Sinan had in addition six gates. The markets built by Muhammad the Conqueror and Sulaiman the Magnificent at Istanbul are most famous. The former has 15 domes and two rows of four pillars and the latter has 20 domes. These two constructions, with the addition from time to time of streets, comprise the famous covered market of Istanbul. It is really a market city.

It covers an area of 30,700 square metres and includes 65 streets, a square, 300 shops, 1,000 rooms, 18 gates, eight fountains, a school, wells, and 16 caravanserais. At the time of Sultan Muhammad and Sulaiman it was mainly the wood, but after the fire in 1113/1701 it was rebuilt in brick and stone. Architecturally, however, the so-called "Egyptian Market of Istanbul," which was built in 1071/1660, is far superior. The windows at the sides of the high, sloping roofed central portion give light at a lower level to the central passage, which forms a right angle, on either side of which are set the rows of shops, 88 in all, each covered by a dome. It is a singly-storied building except the entrance arcades. The effect of the interior is as impressive as that of a cathedral.

The earliest Ottoman palace was built at Bursa, called Bey Sarai, but no trace of this structure is found now.

The complex structure now called the Topkapi Palace (Seraglio) grew out of the subsequent additions to this palace by the Sultans through the centuries. The famous Topkapi Palace remained the residence of the Ottoman Sultans from the ninth/15th century to the 13th/19th century when they moved to Bosphorus. This palace was the centre of government as well as of culture. No other assemblage of buildings affords such an opportunity as this to study at one place the entire history of the Ottoman Architecture.

It covers 699,000 square metres of area, comprising five groups of apartments totalling 348 rooms, two groups of offices, eight servant

quarters, ten mosques, 14 paths, two hospitals, five schools, 12 libraries, 22 fountains, a fish pond and vineyard, one outer and four inner courts, and the whole assemblage is surrounded on the landside by a wall. At a time, food for 5,000 residents of the Palace was cooked at the royal kitchen.

In spite of the fact that the Topkapi Palace was not constructed and designed by any single architect, it still possesses a remarkably homogeneous character. The entire arrangement of the palace, with its non-geometrical sub-divisions and its terrace walls counter-acting the steep slope of the ground, conforms admirably to present day principles of town planning.

It is not possible to give full description of the palace. The third and fourth courts, however, contain the most interesting buildings. The structure in which foreign envoys were received by the Sultan (Arzodasht) is a marvel of the ninth/15th century architecture. The library of Sultan Ahmad (1131/1719) is remarkable for its plan and marble facade. The Baghdad Pavilion (1048/1638) in the fourth court contains four ivans and one central dome. Its terraces, facing the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn, are surmounted by a wide caved roof supported on arcades. The walls are faced, both inside and outside, with tiles. The Pavilion of Mustafa Pasha (1116/1704) is in Rococo-Turkish style, made in wood, to serve summer requirements.

Unlike the Il-Khanid monuments of Persia and Central Asia, Turkish architecture on the whole is horizontal, not vertical. The height of Turkish buildings is much less than their length and expansion. According to Behcat Uncal, this horizontal effect gives an impression of comfort and repose. In religious buildings, solid parts pre-dominate over the window openings. On the other hand, in secular buildings, window strips dominate the facade. The Turks avoided total symmetry in their ground plans and facades.

6. Muslim Architecture in Pakistan and India

The Muslim conquest of Indo-Pakistan sub-continent started in 94/712 when Muhammad bin Qasim invaded Sind. Contemporary records show that he constructed a mosque and other buildings at Daibul, but these structures no longer exist. Recently some excavations made in southern Sind led to the discovery of certain traces of ancient monuments. But the experts have not yet come to any final conclusion with regard to the age of these structures. Suggestions have been made that the rectangular foundation excavated at Bhambor is that of the first mosque on the sub-continent built at the time of Muhammad bin Qasim.

Similarly, no Muslim monument built before the middle of the sixth/12th century has so far been discovered although it is known that Multan had been an important centre of Muslim culture prior to Mahmud of Ghaznah's excursions. After Lahore was conquered by Mahmud in 393/1002 a permanent garrison of Afghan soldiers was established there.²⁶ Later on, Lahore became the capital of Mahmud's successors (492/1098 - 582/1186). It is, therefore, most probable that mosques, palaces, tombs, and other structures built by Muslim rulers of Multan, Lahore, and other small principalities in the Indus Valley between the second/eighth and the

sixth/12th centuries suffered at the hands of invaders or were destroyed by the ravages of time. What exists today belongs to a much later period as compared with Iraq, Syria, Iran, Egypt and Spain.

Indo-Islamic architecture, during its history of more than five centuries (545 - 1119/1150 - 1707), however, covers such a vast area and has passed through so many stages and styles that in this brief section only a passing reference can be made to them. Besides the imperial style of Delhi, which served as a model, at least eight very marked provincial styles have been noted by experts. These provincial styles belong the West Punjab (545 - 725/1150 - 1325), Bengal (597 - 957/1200 - 1550), Jaunpur (762 - 885/1360 - 1480), Gujrat (700 - 957/1300 - 1550), Mandu and Malwah (808 - 977/1405 - 1569), the Deccan (748 - 1206/1347 - 1617), Bijapur and Khandesh (828 - 1067/1425 - 1656), and Kashmir (813 - 1112/1410 - 1700). One of these styles the Multan style in West Punjab - is even older than the imperial style of Delhi.

The earliest Muslim monument in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent happens to be the tomb of Shah Yusuf Gardezi at Multan, built in 547/1152.²⁷ It is a rectangular structure with a flat roof. One of the walls has an oblong portion which is slightly projected to frame the entrance. The walls are completely encased in the most colourful tiles for which Multan has always been famous. These tiles are decorated with geometrical, inscriptional, and floral motifs. The absence of domes, pillars, and arches in this modest building is very significant.

It was at Delhi that the foundations of Muslim architecture were laid on a grand scale. Soon after he made this imperial city his capital in 587/1191, Qutub al-Din Aibak ordered the construction of the famous Quwwat al-Islam Mosque in 592/1196. This is the oldest mosque extant in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. It consists of rectangular courtyard (141 ft x 105 ft) surrounded by pillared cloisters. The sanctuary on the western side possessed elaborate series of aisles with shallow domed ceilings. In front of the sanctuary was placed an iron pillar brought from Mathura as a mark of victory.

Three years later, an expansive arched facade was built across the entire front of the sanctuary. Its pointed arches made in red stone are magnificently carved with inscriptions and floral motifs. They produced the effect of loftiness and lightness as, following the contemporary north Iranian style; they are vertical in their composition.

Qutub al-Din Aibak laid the foundations of another most remarkable building the same year. It was the Qutub Minar. Although it was constructed at a time when Muslim in India was hardly established, it has never been surpassed in the boldness of its conception, its aesthetic composition, its exquisite execution, and its imposing effect. It is a unique monument in the entire Muslim history. The idea of this fluted and star-shaped tower was certainly borrowed from Ghaznah as well as North Iran, where the ruins of similar towers still exist. But the Qutub Minar has surpassed all such towers. It lies outside the Quwwat al-Islam Mosque and was probably designed on the basis of Samarra mosque or the mosque of ibn Tulun (second/eighth and third/ninth centuries).

It is a five-storeyed building with a domical roof. The storeys diminish in height and dimension as they ascend and are ornamented by four projecting balconies. Between these balconies there are richly sculptured and raised bands containing Arabic inscriptions. The basement contains six such bands. The lowest storey has 24 projecting ribs forming the flutes. They are alternately angular and circular in the first storey, only circular in the second, and angular in the third. The other two storeys are of plain marble with red stone belts and were added later. Its tapering construction produces the effect of a height greater than the actual which is 238 feet.

A notable contribution of Muslim architecture in India was made by Sultan Shams al-Din Iltutmish (606 - 643/1211 - 1236) who added the famous arched screen in front of the Ajmere mosque built by his predecessor in 597/1200. These arches, seven in number, extending over 200 feet, more nearly approach the four-centred type invariable found in subsequent Muslim buildings. Each arch is surrounded by three lines of writing, the outer Kufic, the other two in Arabic characters separated from each other by bands of carved arabesque ornament.

Another significant aspect of Muslim architecture in the seventh/13th century is the construction of a large number of tombs. Famous among these are the tombs built by Iltutmish for his son at Sultan Ghari (626/1231) and for himself (633/1235) and the tomb of Sultan Balban (679/1280), in Delhi. The shrines of Shah Baha al-Haq (661/1262), Shah Shams al-Din Tabriz (675/1276) and Shah Rukn-i 'Alam (720/1320) at Multan also belong to the same period. The last named Shrine is one of the most impressive buildings in Pakistan. It is an octagonal structure with sloping walls having tapering turrets at the angles. Erected on an elevated plane, its total height is 115 feet and the dome is 50 feet wide inside. It is made in brick with bands of carved chiselled and parts are inlaid with glazed tiles suggest the Arab-Iranian origin of Multan architecture.

The beginning of the eighth/14th century brought a remarkable change in the imperial style at Delhi. This change was caused by the invasion of Central Asia and Iran by the Mongols. Bringing death and destruction in their wake, the Mongols were responsible for a large scale migration of Turkish and Persian architects, engineers, and artisans to Delhi and it was this group of people who built the famous 'Ala'i Darwazah (705/1305), one of the most exquisite piece of architecture near the Qutub Minar. The 'Ala'i Darwazah (the Gateway of 'Ala al-Din Khalji) occupies a key position in the evolution of Muslim architecture in India. A mere glance at this elegant gate will show that it must have been built by expert architects, having knowledge, vision, and capacity to prepare the design in detail before it was executed. Its style is distinctive and original. The method of its walling, the shape of its arches, the system of support for the dome, and the design of surface decoration all suggest supervision of master builders.

The main arch is a pointed horse shoe. It is rather vertical, the width of its span being much less in proportion to its height. There are bands of inscriptions carved in white marble.

The Tughlaqs who ruled over India from 720/1320 to 816/1413 were great builders. The founder of the Tughlaq dynasty, a soldier who ruled

hardly for five years (720 - 725/1320 - 1325), managed to build in this short period a fort, a palace, his own tomb, and the fortified city of Tughlaqabad. This was the first capital city founded by any Muslim monarch in India, although Sultan 'Ala al-Din Khalji, his predecessor, had also earlier planned a similar capital. Tughlaqabad, near Delhi, is now in ruins except for the tomb of the warrior king. It is a unique building as the tomb looks more like an independent fortress than a burial place.

Perhaps the disturbed political conditions, on account of Mongol invasion, demanded the expediency of utilizing every building for defence purposes in times of emergency. This fortress tomb was built on a high plane. It is made in red sandstone and white marble. It has thick sloping outer walls giving the building a pyramidal appearance. Its doorway is literally a death trap for intruders and within the courtyard there is solidly built underground vaults for hoarded wealth. The dome is pointed Tartar in shape - a style followed throughout the Muslim period in India. This pentagon produces the effect of great strength, solidity, and robustness.

The Mongol invaders could not destroy Delhi; this was done by one of her own rulers, Muhammad Tughlaq, who moved his capital to Daulatabad in the south. Delhi became a deserted city and all its trade, art, and industry were completely ruined. Most of the artisans and architects, who could manage to escape from the Royal camp, took refuge in provincial capitals with the result that when the capital was restored by Firuz Taghlaq was no more master builders were to be found in Delhi.

The Royal treasury was also empty and the economic condition of the subjects had become much deteriorated. In spite of the fact that Faruz Taghlaq proved to be one of the greatest builders India has ever produced, his buildings had to be simple and unornamented, producing the effect of austere severity. Gone were the engravings and carvings, the refined decorative motifs, and the well finished and properly cut stone pieces of marble and red stone, and the embellishments of the outer and inner surfaces. Instead, walls were made of rubble covered with thick layers of cement. It was the puritanical phase of architectural asceticism.

Firuz Shah Tughlaq built four fortified cities in North India: Firuz Shah Kotlah in Delhi, Jaunpur, Hissar, and Fatehabad. Firuz Shah's fortified citadel in Delhi was situated on the river bank. It was roughly a rectangle with rectangular courtyards, baths, tanks, gardens, palaces, barracks, a huge Jami' mosque for a congregation of 10,000 people, servant quarters, etc. The main architectural principles of palace-fort, followed by the great Mughuls at Agra, Delhi, Allahabad, and other places, had been laid down by Firuz Shah.

Several mosques were built in Delhi by Firuz Tughlaq between 772/1370 and 777/1375, the most famous being the Khirki Mosque. It was built on a tehkhanah or sub-structure of arches. It is a unique construction as it is almost a covered mosque like Saljuq mosques in Turkey, a rare phenomenon in India. The portal is for the first time reached by some flights of steps. It is entered through an arch and beamed doorway. The interior consists of cloisters formed by a series of square bays, each one roofed by a cup-shaped dome. There are three rows of such domes, each row having

three constellations of nine domes each. Thus, there are in all 81 such domes. Each corner of the rectangles is supported by a tower and a tapering round bastion.

The invasion of Timur in 801/1398 was a major calamity for India. He not only sacked Delhi but took away with him Indian artisans to build the famous Jami' Mosque at Samarqand. Delhi lost its political supremacy. The rule of Sayyid and Lodhi monarchs were confined to the Gangetic basin only. And during the whole of the ninth/15th century and the first quarter of the tenth/16th century Delhi could boast of no architectural achievements. No palaces, no mosques, no forts, and no cities were built, only tombs were erected as memorials to the dead.

However, a significant addition in the construction of domes was made in this period. This was the introduction of double dome in India, although this style of dome-making had been practised in other Muslim countries for centuries. We find this double dome - an inner and an outer shell to raise the height of the dome without disturbing the interior plan - for the first time in the tomb of Sultan Sikandar Lodhi (924/1518).

Bengal

The Muslim architecture of Bengal is as old as that of imperial Delhi, as Bengal was conquered by one of Qutub al-Din Aibak's generals in 599/1202. It soon became an independent kingdom and remained so until it was annexed by Akbar the Great in 984/1576. The Muslim monarchs of Bengal were men of fine taste and they built scores of mosques, palaces, and other structures at their capitals at Gaur and Pandua bear testimony to their architectural genius but nowhere have climatic and physical conditions caused greater havoc to Muslim monuments than in Bengal. As no stone was available in the vicinity, most of these buildings were constructed in bricks could not withstand the onslaughts of heavy rains, storms, and humidity.

The oldest Muslim monument in Bengal is the multi-domed mosque at the village of Pandua. It was built in the middle of the seventh/13th century. It is the oldest multi-domed mosque in the entire sub-continent. Another very significant structure erected at Pandua is the Adina Mosque (766/1364). It was the focal point of the new capital city built by Sikandar Shah (759 - 791/1358 - 1389). The Adina Mosque, a double storeyed structure constructed on orthodox lines, is the largest and the most impressive building in Bengal. It is as big as the Great mosque at Damascus (705 ft x 285 ft). "To the spectator standing within the expensive quadrangular court of the Adina Mosque, surrounded by its seemingly endless archways, the conception as a whole presents the appearance of the forum of some ancient classical city rather than a self-contained Muslim house of prayer, with the high-vaulted sanctuary on the western side simulating an imperial approach in the form of a majestic triumphal archway."²⁸

Around the courtyard is a screen of arches, 88 in number. The roof is covered with 306 domes. The upper storey, probably a Royal Chapel, is supported on a range of arches carried by unusual pillars. These are very short but ponderous piers, abnormally thick, and square above and below.

These pillars are unique in their construction and are found nowhere in India. The interior of the sanctuary hall is a superb pointed arch vault, the earliest and the rarest example of its kind in India. The design and execution of the central niche are also most impressive. It is inscribed with delicate arabesque and calligraphic texts.

The Muslim architecture in Bengal was partly conditioned by its climate, for due to excessive rains the surface of the roof had to be curved and covered with a number of small domes. The finest examples of such curved roofs may be seen in Chota Sona Masjid at Gaur (899/1493) and Qadam Rasul. Another characteristic of Bengal monuments is their “drop” arches in which the span is greater than the radius.

Jaunpur

Jaunpur was made a provincial capital by Firuz Toghlaq who built there a fort and laid the foundations of Atala Mosque. Later on, the famous Sharqi monarchs of Jaunpur adorned their city with mosques, tombs, palaces and other buildings associated with an imperial capital. As a matter of fact, Jaunpur became the cultural capital of Northern India under the Sharqi monarchs. It was called “Shiraz of the East.” Sikander Lodhi, the Sultan of Delhi, completely destroyed this city’s Royal structures when he occupied it in 885/1480; its five mosques alone were spared. The most outstanding characteristic of these stone-built mosques is the pylon formation of their facades. Most famous among these mosques are the Atala Mosque and the Mami‘ Masjid completed in 811/1408 and 875/1470 respectively.

The sky high pylons of these mosques have a unique construction, the like of which is not to be found anywhere in the Muslim world. Their origin is unknown. John Terry, however, suggests that since the early Muslim rulers of Jaunpur were Abyssinians, these pylon-like portals might have been inspired by the pylons of Pharaonic temples in the Nile Valley.²⁹

The Atala Masjid is a very distinctive and majestic building. Although its general arrangements are conventional, its double-storeyed cloisters are very spacious, having 42 feet across and five aisles deep.

Many of the elements found in Jaunpur buildings were derived from the architecture of the Tughlaqs at Delhi, for instance, the recessed arch with its fringe ornamentation, the shape of the arch, and the sloping side of its supports, the beam and brackets supporting the arches, the tapering turrets, the square shafts of the pillars, and the imposing flights of steps leading to the portals, all suggest that artisans trained in the imperial style at Delhi during the eighth/14th century and the beginning of the next were brought to Jaunpur. Jaunpur mosques show a very pleasant innovation in providing especially constructed galleries for religious needs of women. These galleries were covered with beautiful open work screens as seen in the Lal Darwazah Mosque (854/1450).

Although Jaunpur mosques do not display much refinement, they are strong, sincere, and purposeful in their character. They are good examples of bold and forceful workmanship.

Gujrat (700 - 957/1300 - 1500)

Gujrat presents by far the most graceful provincial style in the annals of Indian architecture. The Gujart style of architecture, in the course of 250

years of Muslim rule, passed through three marked stages: the formative and experimental stage well represented by the Jami' Masjid at Cambay (725/1325), the middle stage of increased assurance and directional authority, the best and most consummate illustration of which may be found in the Jami' Masjid at Ahmedabad, and the final stage when it reached its zenith in the latter half of the ninth/15th century under the patronage of Mahmud Begarha I (863 - 917/1458 - 1511), the typical example being that of the Jami' Masjid at Champaner.

In the Cambay mosque, though much was borrowed from the Delhi style of Khalji period and also from the Ajmere mosque, its fine proportions, dignified appearance, and simple design provided a model for subsequent mosques in Gujrat.

The second phase owes its existence to Ahmad Shah, the great builder, who founded the capital city of Ahmedabad (814/1411). His zeal for building projects was matched by that of his courtiers and successors, so much so that few cities can claim to possess larger numbers and finer specimens of monumental architecture than the capital of the Ahmad Shahi dynasty. Besides, many tombs and other structures, one can count more than 50 mosques of that period in Ahmedabad alone. Ahmad Shah's citadel with its palace is situated on the left bank of the river of Sabarmati. It is a rectangular enclosure occupying a prominent position. Almost in the heart of the town was built the great Jami' Masjid connected with the citadel by a wide avenue. Astride this avenue was erected a stately triumphal gateway called the Tin Darwazah as it possesses three arched entrances. The entire conception was a bold attempt at town planning not usually found in provincial towns.

The Jami' Masjid of Ahmedabad is considered the high water mark of mosque design in western India. In its sanctuary have been combined two different facade conventions, the screen of arches on the one hand and the pillared portico on the other. Thus, a subtle contrast between the volume and strength of the wall surface and the depth and lightness of the colonnade has been achieved.

In the reign of Muhammad Shah (846 - 855/1442 - 1451), son and successor of Ahmad Shah, Sarkhaj, a suburb of Ahmedabad, acquired great importance as the burial place of a divine. Here palaces, gardens, pavilions, gateways and a large artificial lake, besides mosques and mausoleums, were erected on a grand scale.

The Gujrat architecture attained its third and final stage during the reign of Mahmud Begarha I. He founded three cities, and adorned them with imposing buildings. Moreover, splendid constructions were added to the glory of Ahmedabad. Most of these were mausoleums, four of which are the Raudahs (tombs) of Sayyid 'Uthman at Usmanpur, of Sheikh Ahmad Khatu at Sarkhel, of Shah 'Alam, and of Mubarak Sayyid near Mahmudabad.

Most famous among the mosques of this period are the mosques of Mian Khan Chishti (861/1456), of Bibi Achut Kuki (877/1472), of Mahfuz Khan (898/1492), and finally Sidi Sayyid which last is a notable departure from the conventional mosque design. It is composed entirely of arcades of arches; eight square piers support these to form the interior over which is

laid a flat roof. The walls of the sanctuary are composed largely of perforated stone screens. For the first time, the entire screen has been perforated with “palm and parasite” motif with a wonderful skill and aesthetic taste.

Sultan Mahmud Begarha built a new capital also, at Champaner, 78 miles south-east of Ahmedabad. It was a walled citadel with palaces, a Jami‘ Mosque, and other usual constructions.

The Deccan

The Muslim architecture of the Deccan was the product of the amalgamation of two separate trends introduced in South India from Delhi and Iran in the eighth/14th century. Another notable feature of the Deccan monuments was the almost complete absence in them of any influence of the then existing South Indian art, in spite of the fact that this territory was so rich in the Chalukyan and Dravidian temple architecture. It is surprising that, while Muslim architects of North and West India freely borrowed from the local style, their co-religionists in the South preferred not to be in any way obliged to and affected by the styles prevalent in the Deccan.

The Deccan was first conquered by Sultan ‘Ala al-Din Khalji. But the first independent Muslim ruler of South India was a Persian adventurer, ‘Ala al-Din Hassan Bahman Shah. He had served under Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq at Daulatabad. He established the Bahmani dynasty at Gulbargah (748/1347), the fortress of which is considered a most remarkable production of military architecture. Almost carved out of a living rock, this fortress is now in ruins except for its most extra-ordinary Jami‘ Mosque built in 769/1367. It is one of the few Indian mosques entirely covered like the Cordova mosque.

The whole area, including the courtyard, is roofed over by 63 small domes. Light is admitted through the side walls which are pierced by great arches. It was built by Muhammad Rafi‘, a hereditary architect of Qaswin in northern Iran, who must have trained in the Saljuq style of covered mosques found in Turkey. Other monuments of the Bahmani period at Gulbargah include scores of Royal tombs including the famous Haft Gumbad (seven domes).

The most unique construction of the entire history of Indian architecture is the Gulbargah market, 570 feet long and 60 feet wide, adorned with a range of 61 arches on either side supported by pillars and flanked with a block of buildings of a highly ornamental character.³⁰

The Bahmani capital was moved from Gulbargah to Bidar by Ahmad Shah (826 - 840/1422 - 1436). It was adorned with a fortress, palaces, two mosques, and the famous college built in 877/1472 by the great scholar minister Khuwaja Mahmud Gawan. It was a three-storeyed building with loft towers. Its surface is almost wholly covered with glazed tiles of green, yellow, and white colour with floral and inscriptional motifs gracefully executed by expert hands.

But the magnificent monument of the ‘Adil Shahi rulers of Bijapur far excel those in other capital cities of the Deccan. In number, too, they are second to none; there are more than 50 mosques, 20 tombs, and nearly the same number of palaces in Bijapur. These were constructed within 100

years after 957/1550. Prominent among these buildings are the Jami' Masjid, the most powerfully simple mosque, the Raudah of Ibrahim, one of the most elaborate tombs, the GOL Gumbad, a grandiose structure, and the Mihtar Mahal, the most delicate and the most refined of the all.

The Gol Gumbad, the mausoleum of Muhammad 'Adil Shah, is considerably larger than the pantheon in Rome, and it has the largest domical roof in existence. This huge dome is based on a circular cornice obtained through interesting arches. This method of constructing intersecting arches, perhaps of Turkish origin, was a favourite device with Bijapur artisans. It was unknown in other parts of India. Besides being of great utility in dome construction, these intersecting arches produce an exceedingly aesthetic effect, those for instance in the sanctuary of the Jami' Masjid at Bijapur.

Malwah

The small independent State of Malwah in Central India lasted for about one and a half centuries (804 - 937/1401 - 1530). Its capital, Mandu, was situated on a plateau possessing a very picturesque view. It was adorned by Hoshang Shah (807 - 839/1405 - 1435) and Mahmud Shah I (940 - 974/1436 - 1469) with magnificent palaces, mosques, and other buildings, finest among which was the Jami' Masjid (858/1454). It was a multi-domed building with repeated arcades of arches forming the sanctuary.

Facing the mosque and situated on an elevated plain is the large structural complex called the Ashrafi Mahal (Palace of the Gold Mohar). It was built by Mahmud Shah I. This complex consists of a college, a mausoleum, and a tower of victory.

Two other notable buildings in Mandu are the Hindola Mahal (swinging palace) and the Jahaz Mahal (ship palace). The former was built by Hoshang Shah and is a combination of audience hall and Royal apartments. The latter was built by Mahmud I and is a double-storeyed building extending for some 260 feet along the water-front of two small lakes. It is a colourful structure suggesting gaiety and entertainment.

These and other palaces and mosques of Mandu are all built in red sandstone. For decorative purposes, the builders used marble and various semi-precious stones such as jasper, agate, and coruclian which were found in the vicinity. Glazed blue and yellow tiles were also employed as panels and borders. It is, therefore, correct to say that Mandu monuments are noteworthy not for their structural qualities but for their decorative properties, in which an aesthetic colour sense takes a prominent position.

The Mughul Period (933 - 1119/1536 - 1707)

The Mughul Emperors of India were descendants of a highly cultured dynasty. Their great ancestor, Timur, had embellished his capital city of Samarqand with exquisite palaces, mosques, mausoleums, and madrasahs. Babur, the founder of the Mughul Empire, too, was a scholar-warrior of a remarkably refined taste. In his "Memoirs" he relates that a considerable amount of construction in India was undertaken under his order, although he ruled only for five years. Two mosques attributed to him still exist - one at Panipat in east Punjab and the other at Sambhal, a town east of Delhi. They are, however, built in the traditional style.

The first construction in pure Mughul style, a combination of Persian and Indian style was erected at Delhi in 972/1564 by Emperor Humayun's Queen in memory of her beloved consort. During Humayun's forced sojourn in Iran, she faithfully stood by him for 12 years. She must have acquired a taste for Persian architecture there. When she decided to build Humayun's tomb, she entrusted the task to an Iranian architect, Mirak Mirza Ghiyath. The result was that for the first time a Persian conception was interpreted in Indian architecture.

The introduction of bulbous domes, so common in Iran and Central Asia, and of arched alcoves, a complex of rooms, corridors and a vast garden surrounding the tomb was a significant landmark in Indian architecture. Added to these purely Persian innovations were certain Indian characteristics such as the fanciful kiosks with their elegant cupolas and excellent stone masonry combined with artistic marble work. From these it is obvious that there emerged a new style under the Mongols, the origin of which can be easily traced in Humayun's tomb.

This style was almost perfected by Akbar the Great, who constructed numerous buildings during his long reign. He built four great fortresses: at Agra in 972/1564, at Ajmere in 978/1570, at Allahabad in 991/1583, and at Lahore at almost the same time. According to A'in-i Akbari, "there were built upwards of 500 edifices of red stone in the fine styles of Bengal and Gujrat" in Agra fort alone.³¹

The most complete of these buildings is the palace called the Jahangir Mahal in Agra. The palace-fortress of Lahore is unique in this respect that its outer walls are decorated with glazed tiles with sport motifs such as elephant combats, games of polo, and hunting episodes. Figure compositions and floral devices also are found in the panels.

The most monumental achievement of Akbar is Fatehpur Sikri, his new capital city, 26 miles west of Agra. It is a complex of palaces, official residences, and religious buildings, so designed and executed as to form one of the most spectacular structural productions in the whole of India. These are all built in red stone. Famous among them is the Diwan-i Khas (private audience hall), the Jami' Masjid with its Buland Darwazah (high gate) and palaces of Queen Jodha Ba'i, Maryam Sultanah, Rajah Birbal and Hawa Mahal.

The Diwan-i Khas is a rectangular hall with unique arrangements. It has a large and circular pillar in the centre, its massive capital supporting a circular platform. From this platform stone bridges radiate along each diagonal of the hall to connect it with hanging galleries. The Emperor used to sit on the central platform and listen to discussions among scholars of different religions.

The most impressive single structure of Fatehpur Sikri is the Buland Darwazah which was built in 979/1571 to commemorate the conquest of the Deccan. It is 134 feet high with a further flight of steps, 42 feet high. Across its front, the gate measures 130 feet. It serves as entrance to the Jami' Masjid containing the tomb of Sheikh Salim Chishti.

Emperor Akbar's son, Jahangir, was not much interested in buildings. The only important construction undertaken during his reign was Akbar's

tomb at Sikandarah in 1022/1613. Unlike previous mausoleums, Akbar's tomb has no dome. It seems that a new group of architects were trying to evolve a style different from the one followed by earlier Mughuls. Two more tombs were built in the same style in which the central dome was replaced by a rectangular pavilion. These were the tombs of I'timad al-Daulah built at Agra in 1036/1626 and the tomb of Jahangir built at Lahore. Both were constructed under orders of Queen Nur Jahan. Of these three, the tomb of I'timad al-Daulah is the most delicate and ornate piece of architecture. It is made of marble with its surface tastefully decorated with precious stones of different colours. This inlaid work is in pictura dura style.

The reign of Emperor Shah Jahan (1036 - 1069/1627 - 1658) is the golden age of Mughul architecture. While Akbar's monuments surpassed those of his predecessors in red stone architecture, his illustrious grandson preferred the use of marble on a scale unparalleled in history. His was the age of marble and its architectural style was determined by marble forms with the result that the character of the arches had to be altered into a foliated one, white marble arcades of engrailed arches became a distinguishing feature of Shah Jahan's buildings. The bulbous dome also was constricted at the neck and ornamental elements became curvilinear.

Shah Jahan was almost possessed with a passion for buildings. He started with the Agra Fort wherein he built the marble hall of Diwan-i 'Am as soon as he ascended the throne in 1037/1627. Ten years later, the Diwan-i Khas, a hall also made of marble, was added to it. The double columns of this hall are amongst the most graceful constructions of his reign. From time to time, several other palaces, pavilions, and mosques, e.g. the Khas Mahal, the Shish Mahal, the Muthamman Burj, the Moti Masjid, and the Naginah Masjid, were added to the complex inside the citadel.

In 1048/1638, Shah Jahan decided to transfer his capital to Delhi where he laid the foundations of Shah Jahanabad, a palace-fortress on the right bank of the river Jamuna. The vast, oblong complex is a city within a city. It is a well planned enclosure and a product of the architectural genius of Shah Jahan himself.

The citadel, made of red stone and marble, consists of four groups of buildings arranged symmetrically. The large central quadrangle contains the Diwan-i 'Am, the two square court-yards in the form of ornamental gardens on either side, and the range of marble palaces along the riverside. These palaces include the Rang Mahal and the Diwan-i Khas, two most lavishly ornate buildings considered to be the crowning jewels of Shah Jahan's seraglio.

Since the citadel did not include any mosque, Shah Jahan built the famous Jami' Masjid of Delhi on a site near his palace. It is erected on a lofty plinth and is one of the two largest and most famous mosques in the sub-continent, the other being the Badshahi Masjid of Lahore. Rectangular in shape, the Jami' Masjid has tree entrances, the main and the most imposing entrance faces the east and much resembles Akbar's Buland Darwazah at Fatehpur Sikri. It is made in red stone and marble. The three domes are made of marble with vertical strips of black stone inset at regular intervals.

Several noteworthy buildings were erected by Shah Jahan and his governor at Thattah, the then capital of the province of Sind. Among these are the Jami‘ Masjid, begun in 1057/1647, and a group of tombs built on the Makli Hill by Mirza ‘Isa Khan who governed Sind from 1037/1627 to 1054/1644. The Jami‘ Masjid is built of bricks decorated with glazed tiles of blue, white, and yellow colours. These tiles were cut in very small sizes, only have an inch wide, thus nearly 100 such tiles have been used within one square foot producing a mosaic effect. The designs are chiefly geometrical, but the spandrils of the arches often show conventional floral compositions.

Since stone and wood were scarce in Sind, most of the construction was done in bricks and glazed tiles. The architectural style of Sind closely resembles that of contemporary Persia - brick walls arcaded with Tudor type arches, kiosks with cupolas, a “Lodhi” style dome, and the outer surface embellished with glazed tile work.

The greatest masterpiece of Shah Jahan is the Taj Mahal (1042 - 1050/1632 - 1650), built by the Emperor in memory of his beloved Queen at Agra on the bank of the river Jamuna. This exquisite poetry in marble touches the highest pinnacle of Muslim architecture and is unsurpassed in history. Its rhythmic proportion, its atmospheric setting, its feminine delicacy, its animated ornamentation, and its pleasing symmetry make the Taj Mahal one of the great wonders of the world.

While Shah Jahan built in marble and red stone, brick and glazed tile were patronized by the nobility. The finest example of this type of buildings is the famous mosque of Wazir Khan in Lahore. Built on conventional lines, every portion of its structure, both inside and outside, is enriched with a variegated scheme of colours either by means of floral patterns painted in tempera or panels of more conventional designs executed in lustrous glaze.

The Mughuls were very fond of landscape architecture. Nothing pleased them more than ornamental gardens, traces of which are found almost in every city where the Mughuls had lived. The most famous among these are the Shalimar Gardens and the Nishat Bagh of Srinagar and the Shalimar Gardens of Lahore, all three of them built by Shah Jahan. These gardens, like most of the Mughul buildings, are almost always symmetrical and geometrical. But their rectangular terraces, kiosks, balconies, pools, fountains, and cascades present a most pleasant effect and testify to the refined taste of their originators.

The Emperor Aurangzib (1068 - 1119/1657 - 1707) was the last of the great Mughuls. Although too much occupied in political affairs of the state to indulge in constructional work, he has left a famous monument in the Badshahi Masjid of Lahore, the present capital of West Pakistan. Built in red stone and marble, the Badshahi Masjid is one of the two biggest mosques in Indo-Pakistan sub-continent and is an imposing example of strength, solidity and expanse.

With the death of Aurangzib in 1119/1707, the glorious chapter of Muslim architecture in this sub-continent came to an end. The decline of the Moghul Empire was so swift and the political conditions prevailing in Lahore, Delhi, and other important centres of Muslim culture so insecure

and unsettled that traces of late 12th/18th century Muslim structures are very rare.

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Chapter 56: Painting

A. Introduction

It is difficult to distinguish Muslim contribution to painting from the history of Muslim painting. An assessment of Muslim contribution to this art would involve a consideration of the changing and growing attitude of Muslims towards painting and a study of the historical background which determined this attitude. Both these considerations are necessary because they imply each other, an understanding of the one without the other is bound to be inadequate and lopsided. Let us first consider the Muslim attitude towards painting.

It seems that Muslim attitude towards painting in the early history of Islam was hostile. This was justifiable because Fine Arts had at that time an uncanny association with pagan beliefs and rituals. Painting was reminiscent of polytheism which Islam had come to fight against and destroy. Islam then needed an extraverted attitude - an attitude in which the soft and feminine qualities of artistic creation and appreciation could find little room. The social consciousness of man at that period of history did not have sufficient insight into subtle differentiation of various aspects of life. Being a facet of pagan polytheism painting was prohibited by Islam in its zeal to break idols.

Profound aesthetic possibilities inherent in Islam had to lie dormant to be realized only when was ripe for their realization, i.e. after Islam had succeeded in its mission to make monotheism an effective force in the development of human consciousness and to foster and nourish the scientific impulse so that man could become master of his history and responsible for its vicissitudes. Once this attitude was fairly established in their history, the Muslims began to pay attention to those pagan pursuits which they had neglected before which were now shorn of their polytheistic associations. Painting was no longer the art of making images but the art of breaking images. Through painting one could now cast out the devils of one's heart and thus prepare one's soul for direct encounter with God. There was no longer any question of worshipping the gods one painted, for no longer did they remain the objects of worship for the Muslim mind.¹

Orientalists have always seen Muslim paintings through coloured spectacles. They enumerated the influence which moulded the character of Muslim art and maintain by deft implication that Muslim art could be reduced to these influences, that there was nothing original in this art. They do not see that Islam not only absorbed external influences but also modified them to suit its own native genius. Muslim painting was only an aspect of Muslim life. It was an expression of the spiritual explorations of sensitive minds. These sensitive minds, rooted in their own culture, had their own peculiar longings and yearnings, aspiration, and conflicts. It was out of these dynamic forces that peculiar idioms and patterns which we call by the name of Muslim Art.

B. Characteristics of Muslim Painting

Muslim painting began under a shadow - the shadow of taboo on pictorial representation of material things. Islam started its career as an

iconoclastic missionary religion to the main aim of which to establish a social order based on reason. It propounded laws, made institutions, and fostered organizations that the ideal could come to earth. It not only enunciated values and principles but also tried to demonstrate that they could be realized in this mortal life of ours. In this endeavour, Islam had to suppress the pagan orientation not only of the Arabs but of all the peoples it conquered. Paganism had an uncanny and almost an internal relation with idol-worship, and Fine Arts were the only means by which idols could be raised and formed in such a way that they could, by their beauty and elegance, induce in the beholders a mood of devotion and emotional abandon.

The aesthetic sense among the pagans was the religious sense. Devotion to beauty and worship were identified in the pagan mind. Paganism was the cult of the irrational. It was based on the bond between the primitive man and the forces of nature that he faced in his daily life. Islam came with the message that there is only one God, that He alone is worthy of worship, and that the forces of nature can be subjugated and bent to serve man's will and desire. It was necessary for Islam at that stage to sub-ordinate the aesthetic to the moral and the beautiful to the good. It was, therefore, a historical necessity which led early Muslims to prohibit the art which fostered representation of gods, goddesses, and national heroes as objects of worship. It did not mean that such a prohibition is inherent in Islam.

Muslim painting, therefore, began with a handicap. Without this handicap its individual and unique character is not conceivable. Some of the unique characteristics of Muslim painting are as follows:

1. Muslims loved their Holy Book, the Qur'an. In their attempt to copy it they tried to write it beautifully and gracefully. They developed new forms of writing and created novel movements in calligraphy. The forceful and lyrical language of the Holy Qur'an induced them to write it with passion and warmth to introduce cadence and grace to the form of the written word. Muslim painting is the result of these movements in calligraphy. Thus, we find that Muslim painters emphasize line (khat) more than anything else. A powerful and colourful line and a forceful stroke can create a ravishing form, pulsating with charm and fascination. It is the "line" that matters, everything else would take care of itself. Whether it is a straight line or curve, the stroke alone is responsible for the aesthetic forms; it provides the criterion of beauty.

2. Islam implies a serious commitment to history. For Islam, nature is interesting only as a background to human personality and human deeds. Muslim painters are intensely alive members of Muslim society. For them wars and battles, rise and fall of dynasties, destruction and construction of cities are not matters to be observed with a spiritual nonchalance and complacency but events of vital interest. For a Muslim artist, human personality has supreme value. We, therefore, find that it is the human drama, the human action, which occupies the centre of Muslim paintings. Vast spaces, mountains and valleys, storms of wind and rain which characterize Chinese paintings are conspicuous by their absence in Muslim painting. The principal reason for this attitude seems to be the realization

that for a painting of nature to be vital and vivacious it has to employ human symbols.

The storms must oppress and plunder, the wind must be caught unawares in a tree, the valley must sing songs, and mountains must radiate human, maternal warmth. One cannot enjoy a landscape painting unless it is perceived animistically, unless it is human in some way. Not that Muslim painters did not paint landscapes, they did sometimes far more effectively than the impressionistic painters of France and Holland. What did they eschew, however, was painting a landscape for its own sake. A human being must be there to give actuality to natural scenery. Without human beings nature is dead and insignificant. For Muslim painters a scene of natural beauty is incomplete and incomprehensible with the observer being there in the painting in one form or another. It is a new mode of perception; seeing nature as an inter-play between natural stimuli and the human eye. Western critics of Muslim art do not see this point. They dismiss the entire Muslim painting as sentimental and romantic because it is not interested in nature per se.

3. Muslim painters did not introduce perspective in their paintings. Their paintings seem almost all - except those made in the time of Jahangir under the impact of Dutch and Flemish painters - to be lacking in depth. The third dimension and the changes it causes in human perception are ignored by the Muslim painters. Perhaps the reason is that they are interested in distant objects as well as in near objects. An object far away is as much relevant to the central figure as the object in the forefront. Why not bring it forward in imagination, observe it telescopically at it was and paint it in its full magnitude?

One finds a similar spectacle in some of the illustrations of the Shah Nameh. There in a single painting several episodes are brought together to make a complete story. The Western critic is baffled, and even when he praises such "erratic" paintings he does so condescendingly. The reason he does not understand this style of painting is that he is alien in spirit of the Muslim conception of time. For a Muslim, time and eternity are only two facets of the same reality, he does not have to create a dichotomy between time and eternity, he does not have to make time illusory in order to satisfy his longing for eternity. A Muslim is expected to try constantly to create eternity out of time. No wonder then that Muslim painting tried to combine all dimensions in a single unity and all phases of time in one whole.

4. Muslim painters did not paint darkness. In their painting all is light and colourful. The resplendent sun seems to cover their canvas and paper. There are no dark shades or black shadows haunting the painting like ghosts threatening life with primordial dangers. Their painting is a painting of luminous tints and hues and colours. This again reflects a singularly strange attitude, especially to the Western, for he can wallow in darkness.² Darkness and fondness for darkness are typically pagan characteristics.

It connotes qualities which emanate from a state of pre-consciousness. You cannot be conscious and remain in darkness. Darkness is a dragon which devours distinctions, discriminations, and differentiations. Darkness also characterizes a condition of stark individualism, when the individual is

sundered from society and finds himself in the grip of absolute helplessness. Modern Western sensibility which is completely unconnected with Muslim culture cannot appreciate the absence of darkness. It seeks an external representation of the black despair within. But black individualistic despair was no part of Muslim consciousness.

As we have seen, Islam emphasizes a serious commitment to history. In a growing Muslim society the individual, apart from being an individual, is a social being par excellence. Sociality is a *raison d'être* of an individual. The helplessness of an individual and the resulting spiritual darkness, therefore, is a condition alien to Muslim consciousness. Perhaps, when the Muslim individual is faced with rapid industrialization, he may for a time get into despair and thus enter the realm of darkness in order to emerge again with light. Of course, there were Muslim mystics and they did come at times face to face with the phases of inner darkness, but they were people who never painted.

5. Muslim painting, consciously or unconsciously, employed symbols which represent mystical states. Sometimes endless curves with no beginning or end stand for the state of bewilderment in which nothing outside seems to gratify spiritual longings. At other times mandala³ forms are used to indicate the state of spiritual wholeness which mystics desire to achieve. Western critics do not see these motifs in Muslim art and like to dismiss it as merely decorative and ornamental. Unless one sees Muslim art in its proper historical perspective and imaginatively flows with the stream of Muslim history and ideology, one is not likely to appreciate the significance of this unique idiom.

6. Muslim painting, especially in Iran, was devoted to the expression of a single emotion in one painting. Every detail of the subject was perceived and made use of for an effective rendering of the subtle nuances of that emotion. The trees and flowers were not there to fill a background; they were there to add to the melody flowing from a painting. Most of the Persian miniature paintings are like orchestras in which each object painted contributes to the symphony. This unique characteristic of Muslim painting may have emanated - as Basil Gray suggests - from the mystical and pantheistic tendencies of the Persians, they, perhaps, regarded every object of nature as manifesting God. But a more plausible explanation of this singular quality can, perhaps, be found in the Muslim conception of time.

Muslims regard duration as continuous and eternal, time as discontinuous, universe for them is new at each moment. One continuously hears the sound of *kun ja-yakun*.⁴ For a Muslim artist, therefore, simultaneity of eternity is far more significant than succession of events. The emotional meaning of an object is implicitly contained in the total situation. This attitude is hard to grasp for the Occidental mind. That is why we find that the Western critics of Muslim art, by trying to fit its mode of expression in the pre-conceptions and categories of their own culture, misunderstand and distort the essence of its individuality.

The nearest parallel to this conception is the Chinese conception of synchronicity embodied in their religious classics, such as I Ching. Since each moment is an act of God, the Muslim painter sees every temporal and

spatial situation as somehow transcending serial time and geometrical space. His peculiar perception gives a painting its particular individuality, the fact that his eager vision selects a peculiar array of objects imparts to its uniqueness. But the fact that this array is the manifestation of the Divine gives it an aura of universality. Both particularity and universality are, thus, combined and synthesized in a single work of art.

7. Muslim paintings - again especially miniatures - are illustrations of literary and religious classics. Several explanations of this peculiar characteristic have been advanced. But the only explanation which is consistent with the general Muslim attitude is that for a Muslim nature is itself in illustration of the Word of God. *Kun fa-yakun* are the words which translate themselves into the sensible world. The world is Logos in matter and motion. Muslim consciousness is rooted in the awareness of a profound inter-relationship between word and fact. Word seems to be the life blood of the universe.

This point will become clearer if we attend to a parallel recently drawn by Dr. W. C. Smith between the Christian "Eucharist" and the memorization of the Qur'an by Muslims. Dr Smith writes, "The Koran, in formal Muslim doctrine pre-existent and uncreated is for the Moslem the one tangible thing within the natural realm that is super-natural, the point where eternal has broken through into time. By Koran one means, of course, not the 'ink and paper' but the content of the Koran, its message, its words, ultimately its meaning. The hafiz (freely, the 'memorizer', but, more literally, the 'apprehender') has in some sense appropriated this himself, has interiorized it in a way that could conceivably suggest to a Christian some analogy with what happens when the Christian in the Communion service appropriates God, the super-natural, the embodiment of eternity in time."

This parallel is extremely valuable. For where Christians have to incorporate the body of Christ in order to have communion with the God-head, Muslims have to incorporate the words of the Qur'an so that they would have communion with God. The eternal Word and its meaning are one, they cannot be separated. And it is the Word which gives spiritual sustenance to the believer.

If we look at the artistic illustrations composed by Muslims painters from this point of view, we may appreciate the significance of this tendency better and more adequately. The word for a Muslim has a compelling power of creation: his spirit must fly to eternity on the wings of words. Not only that, these are the only wings which can take him there. Hence, every sensuous experience which inspires a painter to express himself in colour and line, in order to be integrated in his personality, must be capable of verbal expression. The rise and fall of sensuousness must be capable of being regulated by words.⁵

Muslim painting, especially in its early phases, was not an autonomous medium of expression. It was subsidiary to literature. The earliest Muslim paintings were the results of the efforts of painters to illustrate some of the classical books. They derived their content from these books and their form from their need to decorate and make beautiful. The passion to illustrate the written word is not something peculiarly Muslim, it has inspired painters

like Delacroix to illustrate Goethe's Faust and artists like Michelangelo to point Christian myths and legends on the interior walls of cathedrals and churches. It is significant that the grand old man of painting in Pakistan, 'Abd al-Rahman Chughta'i, won his reputation as a great artist by his illustration of Diwan-i Ghalib. When painters, whether of the East or of the West, seek grand visions and cosmic views to colour their artistic endeavours, they illustrate great books. Perhaps the need for these visions is perennial.

Let us now substantiate these points by have a brief a glance at the history of Muslim painting.

C. Historical Background

Muslim painting started its career under the Umayyads, who as rulers and conquerors were mainly without any puritanical disdain for luxury. The palaces they built were expressions of the theme of splendour and richness, which gradually came to dominate all aspects of their lives. One finds the walls of these palaces made beautiful and attractive with paintings inspired by various colourful motifs. About 94/712, the Umayyad Caliph, Walid I, built a desert lodge at Qusair 'Amrah. This romantic palace was decorated by wall paintings representing allegories and various kinds of animals and plants.

The 'Abbasids went further. In their pagan pursuit of imaginative luxury they made the human figure loom large in their paintings. In their paintings girls dance, musicians sing and play on instruments, animals stroll, and birds fly and twitter. These figures are enclosed in circular disks. One finds a resplendent example of this tendency in the palace at Samarra built in the third/ninth century. Side by side with these painting one sees the opposite motif. On wooden boards are painted plants in white, red, yellow, and blue. In these paintings human and animal motifs are absent.

But the early 'Abbasids made their artistic influence felt more in Iran than perhaps anywhere else. Here one sees several palaces decorated with frescoes in diverse styles and various modes of execution. Some of them are only in black and white, while in others all colours are employed to create the desired effect. The black and white paintings portray human movements, while the multi-coloured paintings depict human and diabolical figures, male and female, with and without haloes, heads, busts and dresses. The plaster niches found at Nishapur are made of different designs, but all have the vase or goblet motif; these vases seem to radiate palmettes against a blue background and have a triangular shape reposing on top. Sometimes two magical eyes diffuse a spell over the entire niche. In Egypt, beautiful frescoes were made under the patronage of the Fatimid Caliphs in the fourth/tenth century. They had several themes - geometrical patterns, birds, palmettes moving out of central figures, human beings holding drinking cups in their hands. One also sees the dawn of miniature painting in this period.

D. Book Illustrations

In the seventh/13th century, the 'Abbasids began to patronize illustrations of classical works of science and mysticism. The impetus

probably came from some of the illustrations made by painters in the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries under the influence of Mani, the great Iranian painter. The ‘Abbasids probably employed the Nestorian or Jacobite Christians to illustrate the books they regarded as classics. The main difference in content between the Manichaean illustrations and Muslim illustrations was that the former were mainly representations of religious themes and the latter devoted by and large to making the sciences of the body and the soul sensuously attractive to the human eye. For instance, the Arabic translation of Dioscorides’ *Materia Medica* was illustrated profusely by ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Fadl. Similarly, other books dealing with animals and plants in a scientific manner had their themes illustrated by skillful painters of the time.

The distinctive feature of these illustrations was that they treated of operational themes. They dealt with subjects such as doctors preparing medicines or surgeons doing operations. These illustrations have a very simple style. Rich and powerful colours make the theme throb and pulsate with energy and vivacity, rosettes and palmettes cover and decorate the apparel and garments, but the background is only just indicated, generally with a few conventionalized trees.

One book which was distinguished for its remarkable illustrations was Hariri’s *Maqamat*. Its illustrations were done by a powerful painter of the time, Yahya ibn Mahmud of Wasit, conveniently known as al-Wasiti. This painter copied and illustrated the most important copy of the *Maqamat* in 635/1237. These magnificent paintings deal with everyday life. They show ordinary Muslims travelling in the desert, praying in the mosque, drinking in the tavern, and reading in the library. Their realism is enchanting, their conception is bold, their strokes are sure and vital, and the line they imprint is fine and delicate.

In this period, *Kalilah wa-Dimmah*, a Hindu book of stories, which was translated into Arabic by ibn Muqaffa’, was quite a popular fount of inspiration for the painters who aspired to make their mark as illustrators. One of the manuscripts prepared in 628/1230 show minute observation of details and an excellent realization of the animal motif, but here, as elsewhere, the third dimension is only barely and abstractly indicated. In northern Mesopotamia under the Saljuq Atabegs painting seems to have acquired considerable popularity. Nur al-Din Mahmud, the Urtuq Sultan of Diyar-Bakr, asked al-Jazari, the great inventor, to write a treatise on the work he had done. Several illustrated copies of this book called “Automata” can be seen in the various museums of the world.

In Iran, during this period of history, only wall paintings and ceramics portraying figures and legends in comparatively subdued colours were being made. Turquoise, blue, or white serving as background would shoot forth gold, silver, green, violet, etc.

E. The Mongo School

The Mongols brought with them a deep fondness for the Chinese art. The painters of Mesopotamia, as we have seen, themselves possessed a great sense of realism. This sense was made more acute and sharp by their contact with the Chinese culture and Fine Arts. The Chinese artists had achieved

considerable excellence and maturity in painting landscapes. The Muslim artists assimilated in their idiom not only on themes selected by the Chinese painters but also their method of impressionistic painting in black and white. Ibn Bakhtishu's *Manafi'i al-Hayawan* is the earliest Iranian manuscript of the Mongol times. Several copies of this book were made in different styles, sometimes adopting mild tones and at other times venturing forth in bolder colours.

The most important influence that Mongol painting received in this period was that of a master mind. Rashid al-Din, the man who wrote, among other books, *Jami' al-Tawarikh*, a history of the Mongols, was, above all, a devotee of learning and arts in the pursuit of which he founded a colony of people whose main business was the enrichment of life with knowledge. Several artists, provided with accommodation and amenities of life in that colony, were asked to copy and illustrate books, mainly his own. The miniature painting in all these books - especially those in *Jami' al-Tawarikh* - show a peculiarly sober but fascinating blend of the Iranian and Chinese features of artistic expression. Some of the copies of this book can be assigned to a later period because they suggest developments which occurred only in the beginning of the eighth/14th century.

Quite a few of the painters of this period copied and illustrated Shah Nameh of Firdausi. Again, there are several variations of the composite influences of the Chinese and Iranian styles of painting. The realism of these paintings is particularly marked, the expressions are distinctly individualized, and the details are painstakingly portrayed.

F. The Timurid School

Then came Timur. He was the man who left a trail of blood behind whenever he ransacked a country. Nonetheless, he was a great lover of arts. When he conquered a country he would take special care not to kill the artists. He would then take them to Baghdad, where under his patronage they copied and illustrated manuscripts. But true artistic greatness was achieved only under the inspiring benevolence of Shah Rukh (Timur's son) who made Herat his home. Shah Rukh was interested in books and he inspired many artists to calligraphy and decorate the famous and important books of the time.

Khalil, a great painter, who was regarded second only to Mani, was the leading figure in art at Shah Rukh's Court. Shah Rukh's son, Baisunqur Mirza, founded an academy of book arts with a large staff. Among the important painters were Amir Shahi and Ghiyath al-Din. Shah Nameh was still the fount of themes for the Court painters, but they also addressed themselves to mystical and romantic subjects - such as those found in Nizami's *Khamseh* and Sa'di's *Gulistan* and *Bustan*. The vivid and lyrical imagery of those paintings suggest that the painters modified and changed their style to suit the novel subjects they had discovered. At Shiraz, where an independent school flourished at this time, colours were milder and cooler, and the style, though not vastly different, was definitely less skilful than that of the school at Herat.

Another book, *Diwan-i Jami*, was also a popular source of inspiration for the painters of that period. 'Abd al-Karim of Khwarizm calligraphed and

illustrated Maulana Jami's Diwan at the end of the ninth/15th century. In Samarqand a book on astronomy was also illustrated for the library of Ulugh Beg.

G. The Great Behzad

The Iranian historian Khwandamir wrote thus about Behzad in the middle of the tenth/16th century, "He sets before us marvellous forms and rarities of his art, his draughtsmanship, which is like the brush of Mani, has caused the memorials of all the painters of the world to be obliterated, and his fingers endowed with miraculous qualities have wiped out the pictures of all the artists among the sons of Adam. A hair of his brush, through its mastery, has given life to the lifeless form."

This great painter began his career with Sultan Hussain Mirza at Herat at the end of the ninth/15th century. Later, he came to Tabriz in the early tenth/16th century to work under Shah Isma'il. It has been said that when a battle was raging against the Turks, Behzad and Shah Mahmud al-Nishapuri were hidden by Shah Nasir in a cave. In 929/1522, Behzad was appointed Director of the Royal Library. The two well-known manuscripts that Behzad illustrated were Khamseh and Bustan. One sees in these paintings a keen perception of form, a highly sensitive and subtle sense for colour, experimentation with colours to evolve new Gestalten, and novel patterns of feeling and awareness. These paintings show that Behzad had an astonishingly strong consciousness of the opposites: of dramatic action and immobility, of blending peace and unrest, of combining generality with individuality. Zafar Nameh, a biography of Timur, was also illustrated by Behzad. Besides, he illustrated Maulana Jami's Diwan, and his illustrations show his experimental genius at its best.

The most outstanding student of Behzad was Qasim 'Ali, who carried on the style and artistic tradition, set by his inimitable master. Qasim 'Ali, who acquired the experimental spirit of Behzad, became well known as a painter of faces.

One thing that strikes the modern connoisseur of painting is that Behzad, who unfortunately did not outgrow the narrow confines of miniature painting, had an intense awareness of the mandala. One has only to look at his masterpiece, "The Dancing Dervishes," which, apart from its ravishing curves and powerful lines suggesting movement and rhythm, is a beautiful mandala figure. The dervishes make a moving and dancing circle which seems to revolve around a centre. The centre is again not bereft of content. It is filled with four dervishes dancing hand in hand.

This painting gives a lie to all those Western critics of Muslim painting who have repeatedly charged Muslim art, almost ad nauseam, with being almost entirely decorative. This painting is one of the illustrations in Diwan-i Jami, a Book of poems with a markedly mystical content. Here is a painter who not only illustrates but also absorbs the mystical content in his artistic forms. Mandala represents spiritual wholeness. It seems that Behzad was painting his powerful pictures not to produce decorative effects but to answer a spiritual need. It was a response to his spiritual longing, a colourful realm discovered by his spiritual quest, as answer to the prayers of his soul. When one looks at "The Dancing Dervishes," one finds that compared with

it the most renowned mandala paintings by the mystics of other creeds pale into insignificance. The spell that Behzad's paintings cast on the beholder can radiate only from a whole soul. It is not the work of a mere decorator.

H. The Safawid School

Herat continued to throb with art even when Behzad shifted from there to Tabriz. Behzad's influence was not passing or transitory, it stayed because it continued to move and stir the Muslim soul. Amir Khusrau Dihlawi's *Khamsea* was copied at Balkh and was illustrated by one of Behzad's students. It contained some very significant miniature paintings. The great calligrapher 'Ali al-Hussaini copied and illustrated 'Arif's *Go-i Chaugan* in 930/1523. Similarly, *Diwan-i Hafiz* was illustrated by Shaikhzadeh, a student of Behzad, and Sultan Muhammad who had an individual style. Sultan Muhammad also copied Nizami's *Khameseh* and produced some very outstanding and superb paintings. In his paintings he introduced new colour schemes and new ways of perception.

Sultan Muhammad was a Court painter par excellence. He was not only an intimate and close friend of Shah Tehmasp, but also taught him how to paint. He illustrated Nizami's *Khamseh* and Firdausi's *Shah Nameh*. Along with his teacher Mirak, he created a new style of painting. His fingers are more sophisticated and his background is richer in detail and ornament.

Sultan Muhammad also painted some portraits of charming young men and lovely ladies. Some of his portraits are those of Shah Tehmasp himself.

The second half of the tenth/16th century saw the rise to eminence of another painter, Ustad Muhammadi, son and student of Sultan Muhammad. The miniatures painted by this great artist reveal an enchanting style and a sense of composition unprecedented in the history of Muslim painting. He took his subjects from everyday life and imparted an inimitable rhythm to all the details of his figures. Trees, wild and tamed animals, men and women enter his paintings and become immortally and irrepressibly alive.

I. The Bukhara School

In the early tenth/16th century, Bukhara became the centre of hectic creative activity. Mahmud Madhahhib, a student of the famous calligrapher Mir 'Ali, excelled in painting love scenes. He also illustrated Nazami's *Makhzan al-Asrar*. Several other painters painted miniatures in this century and their work shows the influence of Behzad and his school. But they did not blindly imitate Behzad; they accepted his influence and developed a new style. They experimented with colours and afforded local touch to the figures they made. One painter illustrated Sa'di's *Bustan* and another Muhyi Lari's *Futuh al-Haramain*. One finds these paintings beautiful and decorative, but lacking in the spiritual fire which was characteristic of Behzad's work.

They were bereft of the ardent longings which animate paintings of the Herat school. They are expressions of artistic decay which set in at about this time in Iran and other Muslim countries. The principal reason of this decline seems to be the desire of clinging to the same old form of miniature painting and a refusal to experiment with other media of expression. That is why in Isfahan, under the patronage of Shah 'Abbas, illustrations were made

but only of works of much lower calibre than Shah Nameh or Diwan-i Hafiz. Paintings were made to portray scenes from books like Chihal Sutun and 'Ala Kapi. At this time Rida'-i 'Abbasi were regarded as the most outstanding painter of Iran.

His tinted drawings throb with life and vigour. One finds in them undulating curves flowing with facility into the patterns they weave and mild strokes emphasizing the ends. This was indeed a breath of fresh air. Life itself, rather than books, became the fount of inspiration. This was a great change, but it could not be felt as such because great changes need great artists to sustain them. Unfortunately, neither Rida'-i 'Abbasi nor anyone else had the powerful vision of a Behzad or a Sultan Muhammad. Consequently, the 11th/17th and 12th/18th centuries, people imitated and admired Rida'-i 'Abbasi, but no new movement came into being.

J. The Turkish Painting

The origin and development of Turkish painting is still wrapped in mystery. However, this much we know that in 855/1480 Sultan Muhammad II invited Gentile Bellini to his Court and commissioned him to paint his portrait. In the tenth/16th century Shah Quli and Wali Jan, the Iranian painters, came to Constantinople and became Court painters. These artists selected the houris of paradise as their subject-matter. Shah Quli achieved excellence as a painter of curved leaves and Wali Jan became distinguished for the elegance of his lines. Some Iranian painters illustrated "History of the Ottoman Sultans" and Sulaiman Nameh, a book of stories by Firdausi of Brusa. The main distinction of these painters was that they did a good deal of experimental work in colours.

K. The Mughul Painting

Babur, the first Mughul Emperor of India (933 - 937/1526 - 1530) was a philosopher and great lover of nature. It seems that he patronized Fine Arts and brought with the traditions of Behzad and the Bukhara school. Babur's son, Humayun, invited Khuwaja 'Abd al-Samad of Shiraz and Mir Sayyid 'Ali to his Court at Kabul and asked them to illustrate Amir Hamzah. The paintings they made of this fantastic story were 1400 in number. Akbar, Humayun's son, was a unique patron of arts. He built a city, Fatehpur Sikri, where he decorated his palaces with mural paintings and founded an academy of Arts.

This was an institution for the creation and promotion of a native school of painting. Painters of this school were influenced by Behzad and the early Timurid paintings. Nizami's Haft Paikar was copied and illustrated by the painters at Akbar's Court in a style which had a peculiar blend of two traditions: Behzad School and the early Timurid School. They show a local touch in so far as the content is concerned, but in the selection of colours and design they were markedly Iranian.

Hindu painters, working under the Mughul influence, illustrated manuscripts dealing with the lives and exploits of Timur, Babur, and Akbar. Their paintings reveal a remarkable mixture of the Hindu, Iranian, and European influences. For the first time in Muslim art one notices the presence of perspective and a clear visualization of the third dimension.

Jahangir (1014 - 1038/1605 - 1628) carried on the tradition of his great ancestors, and he carried it much further. He liked art to be representative of life as it is lived in the present and not a mere illustration of the wisdom of books. Thus, in his time realistic painting of plants and animals were produced in abundance. On his travels he would take his Court painter with him and urge to portray significant historical events in their paintings. Mansur, Murad, and Manohar were distinguished painters of his time. These artists painted rare birds, animals, and flowers in an exquisitely realistic style.

Jahangir and his nobles were also fond of getting their portraits made. The famous portrait painters of this time were Bishandas, Manohar, Muhammad Nadir, and Abu al-Hassan. Abu al-Hassan was Jahangir's favourite: he painted some beautiful miniatures and some very fine portraits of Jahangir. Mughul painters also painted pictures representing nobles and princes conversing with Hindu ascetics and hermits. Shah Jahan, Jahangir's son, was a devotee of portrait painting. Some of his own portraits, made by artists at his Court, show acute observation, elegance and subtlety in execution, and a deep sense of colourfulness. Muhammad Fakhr Allah Khan and Mir Hashim were two of the important painters of his time. Dara Shikoh, Shah Jahan's son, who never ruled, was a great admirer and patron of arts - but after him, that is, in the 12th/18th and 13th/19th centuries, Mughul art suffered a complete decline.

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Notes

1. "Prayer, then, whether individual or associative, is an expression of man's inner yearning for a response in the awful silence of the universe. It is a unique process of discovery whereby the searching ego affirms itself in the very moment of self-negation, and thus discovers its own worth and justification as a dynamic factor in the life of the universe." Sir Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1958 p. 92.

2. Thus, Bachofen writing about the characteristics of matriarchal societies regards preference for darkness as an important attribute of such pagan cultures. Bachofen says, "By no means less significant is a second expression of the same fundamental law, that of pre-dominance of night over day born of her maternal womb. In antiquity... preference of night over the day (was) associated with ... a dominant maternal influence. In this instance two hoary customs and usages, councils and court assemblies, that is, the preference for darkness for the exercise of social functions, show that we are not dealing with a philosophic theory of later origin, but an actual mode of life. Added to these observations comes the preference of the sinister aspect of life and death over its bright aspect of creation, the pre-dominance of the dead over the living and of sorrow over joy."

3. 'Images of the goal,' says Jung, "are mostly concerned with ideas of the mandala type, that is, the circle and the quaternity. They are the plainest and most characteristic representations of the goal. Such images unite the opposites under the sign of the quaternio, i.e. by combining them in the form of cross, or else they express the idea of wholeness through the circle or sphere."

4. Louis Massignon, "Time in Islamic Thought," Eranos Yearbook, Rhein-Verlang, Zurich, 1951.

5. In a footnote in his paper on Christianity and Islam, Dr. Cantwell Smith writes, "It is the word (Kalam) of God, it is not He nor is it other than He." He further quotes from Al-Nasafi, "We do not say that the verbal expressions (alfaz) and letters are eternal...The (uncreated) Qur'an, the Speech of Allah, does not reside in the hearts, nor in the tongues, nor in the ears, but it is an Eternal idea subsisting in the essence of Allah."

The last line in al-Nasafi's quotations, however, suggests that the Eternal Idea could be grasped without the Word. But this is a mistaken view of Muslim consciousness. In Muslim consciousness the Word is an integral part of the total meaning of God. That is why a Muslim, however rationalistically oriented he might be, will always admire -covertly or overtly - the heroic fight that Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal put up against the doctrine of al-Qur'an khalq1-Allah , that is, the Qur'an is the creation of God.

One may agree with Dr. Smith when he writes, "By this act (i.e., memorizing) the Moslem is, as it were, taking the gift of God up off the book and paper in which it is enshrined and incorporating it within himself, so that it becomes for him alive and inalienably personal." It is quite true that the spoken word which is incorporated in the personality of the memorizer (hafiz). After all, the Qur'an descended as the spoken word of God.

Chapter 57: Music

“To some people music is like food, to others it is like medicine, and to others like a fan.”

Alf Lailah wa Lailah

These prefatory lines, serve as they do to provide a text on the lintel of the doorway to this subject, reminds one how widely dissimilar is the attitude of Islamic peoples towards the art and practice of music to that of others; music is indeed “like food,” since it often sustains when all else fails. You can scan Greek literature in vain for any such parallel sentiments. Music in its literal connotation was alien to Greek philosophy.

Aristoxenus certainly dealt with it, but his approach, devoid of the slightest hint of philosophic appeal per se, was a purely scientific one.¹ It is true that the Pythagoreans had given a foretaste of the Islamic spiritual conception of music, but that was in the dim and distant past of Greece. What is more in keeping with the Greek evaluation of this art is to be found in Athenaeus of Naucratis (fl. 200 A. D.), whose utterances are mere entertaining chatter.²

A. The Music in Itself

“This art...is the foraging ground of audition, and the pasturage of the soul, and the spring grass of the heart, and the arena of love, and the comfort of the dejected, and the companionship of the lonely, and the provision of the traveller, because of the important place of the beautiful voice in the heart and its dominating the entire soul.”

Ibn ‘Abdi Rabbihi, al-‘Iqd al-Farid.

After reading the prologue to this chapter, one cannot help realizing how vastly different are the sentiments of Islamic peoples from those of the peoples of Greece and Rome on the assessment of music. And by music we mean that art which the noblest minds in Islam believed to be capable of being informed with and ennobled by thought, and in turn to adorn and enforce thought, and to be thus understood and felt. No better example of that percipience is to be found than one in the utterances of the Ikhwan al-Safa of the fourth/tenth century of Basrah, the home of the learning, who spoke of music as “an art compounded between the corporeal and the spiritual.”³

To these transcendental philosophers “all the arts had bodily forms except the art of music, whose substance was a spiritual essence.” With what felicity do the “Brethren” laud that type of music “which softens the heart, brings tears to the eyes, and makes us feel penitent over past misdeeds.” How well they knew the value of those soothing melodies “that lightened the pain of disease and sickness,” and those affecting airs which “comforted the aching hearts and eased the grief of the afflicted in times of calamity.” More practical still was their recognition of those songs “that relieved the toil of heavy work and wearisome undertakings,” as well as that music which gathered “joy, pleasure, and happiness...at weddings and banquets.”⁴ Indeed a veritable ocean of literature in praise of music has flowed down to us from the Islamic past, whilst poets have sung the sweetest verses in adulation.⁵

On the other hand, there have been many pious and honourable men among the legists (fuqaha') who have considered music a useless pastime (lahw) which sometimes became an urge to commit actions which were unlawful (haram) or abhorred (makruh). Among those who condemned divine art were some of the most sincere of the Muslims, from ibn Abi al-Dunya (d. 281/894) in his "Censure of Forbidden Pleasures" (Dhamm al-Malahi),⁶ to Shihab al-Din al-Haithami (d. 973/1565) in his "Restraint of Impetuous Youth" (Kaff al-Ra'a').⁷ Nobody can censure those opponents of music who sincerely believed that it was among the things prohibited (muharramat), since even Christian Europe linked "wine, woman, and song" among the "idle pleasures" (malahi).

Yet, strictly speaking, the objections of the purists in religion to "listening to music" (al-sama') has no logical raison d'être. Calligraphy cannot be blamed on account of forgers, nor can accountancy be condemned because of defalcators. It would be just as illogical to forbid fruits and viands because of their concomitance with wine and woman as to censure music owing to its proximity to the latter. Music, per se, is neither good nor evil, although it may accompany both, yet it cannot be categorized or submitted to predicament.

In spite of all our probing and searching we still do not know the inner causes of emotion. Al-Farabi (d. 339/950) denied that music inspired a passion or soul-state.⁸ His guess was that music, whether in the performer or the listener, was itself inspired by a passion or soul-state. Ibn Zailah (d. 440/1048) held much the same view. He says, "When sound (saut) is adorned by harmonious and mutually related composition, it stirs the soul of man...Beginning on a low note and ascending to a high note, or vice versa, according to a particular arrangement and a known composition, it becomes related to the sentiments of the soul of man. As one note (naghmah), after another changes in the music, one state after another changes in the soul.

One composition will transport the soul from weakness to strength, and another from strength to weakness...Therefore, the composition which is possessed of certain sounds is possessed of certain qualities by which the soul is influenced."⁹ All that is manifest to the meanest observer, but no one has yet told us what those "qualities" are. Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 606/1209) states a more "up-to-date" opinion, and this, in substance, is what he has to say, "In the animal world sounds come into existence by reason of grief, pain, or joy. Those sounds, according to these circumstances, are different, being high or low, so, the law of association, those sounds become bound up with the different mental states which prompt them. Thus, when those sounds are renewed, they inevitably call up the related mental states, which may be grief, pain, or joy."¹⁰

From the purely Islamic point of view, ibn Zailah also raises a point worth mentioning. He says, "Sound produces an influence on the soul in two directions. One is on account of its special composition (i.e. its physical content), the other, on account of its being similar to the soul (i.e. its spiritual content)."¹¹ A Persian mystic, al-Hujwiri (fifth/11th century), divides those who listen to music into two categories: those who listen to the material sound and those who hear the spiritual meaning. That ecstatic

maintained that those who heard spiritually did not apprehend mere notes (naghamat), modes (maqamat), or rhythms (iqa'at), but music per se, insisting that such audition "consists in hearing everything as it is in quality and predicament."¹²

That doctrine takes us to the very core of Sufi teaching in which "listening to music" under such spiritual control conduces to ecstasy, which leads to a revelation of the Divine. Did not Schopenhauer suggest that the world itself is but music realized, and was not that what the Ikhwan al-Safa had taught a thousand years earlier?

Yet of all the great thinkers of Islam no one has probed to the heart of the problem with such power of persuasion and solicitude of purpose, and reached a conclusion of such profundity as al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111). How penetrating are his words, "Hearts and innermost thoughts are mines of secrets and treasuries of precious stones. Within their confines are jewels which are as sparks contained in iron and steel...And there is no other way of extracting their secrets except by the flint of 'listening to music' (al-sama'), because there is no means of reaching the hearts except through the portals of the ears."¹³ ...Verily, 'listening to music' is a factual touchstone,... for as soon as the soul of music reaches the heart, it brings out whatever predominates in it."¹⁴ That was also the dominating thought of Abu Sulaiman al-Darani (d. c. 205/820), who averred that "music and singing do not produce in the heart that which is not in it."

As our opening lines from the *Alf Lailah wa Lailah* reveal there is much more in music than its being merely an ancillary to those things which are unlawful and abhorred, and those who base their objection to music on the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith must know that they can be answered by proofs to the contrary from these identical and revered sources.¹⁵ Ibn Khaldun (d. 808/1406), the greatest of the philosopher-historians of Islam, did not touch directly on the question of al-sama' in the legal aspect. We do not know his reasons for that apparent neglect, but the fact that he devotes a chapter in his *Prolegomena to music* is sufficient proof of his attitude, which was that of the rational man.

To him, man was a social animal who was good by nature.¹⁶ It follows, therefore, that man should seek to satisfy certain natural desires in his leisure hours, such as the need for healthy relaxation, the wish to acquire knowledge, and the urge to listen to sweet music.¹⁷ All such longings were perfectly reasonable, and since man could discern what was good or evil in those desires, he could, by experience, make such desires always beneficial both socially and spiritually, provided the intention in those desires were good. If that were the case, the desires were lawful.¹⁸

The Sufi and the darwish have eloquently defended their attitude in the usage of music in their ceremonials by proofs that are unanswerable by its condemners. Perhaps the most trenchant defence was made by the brother and successor of the great al-Ghazālī, who was known as Majd al-Din al-Tusi (d. 520/1126), and this is what he said, "If anyone says that audition is absolutely unlawful, he has declared forbidden in the law that about which no statute has come down, since no statute forbidding audition and dancing has come down in the Book of Allah, or in the usage of Allah's Apostle, or

in the words of the Companions (of the Prophet). And he, who declares to be forbidden in the Law anything which is not in it, has invented something against Allah, and he who invents anything against Allah is an infidel by general agreement.”¹⁹

Yet we, in this work, are primarily concerned with the purely secular approach, although it may unavoidably include that which is divine. Not only is the case for secular music unassailable, but the teaching, acquisition, and practice of it can be proved to be rational since it affords healthy exercise to the body, mind and emotions. It has been said that “men die for want of cheerfulness as plants die for want of light.” And, what can supply that want better than music? Therein is refreshment for the body, cheer for the mind, and relief for the emotions, or, more grandiloquently, the repairing of lost energies, the soothing of chafed sensibilities, and the kindling of finer feelings and aspirations.

Everybody knows, especially in Islam, the wondrous power of the “beautiful voice,”²⁰ particularly in the reading (qir’ah) of the Qur’an and the chanting of the “call to prayer” (adhan). They give back musical impressions which not only delight the ear but thrill the soul, because that chanting harmonizes with the divine message.²¹ And why should not secular music per se do likewise, since there seems to be a natural alliance between radiant music and moral beauty? Surely man’s faculties and susceptibilities for the acquisition and enjoyment of music were not bestowed but that they should be a glory to the Giver and a joy to the possessor, for they are as essential to the social and spiritual welfare of man as the influence of the sun and rain is to be the fruitfulness of the mother earth.

“Get way from evil and sing”
(Ab’id al-sharr wa ghanni).

Syrian Proverb

B. The Music Lovers

“I like the man who cultivates poetry for self-instruction, not for lucre; and the man who practises music for pleasure, not for gain.”

Ibn Muqlah (d. 238/940)

Since Islam was born among the Arabs and was cradled in the Hijaz, one must give prior consideration to these two important facets. In the “Days of Ignorance” (al-jahiliyyah) music was practiced in the whole of Arabia by the matrons of the towns and tribes as well as by professional singing-girls (qainat). These not only cheered many a home and encampment, but strengthened the resolve of those in the battle throng, as we read in the Hamasah. Their singing (ghina’) was based on a simple type of song called the nasb which was but an improved form of camel-driver’s chant (huda’). They accompanied themselves on an instrument of strings (muwattar), although more generally it was a harp-like instrument (mi’zafa), a percussion wand (qadib), or a tambourinte (mizhar).²²

In default of the latter they could adapt the perforated skin sieve (ghirbal) for that purpose: this received the approval of the Prophet later.²³ When Islam came upon the world of intellectual darkness, the first male musician to make history was Tuwais (d. c. 88/705). He accompanied himself on a

square tambourine (daff), and when performing would perambulate along the lines of his audience.²⁴

The wide conquests of the Arab armies, notably in Persia and Syria, had sent crowds of captives into the towns of the Hijaz. Among these were singers and players whose alien types of music captivated the people of Mecca and Medina. The result was that Arab musicians found themselves compelled to master the new kinds of singing and playing. That was only one of the many cultural influences which affected Arabian modes of life, for “when the revelations of the Prophet flashed on the world, a message was delivered which could not be confined to the Hijaz, the cradle of Islam. As a result, the banner of the Prophet was planted eastward at the extremities of Transoxiana, southward by the banks of the Indus, northward to the shores of the Black Sea, and westward on the slopes of the Pyrenees.”²⁵

As we march through the pages of the history of music we shall see how manifold artistic ingredients contributed to Islamic civilization. Al-Hirah, the capital of the Arab Lakhmids, had already imbibed much of Persian culture including the lute (‘ud).²⁶ The Meccans had used a rustic type of pandore (mi‘zaf) which had a parchment “face” (wajh), but as the Persian lute (barbat) had a “face” of wood, the Meccan lute was called the ‘ud (wood). The holy cities of the Hijaz resounded with strains of music and song,²⁷ and the artistic career of the songstress ‘Azzat al-Maila’ (d. c. 88/705) in the Hijaz attested to that fact.

At her auditions the greatest musicians, poets, litterati, and the most distinguished citizens, including ‘Abd Allah ibn Ja‘far, a cousin-germain of the Prophet, took part. Even Hassan ibn Thabit, the first poetic extoller of Islam sang her praises.²⁸ Among the great musicians of the glorious days of the Orthodox Caliphs (al-rashidun) were Sa‘ib Khathir (d. c. 83/683), Hunain al-Hiri (d. c. 100/718), and Ahmad al-Nasibi, a kinsman of the poet A‘sha Hamdam (d. 82/701).²⁹

The Umayyad caliphs removed their capital from Medina to Damascus, where their Courts, with the exception of that of ‘Umar II (d. 101/720), were thronged with singers and players. Of al-Walid (d. 126/744) it was said that “the cultivation of music spread not only among the leisured class, but with the people also.”³⁰ Those were the flourishing days of the great virtuosi whose names adorn the pages of Islamic history, notably ibn Muhriz (d. c. 97/715), ibn Suraj (d. c. 108/726), al-Gharid (d. c. 106/724), and Ma‘bad (d. c. 127/743), usually dubbed as “the four great singers.”³¹ Such was Islam, the territories of which knew no racial boundaries, which those four musicians were foreigners by blood, the first being of Persian origin, the second of Turkish descent, the third and fourth claiming respectively Berber and Negro extraction.³²

Because of such a large-hearted tolerance of racial differences it is quite explicable why the hybrid and exotic in music became an allurements and fascination. Through Islam the technical nomenclature in music was almost wholly Arabic, and that was still the case when the first Persian treatises on music appeared in the eighth/14th century.³³ Still, the Arabs borrowed the Persian chang (harp) which they confusedly called the sanj and jank. They

also adopted the Persian tuning (taswiyyah) of the lute, and the frets (dasatin) on the neck of the instrument.³⁴

When the first of the ‘Abbasid Caliphs, al-Mansur (d. 158/755), built that wondrous city of Baghdad, it soon became not only the capital of the vast dominions of the Caliphate, but the cultural centre of Islam. The early ‘Abbasid period has well been styled “the Augustan Age of Arabian literature,”³⁵ although an even greater encomium could be justly used in respect of music during that era, if we take the golden pages of the “Great Book of Songs” (Kitab al-Ahani al-Kabir) as our authority. The first outstanding ‘Abbasid minstrel was Hakam al-Wadi (d. c. 180/796), a singer and performer who carried all before him.³⁶

Almost as exquisite were the vocal accomplishments of ibn Jami‘ (d. c. 189/804).³⁷ He had been taught by the doyen of the Court minstrels, Yahya al-Makki (d. c. 215/830), the fountain head of the old music of the Hijaz. Indeed his “book about the Songs (Kitab fi al-Aghani) was a repository of the classical art;³⁸ his son Ahmad (d. 250/864) issued a revised edition of 3,000 songs³⁹ Greater still was Ibrahim al-Mausili (d. 189/804) who outshone all others by his versatility. Nine hundred compositions stood to his credit, whilst his training school for singing girls became renowned.⁴⁰

Fulaih ibn Abi al-‘Aura’ was another favoured singer, being the only one allowed to appear - professionally - without the customary curtain (sitar) which screened the musicians from the Caliph. Fulaih, with Ibrahim al-Mausili and ibn Jami‘, compiled a collection for Harun al-Rashid known as “The Hundred Chosen Songs” (al-Mi‘at al-Saut al-Mukhtarah).⁴¹ Prince Ibrahim ibn al-Mahdi (d. 224/839)⁴² and his step-sister Princess ‘Ulayyah (d. 210/825)⁴³ had both been carefully trained in music at the instance of Caliph Harun, at whose Court music received so munificent a patronage that it set the whole world in wonderment.

Prince Ibrahim possessed a voice with a compass of three octaves, and was considered the “most proficient in mankind” in that art.⁴⁴ By that time the impingement of Persian and Khurasanian novelties in music became quite pronounced. Singing girls from Khurasan were “the rage.” They performed on a long necked pandore (tanbur) which gave an alien scale, whilst the Persian lute produced a scale that was dissonant to the Arabian system, as we shall see in Section C. Prince Ibrahim and his henchmen favoured these exotic ideas, and even applauded the open violation of the recognized patterns in both the melodic and rhythmic modes.

This defiance of the old classical procedure divided the Court minstrels into two camps, viz. the “Romanticists” led by Prince Ibrahim, and the “Classicists” headed by the chief Court minstrel Ishaq al-Mausili (d. 235/850), the most famous of the musicians of the Muslim world.⁴⁵ Against those neoteric fancies, Ishaq took a firm stand, and eventually was able to re-establish the old Arabian scale and modes, which seem to have been set down in his “Book of Notes and Rhythm” and his “Great Book of Songs.”⁴⁶

After the mid-third/ninth century, the Baghdad Caliphate began its political decline, although music still prospered at its Courts. Al-Mutawakkil (d. 247/861) gave constant encouragement to that art. His son, Abu ‘Isa ‘Abd Allah, was an accomplished musician and a composer of

some 300 songs.⁴⁷ Al-Muntasir (d. 248/862) was both a poet and a musician; the words of his songs have been preserved in al-Isfahani who devotes a chapter to him.⁴⁸ Another such devotee was al-Mu‘tazz (d. 255/869), whose songs have also been saved for us.⁴⁹ His son, ‘Abd Allah, was a highly gifted musician who penned a “Comprehensive Book on Singing” (Kitab al-Jami‘ fi al-Ghina’), the first of its kind, although Prince Ibrahim too, had written a “Book on Singing.”⁵⁰

Yet if the Court minstrels did not produce virtuosi of the same class of old, that defect was overcome by their pens, notably by ibn Tahir al-Khuza‘i (d. 300/913) who wrote a “Book about the Modes and the Reasons for the Songs” (Kitab fi al-Naghama wa ‘Ilal al-Aghani),⁵¹ Qurais al-Jarrahi (d. 326/936) in his “Art of Singing and Stories of the Sinbers” (Sina‘at al-Ghina’ wa Akhbar al-Mughanniyyin), Jahzat al-Barmaki (d. c. 328/938) who published a “Book of Pandorists” (Kitaqb al-Tanburiyyin), and the great al-Isfahani who produced “The Propriety of Listening to Music” (Adab al-Sama‘).⁵²

Turning to the west, we see the same high cultural uplift in Muslim Spain as in the home of the Eastern Caliphate. After the Arabs and Berbers had conquered (91/710) the Iberian Peninsula, a vast portion of the land was held by them until the year 479/1086 and during that period, especially under the Umayyad rulers, music and all the arts were cultivated ardently. Singing girls, called jariyyat, were in great demand, and schools for their training had been established.⁵³ Yet those who came from the East were especially favoured, such as the famed lutanist ‘Afza’ at the Court of ‘Abd al-Rahman I (d. 172/788),⁵⁴ while al-Hakam I (d. 206/822) was especially proud of ‘Uklun and Zarqun.⁵⁵

His chief male minstrels were ‘Abbas ibn Nasa‘i and Mansur al-Yahudi.⁵⁶ Concerts were the “order of the day.”⁵⁷ At the palace of ‘Abd al-Rahman (d. 238/852), there arrived in the year 206/821 the world famous Ziryab, who was treated with unheard-of esteem, for he had been taught by Ibrahim and Ishaq al-Mausili in Baghdad. He was credited with knowing 10,000 (1,000?) songs by heart, and for being the equal of Ptolemy in his knowledge of music. It was he who added a fifth string to the lute, linking it - in the cosmic system - with the soul. The musical system in al-Andalus was that of the Arabian east, the scale being the Pythagorean. Ziryab’s music school - which had some reputation - was carried on after his death by his descendants, and was still flourishing in the days of the “Party Kings,” while traces of it could be found in North Africa in the eighth/14th century.⁵⁸

Under ‘Abd al-Rahman III (d. 350/961) we have an anomalous situation of the Court outwardly condemning music - so as to placate the Maliki legists who frowned on music - but inwardly patronizing it, since he encouraged his children not only to dabble in the art, but to rise to virtuosity. One of them excelled on the pandore (tanbur) and guitar (kaitarah),⁵⁹ whilst another, Abu al-‘Asbagh, said that so long as Allah permitted birds to sing he would do likewise.⁶⁰ In the reign of al-Hakam II (d. 366/976) concerts became special events,⁶¹ and under al-Mahdi (d. 400/1009) orchestras of a hundred lutes (idan) and as many reed pipes (zumar) could be heard in the

palace salons.⁶² Those were the brilliant days of ibn ‘Abdi Rabbihi (d. 328/940) who, in his *al-‘Iqd al-Farid*, gave Muslim Spain some idea of the greatness of the music of the Eastern Caliphate. He was a veritable treasure-chest of Andalusian poetry and song.⁶³

We know little of Persian music in those early days save what may be gleaned from the *Muruj al-Dhahab* of al-Mas‘udi (d. c. 345/956), who quoted ibn Khurdadhbih (d. c. 300/912).⁶⁴ As we have seen, both Persia and Arabia borrowed from each other in matters musical, and we know that Persian as well as Arabian music was being taught at Rayy in the time of Ibrahim al-Mausili.⁶⁵ Certainly there were several brilliant writers in music in Baghdad who were of Persian origin, notably al-Sarakhsi (d. 286/899)⁶⁶ ‘Ubaid Allah ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn Tahir (d. 300/913),⁶⁷ and Zakariya al-Razi (d. 313/925).⁶⁸ A famous singer of the Tahirid period was Ratibah of Nishapur,⁶⁹ and so also was the renowned Rudagi - patronized by the Samanid Nasr II (d. c. 331/942) - a lutanist and harpist, as well as a singer and poet.⁷⁰

Most of the contemporary poets, such as al-Mi‘mari of Jurjan and al-Daqiqi of Tus, sang in rapturous praise of music.⁷¹ Persian music percolated everywhere, Turkomanian influence also made itself felt. The Caliph’s praetorian guards at Baghdad and elsewhere were made up of men of Turkoman race, and they dominated in most things. In such circumstances it can be well understood how Turkomanian music, especially on the instrumental side, was highly appreciated. A lute-like instrument called the *rud* was favoured by them, and an arch-lute the *shahrud*, invented by Khulais ibn al-Ahwas of Samaraqand about 306/918, had already spread to Iraq, Syria, and Egypt.⁷²

In Egypt under the Tulunid and Ikhshidid rulers of the third/ninth and the fourth/tenth centuries, Turkoman influence spread by leaps and bounds, and music was enjoyed by all. Ibn Khallikan praises the excellent voice of ibn Tulun when chanting the Qur’an, while his son Khumarawaih actually adorned his palace walls with pictures of his singing girls.⁷³ The art rose to greater heights under the next rulers. Al-Mas‘udi delineated a delightful scene at a palace by the Nile in 330/940 in which the “sounds of music and singing filled the air.”⁷⁴ Kafur (d. 357/968) was devoted to music and was liberal-handed to its professors.

What was this music of Islam, entralling sounds of which charmed all ears from Bukhara in the east to Cordova in the west? Obviously, there were linguistic differences and indigenous musical preferences in so vast a region. Yet Islam, because of its universal outlook, had leavened some of those diversities. Basically, the scale of all was the Pythagorean, as we shall learn presently.⁷⁵ Yet Arabic technical terminology seems to have had dominion everywhere, as one sees in the term *maqam*. Unmistakably, Baghdad was still the artistic and literary centre, for even Abu Bakr al-Katib, who served the Samanid Isma‘il ibn Ahmad (d. 295/907), saw in Iraq “an ocean of learning and a mine of culture.”⁷⁶

If one scans the *nisbahs* of the great men of literature, science, art, and music who sought Baghdad to win fame and fortune, it becomes clear what a magnet the “City of Peace” had become to the world of Islam.⁷⁷ To the

Arabic-speaking peoples, vocal music was the peerless art. Part of that was due to the beauty of the language, plus the allurements of its variegated metres. The outstanding vocal piece was the ode (qasidah). Within its folds a singer could decorate the melody of each verse with endless embellishments (tahasin). Less classical, but far more popular was the ballad (qit‘ah). There were also folk songs of the mawal type, and we know that even the Caliphs enjoyed the simple songs of the people.⁷⁸

The accompanying instruments were generally the lute, pandore, flute (qassabah), or reed pipe (zamr), which played the simple melody, whilst the rhythmic accompaniment was furnished by a tambourine or drum. Purely instrumental items were also featured, especially as interludes between vocal items. When these were combined the performance was termed a naubah.⁷⁹ Although we read occasionally of a hundred or so performers at Court functions, such events were for special display. The ideal in ‘Abbasid days when listening to music was what Europe would term “Chamber music.” Two other instruments, which had independent usage were the psaltery (qanun) and the rebec (rabab). The former was a special solo instrument, whilst the latter was often used to accompany the chanted verse of poets, which had been its function in pagan days.

Since Arabic was still the language of the “classes” in Persia, one imagines in which much has passed from the immaculate and indefectible in Arabic poetry and song was heard in Iranian lands as late as the fourth/tenth century, notably under the Saffarids and Samanids. The Persians, less intrigued by the lengthy Arabic ode (qasidah), produced a pure love song (ghazal) and the quatrain (ruba‘i), one class of the latter, the ruba‘iyy taranah, showing its musical adaptation. The melodic modes in Persia were far more numerous in different tonal structures than those of the Arabs and they retained their older fanciful names such as ‘ushshaq, Isfahan, salmaki, etc. although most of them had scalar affinities with the Arabian finger modes (asabi‘). Their most favoured instruments were the harp (chang), pandore (tanbur), lute (barbat), double chested lute (rabab), spiked voil (kamanchah), flute (nay), and tambourine (da‘irah).

The Baghdad Caliphate had gone into the protective custody of the Persian Buwaihids (320 - 404/932 - 1015), at whose palaces - as well as at those of the Caliphs - music was subventioned with liberality. In fact, the regime of ‘Izz al-Daulah was condemned because of its infatuation for music.⁸⁰ ‘Adud al-Daulah was more discreetly interested in the art.⁸¹ However, the power of the Baghdad Caliphate - both politically and culturally - was gradually slipping away, and the centre of Islamic culture passed meanwhile to the Fatimids of Egypt. Here Amir Tamim, the son of al-Mu‘izz (d. 365/975), was absolutely appassioned of music,⁸² and no less could be said of al-Zahir (d. 427/1036), who spent fabulous gold on minstrels.⁸³

The Persian traveller Nasir-i Khusrau wrote about the splendour of the Fatimid military bands a little later.⁸⁴ One of its famous men, al-Sadafi, better known as ibn Yunus (d. 399/1009), wrote a book the title of which sparkles with delight. It was called the “Book of the Unanimities and Felicities in the Praises of the Lute” (Kitab al-‘Uqud w-al-Su‘ud fi Ausaf al-

‘Ud).⁸⁵ Another, great historian, al-Musabbihi (d. 420/1029), compiled a book of “Selected Songs and Their Significance” (Mukhtar al-Aghani wa Ma‘aniha).⁸⁶ We still discern the Turkomanian pressure on Egypt’s music, due to the crowd of men from the Qirghiz steppes in its army, and that was only one facet of the “new phase of culture” which arose in Egypt in those days.⁸⁷

Although Muslim Spain had “advanced with incredible swiftness to a height of culture that was the envy of Europe,” the break-up of the central government and the rise of the “Party Kings” halted the progress of the arts for a time. Yet here and there were some hallowed spots of culture. Indeed, a few of these “Party Kings” (muluk al-tawa’if) ‘made their Courts the homes of poets and minstrels,” as al-Maqqari testifies. The last of the ‘Abbasid kings of Seville, al-Mu‘tamid (d. 484/1091), was not only a distinguished poet, but a singer and a lutanist, as was his son ‘Ubaid Allah al-Rashid.⁸⁸ The song-poems of ibn Hamdis (d. 527/1132) were the delight of the Sevillians. When the Almoravid Berber hordes from the Maghrib suppressed the “Party Kings,” music came to be looked upon as one of the “wiles of Satan,” although the older Muslim inhabitants took little heed of such rebukes.

Their successors, the Almohades, under the fiat of ibn Tumart (d. 524/1130), made decrees against music more stringent, even to the destruction of instruments. Yet there were many who opposed these fanatical legists, including ibn Quzman (d. 555/1160), the song-writer par excellence, who chided with puritans saying, “The faqih cries ‘Repent’; but how can one be contrite with the air so fragrant, the birds warbling, the flowers perfuming, and music (ghina) from a clever reed-piper (zamir) and a heavenly voice?” Yet, in spite of fulminations, music and songs were heard on every side.

The newly fashioned zajal and muwashshah were so easy to set to melodies that the same tune would be adapted to different words, as ibn Quzman tells us, and songs spread like the wind in the matter of months as far afield as Baghdad, as ibn Sa‘id al-Maqhribi (d. 685/1286) avers.⁸⁹ Among the best known Andalusian composers were Abu al-Hussain al-Hamrah al-Qarnati and Ishaq ibn Sim‘an al-Qartabi. The highest in the land were enchanted by the art. Ibn Bajjah (d. 533/1138), according to ibn Khaqan, “spent his life singing and playing,” whilst a celebrated physician Yahya ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Bahdabah, wrote zajals for the accompaniment of wind instruments.⁹⁰

Returning to the hub of Islam, we find that the Saljuq Turks had irrupted into the land, Baghdad having been entered in 447/1055. Their rulers took charge of the Caliphs, and they and their later atabegs controlled the world of Islam from the borders of Afghanistan to the frontiers of Greece. All of them were keen lovers of music, and the favoured minstrel of Sanjar (d. 552/1157) was Kamal al-Zaman, whose cognomen indicates his renown.⁹¹ Further east the Ghaznawids and Ghurids were patronizing minstrelsy at their courts. Mahmud of Ghaznah (d. 421/1030) had the poet Farrukhi as his panegyrist, who was also a “skilful performer on the harp” (chang).⁹²

Among the Ghurids of Afghanistan and Hindustan, especially at the Court of Ghiyath al-Din ibn Sam (d. 599/1200), music was encouraged bountifully.⁹³ Greater still was the favour shown to the art by ‘Ala al-Din Muhammad (d. 617/1220), the Shah of Khwarizm, who gave Fakhr al-Din al-Razi protection.⁹⁴ In Baghdad the chief minstrel of the Caliph al-Musta‘sim (d. 656/1258) was Safi al-Din ‘Abd al-Mu‘min (d. 693/1294). His greater fame is as an author notably for his “Book on Prosody” (Fi ‘Ulum al-‘Arud w-al-Qawafi w-al-Badi‘), but greater still for his two books on the science of music which brought him world renown.⁹⁵ In the year 656/1258, the Mughul conqueror Hulagu, invaded the famous city of Baghdad, the centre of the world of Islam, and captured it. Ibn Khaldun avers that 600,000 inhabitants were slaughtered, including the Caliph and his family, and although Safi al-Din was spared because of his eminence as a musician, scholars and litterateurs were massacred as cruelly as libraries, colleges, and palaces were destroyed.

These Mughul barbarians, who had become masters from the borders of Egypt to India, were converted to Islam, and, softened by its culture, they made music one of the delights of their Courts, and the murdered Caliph’s minstrel, Safi al-Din, passed into the service of the Mughul vizier Shams al-Din al-Juwaini. Ibn Taghribirdi tells us that Abu Sa‘id (d. 736/1335) “cultivated music, played well on the lute, and composed songs,” and ibn Battutah (d. 778/1377) describes the royal galley at Baghdad, flanked by boats filled with musicians and singers.⁹⁶ By this time Persian, not Arabic, had become the language of art and science in the Middle East, and from Persian works we are able to see what types of instruments were in vogue.

In addition to the older lute and pandore was a new arch-lute (mughni) and a rectangular psaltery (nuzha), together with a Turkoman viol (ghishak), whilst the pandore was more particularly described as a two-stringed (dutar) or a three stringed (sitar) instrument.⁹⁷ It was Egypt alone that offered a stubborn resistance to the Mughuls, and its Mamluk Sultans, like their predecessors, the Ayyubids, favoured music and song. Here the muwashshah, had been popularized by ibn Sana’ al-Mulk (d. 608/1211) in his Dar al-Tiraz, and al-Saruji (d. 693/1294) bettered the instruction as a song-writer, while ibn Mukarram (d. 711/1311) edited a collection of older songs which had wide acceptance.⁹⁸

Al-Nuwairi (d. 732/1332) also devoted much attention to the subject in his Nihayat al-Arab.⁹⁹ It was the Sultan Qala’un (d. 689/1290) who built the hospital (maristan) at Cairo, where “music soothed the wakeful hours to the sufferers.”¹⁰⁰ An outstanding feature of the Bahri and Burji Mamluk Sultans was their military bands,¹⁰¹ which opened the eyes of the Crusaders to the value, both tactically and musically, of martial music.¹⁰²

Sind had been conquered by Muslim armies as far back as the year 92/711, but it was with Ghurids of Afghanistan that modern Pakistan had its real foundation 571/1175 at the hands of Muhammad Ghuri (d. 602/1206). Here, the powerful fuqaha’ were able to enforce views in condemnation of music upon Iltutmish, the Sultan of Delhi (d.633/1235), who, later, having been impressed by the sama’ of the Chishti darwish fraternity, soon abolished that ban against the art, when the plaintive chanting of its

qawwals became a distinctive feature throughout the land, as we know from the *Siyar al-Auliya'*. Secular music was openly encouraged by Firuz Shah I (d. 634/1236), and the *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* says that his bounty to musicians led him to be called "a second Hatim."

Under Balban (d. 686/1287) one evening per week was devoted to audition of music. The succeeding Khalji Sultans, the first of whom was Firuz Shah II (d. 696/1295), were all music-lovers. At the Court of the latter were Hamid Rajah, Nasir Khan, and Muhammad Shah Hutki, all noted musicians, although the greatest of them all was Amir Khusrau (d. 725/1325), who was "no less notable as a musician than a poet." He had served at the Courts of the two preceding Sultans. In his *Qiran al-Sa'dain*, he has described the Court music of his time. In the *I'jaz Khusrawi*, he tells of the rivalry between the Khurasan and Hindustan minstrels at Court. It is said that a fusion between Persian and Indian music was brought about by him, and in the book called *Rag Darpan* many novelties in music are attributed to him.

Music was still to the fore with the Sayyid dynasty, and Mubarak Shah II (d. 837/1433) was deeply attached to the art. On the elevation of the Lodhi Sultans to the throne in 855/1451 there was a change of attitude towards music. Yet Sikandar II (d. 923/1517) employed four exceptional performers on the harp (*chang*), psaltery (*qanun*), pandore (*tanbur*) and gourd-lute (*bin*), only the last named instrument being of indigenous origin. In the extreme north the kings of Kashmir were ruling a famed "land of song" since 735/1334. Among the most cultured of them was Zain al-'Abidin (d. 872/1467), during whose reign music schools were established by Persian and Turanian teachers, which won some celebrity.

In the Deccan, one of the kings of Gulbargah named Taj al-Din Firuz Shah (d. 825/1422) had 700 damsels who were skilled musicians and dancers. His brother, however, was never absent from the darwish ceremonials, where the religious chant gave him contentment of a different kind. Both Ahmad Shah I (d. 839/1435) and Ahmad Shah II (d. 862/1457) were captivated by their Court minstrelsy, and the wife of the latter, says *Firishtah*, was without equal in her musical accomplishments. The singers and dancers of Muhammad Shah II (d. 887/1482) came from Georgia, Circassia, and Albyssinia. So indulgent was his successor Mahmud Shah II (d. 924/1518) in his passion for music that minstrels were attracted to his Court not only from Delhi and Lahore, but also from distant Persia and Khurasan. Truly, Muslim India was in the forefront in music among her sister nations.¹⁰³

Persia was reawakened culturally under the beneficent Muzaffarids. The renowned Shah Shuja' of Shiraz (d. 786/1384) patronized the minstrel Yusuf Shah and the music theorist al-Jurjani (d. 816/1413). The art was particularly conserved by the Jalairid Sultans of Iraq. Hussain (d. 784/1382) actually neglected his realm through his abiding love for music, whilst the greatest living musicians, Ridwan Shah and 'Abd al-Qadir ibn Ghaibi (d. 840/1435), were the chief Court minstrels of Sultan Ahmad (d. 813/1410).¹⁰⁴ When Timur (d. 807/1405) had accomplished his world-wide conquests, most of the above kingdoms passed into the night, and

Samarqand became the artistic as well as the political centre of the Timurid Empire.

During the reign of Shah Rukh, (d. 850/1447) the Court minstrelsy rose to perfection, and the fetes have been eloquently described by ‘Abd al-Razzaq.¹⁰⁵ Yusuf-i Andakani was his favoured minstrel for he “had no equal ... in the seven climes.”¹⁰⁶ Miran Shah (d. 810/1408), the brother of Shah Rukh, was also infatuated with music as discoursed by al-Khatib al-Mausili and Ardashir-i Changi. Baisunghur (d. 836/1433), the son of Shah Rukh, was devoted to Amir Shahi (d. 857/1453), possessed of three-fold talents as minstrel, poet, and painter. Under the guidance of the vizier Mir ‘Ali Shir (d. 907/1501) the rule of the last of the great Timurid rulers Hussain Mirza Baiqara (d. 911/1506) became the byword of the cultured world of Islam, and the names of his minstrels - Qui-i Muhammad, Shaikhi Nayi and Hussain ‘Udi - became a part of history.¹⁰⁷

In Muslim Spain, in spite of the increasing re-conquests by the Spaniards in the seventh/13th century, the Moors still held that part of the land known as Granada. Here they were hemmed in from all sides, and in 897/1492, they were forced to capitulate. Then followed the most despicable persecutions and ruthless destruction of Arabic literature which had been treasured for centuries. Moorish music and instruments were declared anathema, although that did not prevent the Moors from finding solace from their woes in their music. All that the Spanish priesthood could do was to issue edicts forbidding their congregations to listen to those mouriscas and aravias of the Moors.¹⁰⁸ In the mid-tenth/16th century, they were not only denied their national costume, language, and customs, but forbidden the zumrah and lailah, i.e. the musical gatherings.¹⁰⁹

The whole of the Maghrib - from Morocco to Tunis - had been deeply influenced by the culture of Andalus, and both the Marinid rulers of Morocco and the Hafsid rulers of Tunis had encouraged music at their Courts. Yet more bountiful was the revivification of the art due to the exodus of the Muslim exiles from Spain. The first of these arrived at Tlemcen after the fall of Cordova in 633/1236, followed by another to Tunis at the capture of Seville in 646/1248. Then came refugees to Tetuan after the submission of Granada in 897/1492, which was succeeded by an emigration to Fez from Valencia in 943/1526, and finally the wholesale expulsion of 1018/1609.

These newcomers brought a cultural benefit to the Maghrib, and the Moriscos became the artistic and literary aristocracy of the land. In music, one can actually trace the regional variations in classical Granati or Andalusian art to those immigrants. The Cordovan interpretation belongs to Algiers and Tlemcen, the Sevillian style is that of Tunis, while the Granadan and Valencian modes are to be found in Fez and Tetuan.¹¹⁰

The Ottoman Turks now became a power in the world of Islam to be reckoned with. Having settled originally in Anatolia, they soon extended their power in every direction, and by the year 857/1453 Constantinople and the whole of the Byzantine Empire were in their hands. After defeating the Shah of Persia, they took Kurdistan and Mesopotamia into their hegemony, finally to overrun Syria, Egypt, and Arabia after crushing the Bahri

Mamluks in 922/1517. From that date Turkish music began to assert itself gradually in Arabic-speaking lands and beyond, even as far as Tunis and Algiers where Turkish beys and deys were masters.

From remote times to ozan or bard of the Turkish tribes, with chogur or qopuz in hand - they were lute-like instruments - entertained the people with the turku or folk-song. That had not changed, but a new era had dawned since Constantinople had become - by edict only - the pivot of Islam, and it was no wonder that artists, musicians, poets, and literary men should have sought fame and fortune in the new capital, as well as in the pashaliks of Cairo, Damascus, Mosul and Baghdad. Instrumental music had ever delighted the Turks, and the overture (pishrau) and the decorative "divisions" (taqasim), which had been constituent parts of the old Perso-Arabian naubah, were in great demand.

The poets sang eloquently of the joy of instrumental music in the ninth/15th century, notably Nizami of Quniayh and Ahmad Pasha, and Sultan Murad II (d. 855/1451) enticed the finest minstrels to his Court. Nor should we allow the influence of the maulawiyah or Jalaliyyah dervish communities, founded by Jalal al-Din Rumi (d. 672/1273), to escape our notice, since they hymns (ilahis) had a great spiritual influence. In the next century, the poets Fighani, Fusuli, and Rewani still continued to rhapsodize on music's spell. The instruments praised were mostly of Arabian or Persian origin, although the Turkish qopuz had its share of appreciation.¹¹¹ New instruments came on view.

Quduz Farhadi invented the qaraduzan, a lute of three strings, and a son of Hamdi Chelebi (d. 915/1509) introduced two new pandores called the yonqar and yaltmah.¹¹² During the 11th/17th century music took a prominent part in the general cultural improvement, as we know from a manuscript of Cairo by Mulla Muhammad ibn As'ad, of the time of Sultan Ahmad (d. 1026/1617), which contains the lives of the famous Turkish musicians.¹¹³ Ewliya Chelebi was famed in those days. His teacher was 'Umar Gulshani, who was taught by Ibrahim Gulshani of Cairo (d. 940/1533). The description of the musical life of Constantinople is contained in the "Travels of Ewliya Efendi" (Siyahat Nameh); much of it, based as it is on the Ausaf-i Qustantiniyyah (Praises of Constantinople) composed in the year 1048/1638, gives precise details of musicians and instruments, guilds and makers, in the great emporium of the Near East.¹¹⁴

In that century there arose the poet-minstrels (saz sha'yrleri) who were honoured not only in military but also in religious circles. One direct influence from outside came after the capture of Baghdad in 1048/1638 by Murad IV, who took back with him to Constantinople the Court minstrel of the Persian Shah 'Abbas I, named Shah Quli, whose performances on the shashtar had pleased him.¹¹⁵ The late Ra'uf Yekta thought that the advent of Shah Quli "opened a new era in the history of Turkish music."¹¹⁶

In the Muslim east the 'Adil Shahs of Bijapur, the first of whom was Yusuf 'Adil Shah (d. 916/1511), were revealing themselves as munificent patrons of musicians. Yusuf 'Adil Shah had a skill in music almost equal to that of a professional and even essayed composition. Isma'il (d. 941/1534) rather favoured Turanian and Persian music at his Court. Per contra, Ibrahim

I (d. 965/1557) preferred the arts of the Deccan. Ibrahim II (d. 1035/1626) is claimed to have written a work on music called Nauras with an introduction penned by Zuhuri, the Persian poet (d. 1027/1618).

The Qutbi Kings of Golkunda were no less enthralled by minstrelsy. Sultan Quli (d. 940/1543) brought Persian customs to his Court - which lasted 40 years - and his military naubah sounded at the five hours of prayer. In those days the Gwalior School of Music was the subject of conversation. Its renown was due chiefly to Rajah Man Singh (d. 932/1517), and the most famous of its students was Tan Sin, who had been taught by Muhammad Ghauth. Another of the same circle was Bakhshu, whose dhurpads became the repertory of the best minstrels. When Babur (d. 936/1530) became the first of the Mughul Emperors of Hindustan (India), most of the preceding dynasties were absorbed. He had been reared in Courts where music prevailed.¹¹⁷

From the statements in the Babur Nameh it would seem that the Emperor was even a composer, and it is believed that his compositions once existed.¹¹⁸ His son Humayun (d. 963/1556) also encouraged music, and sincerely believed that the Sufi dance was the complete expression of the hikmat-i ilahi. At Court, musicians had their special days for audition, and some of them - 'Abd Allah Qanuni, Muhammad Surna'i, and the vocalists of Hafiz Dost Muhammad Khwafi and Ustad Yusuf Maudud - are registered in the Akbar Nameh. The Court of the renowned Akbar (d. 1014/1605), as described in the A'in-i Akbari of Abu al-Fadl, shows how important music was both to the policy and the taste of the Emperor.

The musicians were formed into seven groups, 36 of whom are named in Abu al-Fadl's work. He was catholic in his choice for not only were minstrels selected from famed Kashmir and Gwalior, but the best of them came from Herat and Khurasan, and they were singers, chanters, and instrumentalists. More than half of these had Muslim names. The Emperor is said to have himself composed 200 items of music. Among the art treasures of his day there is one depicting the arrival of Tan Sin at his Court. Abu al-Fadl tells us of the widely spread net that was cast to capture the best of vocal music - the dhurpad of Gwalior, the chind of the Deccan, the qual and taranah of Delhi, the kajri or zikri of Gujrat, the bangula of Bengal, and the chutkalah of Jaunpur.

Jahangir (d. 1037/1627) followed his father in his love of music, has favoured minstrel being Shauqi, who sang Hindi and Persian songs in way that "cleared the rust from human hearts." There is a portrait of him in Fox Strangway's Music of Hindustan.¹¹⁹ Many other musicians of Jahangir's Court are mentioned in the Tuzuk-i Jahangiri and the Iqbal Nameh. In the first named work is described the military band of this Emperor. Shah Jahan (d. 1068/1658) made the Court music one of the glories of his reign. It was he who collected the dhurpads of the Gwalior composer Bakhshu, which numbered one thousand items. On the wedding of his son, Aurangzib (d. 1119/1707), he expended a small fortune on music alone.

Alas, when Aurangzib ascended the throne he dispensed with his Court minstrelsy, to the dismay of the people at large. Fortunately, Bahadur Shah (d. 1124/1713) reinstated the musicians and raised them to mansab ranks.

By this time, owing to internecine strife, the great Mughul Empire began its political and cultural decline.

Of the state of music in Persia during the 11th/17th century, we know but little save what the pictorial art reveals, although at the brilliant Court of ‘Abbas I (d. 1038/1629) the older instrumental art still held its own.¹²⁰ Four European travellers - Raphael du Mans, Chardin, Pouillet, and later Kaempfer - supply many important details. A picture of the Court minstrels of Safi I (d. 1052/1642) - actually portraits - has been preserved.¹²¹ Persia seems to have been less troubled by the objections of the legists to al-sama‘ than was the case elsewhere. Perhaps they still remembered Hafiz who once said, “When the harp is sounding who cares about the objector?”

Yet there were some Persians, for example, Muhammad ibn Jalal Ridwi (d. 1028/1619) and ‘Abd al-Jalil ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman (d. 1061/1651), who replied at length to the legists.¹²² Incidentally, Chardin shows that the Indian vina was used in Persia as the kingira,¹²³ and even Mersanne (1046/1636) delineated it in Europe.¹²⁴ Strangely enough, it is mentioned by the Arabic writer al-Jahiz (d. 255/869), who writes it - probably a scribal error - as kinkila, and it is also specified by al-Jurjani (d. 816/1413).¹²⁵ By the 12th/18th century, when Nadir Shah (d. 1160/1747) brought a brief resurgence to Persia’s greatness, many had disappeared, although the dulcimer (santir) found a place.

Iraq and Mesopotamia, now in the hand of the Turks, favoured only the Turanian art. Baghdad was the centre of this imported culture, and it spread to Hillah and Basrah. To the north, Kurdish tastes prevailed. The most artistic centres were those where the Mamluk pashas had control, and where Georgians and other Caucasians were given preferment, which meant that quite a new Oriental type of music gained ground.¹²⁶ Karsten Niebuhr, after visiting Baghdad in that century, gave a fair description of its music. He noted the use of what he called a base continue by accompanying instruments, although he seems to have meant a point d’orgue or pedal point.¹²⁷ He mentions and delineates three types of pandore, and the rectangular and spiked viols.

Syria was little better off, as we know from the books of Alexander and Patrick Russell written the 12th/18th century.¹²⁸ They aver that the Allepans were “fond of music,” and in their performances the instruments generally were well in tune, and...kept excellent time.

Notes

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11. Loc. cit
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13. Cf. Cicero, who spoke of the eyes as "windows of the soul."
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19. J. Robson, op. cit., p. 93.
20. Ibn 'Abdi Rabihi, al-'Iqd al-Farid, Cairo, 1305/1887, 3, p. 177, tr. H.G. Farmer, in Music: The Priceless Jewel, Bearsden, 1942, p. 6.
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23. Al-Ghazālī, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 206.
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28. Al-Isfahani, op. cit., 26, pp. 13 - 20.
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Chapter 58: Music (continued)

C. The Music Theorists

“There is one and the same principle which, if prevailing in the at tempered particles of the elements, is equipoise of temperament, if produced in tones in pure and delightfully interval, if apparent in gesture is grace, if observable in languages in rhetoric and eloquence, if created in the limbs is beauty, if the mental faculties is equity.”

Jalal al-Din Dawwani: Akhlaq-i Jalali.

In addition to those who conceived music to be “like a fan” on a sultry day were those to whom it was “like medicine,” as we have heard in the opening fanfare to this chapter. That was precisely how the Pythagoreans viewed music, and it was from them that the notions of the “theory of numbers,” the “harmony of the spheres,” and the “doctrines of the ethos (tathir)” were handed down to Muslim peoples as methodical systems, although the history of the Semitic and Aryan races in pre-Islamic days teems with those beliefs. In fact, the Greeks derived their theses on those matters from the ancient Semites of Babylonia-Assyria, as shown elsewhere.¹

Iamblichus affirms that Pythagoras learned those secrets from the Chaldaei of Babylon,² and books on music and arithmetic by Pythagoras were known in Arabic,³ as were the works of his disciples Iamblichus, Porphyry, Proclus and Nicomeachus.⁴ Perhaps the first impact came through the pseudo-Aristotelian production known as the “Book of Government” (Kitab al-Siyasah), said to have been translated into Arabic, via Syriac, by Yuhanna ibn Batriq (d. c. 200/815),⁵ and this is what we read therein on the influence of music and the harmony of the spheres. Mental diseases are amenable to cure by means of musical instruments which convey to the soul the harmonious sounds which are (ultimately) due to the motions of the spheres in their natural movements.

When those harmonious sounds are interpreted through human agencies, they produce music which is enjoyed by the human soul, because the harmony of the spheres is mirrored in the harmony of man’s nature, which is fundamental to life. That work was translated from Arabic into Latin as the *Secretum Secretorum* about the year 530/1135, and won considerable popularity during the European Middle Ages.⁶

Following Pythagoras, the cosmic order of things was explained under the proposition that “everything is number,” and since mundane music was among the ectypes of numerical proportion, the harmonious order of things covered both melody and rhythm, the various genres of which could banish depression, assuage grief, halt passion and cure sickness. The theory of numbers fascinated Muslim peoples because, unlike geometry, which depended on visual appreciation, it was purely mental sciences. The Pythagorean scale in music, which was based on the “theory of numbers,” was known quite early to the Persians and the Arabs, and the Khurasanians even improved on it.

Islam, having no racial boundaries, the special musical characteristics of the Persian, Arab, Syrian, and Turkoman found open acceptance in the capitals and cities of the Caliphate. Because of these national peculiarities it

soon became evident that some sort of fixation of method and system was urgent, and this expediency was brought to fruition by an Arab named ibn Misjah (d. c. 97/715) who, having travelled in Syria and Persia and taken lessons from practitioners and theorists, conceived a system of music theory and a method of practice which were adaptable to existing conditions in Arabic-speaking lands. These, we are told, were adopted generally.⁷

Thus were the eight Arabian melodic modes (asabi') classified in two groups of four each: the first in the course (majra) of the binsir, i.e. using the major third (408 cents), and the second in the course of wusta, i.e. using the minor third (294 cents).⁸ At the same time eight rhythmic modes (iqa'at) were formulated, also in two groups of four each, those numbers being in accordance with cosmic theories. All the song books of the period, from Yunus al-Katib (d. c. 148/765) to al-Isfahani (d. 356/967), specify the melodic and rhythmic modes of each song.⁹ Meanwhile, a neutral third (355 cents), i.e. an interval half-way between the major and minor third. It was introduced by a certain lutanist named Zalzal (d. 175/791),¹⁰ although a somewhat similar three-quarter tone had existed in the pre-Islamic measured pandore (tanbur mizani).¹¹

Another wayward interval was the Persian minor third (303 cents) which was sharper than the Pythagorean interval (298 cents),¹² and it was these alien intervals which both al-Isfahani and ibn 'Abdi Rabbihi blames for the decadence of the pure Arabian music in the third/ninth century. There are many earlier theorists of music, notably Yunus al-Kativ (d. c. 148/765) who wrote a "Book of Melody" (Kitab al-Naghm). That was also the title of the book by al-Khalil (d. 175/791), who also compiled a "Book on Rhythm" (Kitab al-Iqa'). He was the "father of prosody".¹³ A more important treatise appears to have been the "Book of Melody and Rhythm" by Ishaq al-Mausili (d. 236/850), and that was accomplished, says al-Isfahani, without the author's knowing an iota of the work of Euklid.¹⁴ None of these works has come down to us, but we know precisely what al-Mausili's theoretical principles were from the Risalah of his disciple ibn al-Munajjim (d. 300/912).

In the mid-third/ninth century a new world dawned for those interested in that group of the sciences known as the quadrivium, i.e. the 'ulum riyadiyyah, which included the theory of music. At "House of Learning" (Bait al-Kikmar) in Baghdad were scholars who had translated the great Greek writers on Music into Arabic, including Aristotle, Aristoxenus, Nicomachus, Euclid, Ptolmy, and probably Aristides Quintillanus.¹⁵ The first to avail himself of the new learning was al-Kindi (d. c. 260/873), and three or four - out of a dozen - of his works on the subject have been preserved. The entire gamut of the science of music is covered by him in his several extant works, two of which have been translated or extracted.¹⁶ He not only appreciated music as a science for mathematicians and joy to auditors, but as a prescription for physicians to administer to the afflicted mind and body.

As de Boer says, al-Kindi applied mathematics to medicine in his theory of compound remedies, like the effect of music on geometrical proportions.¹⁷ Everything within the entire macrocosm was linked together.

Each note on a lute was connected with melodic mode (tariqah), rhythm, and sentiment. These, in turn, were conjoined with the planets, seasons, elements, humours, colours, and perfumes. In his minute description of the lute - the earliest which we possess - "the four gold things" dominated all else. There are four strings, tuned in fourths, and four frets. The strings from the lowest to the highest were four-ply, three-ply, two-ply and one-ply.¹⁸

His disciples, the Ikhwan al-Safa (fourth/tenth century), followed him in most things, but made the strings compounded of 64, 48, 36, and 27 strands respectively.¹⁹ They assigned to every melodic and rhythmic mode a specific influence (tathir), a doctrine which held sway in Islamic lands up to the 14th/20th century. His most illustrious student was al-Sarakhsi (d. 288/899), but these five books on music have not survived.²⁰ Thabit ibn Qurrah (d. 288/901) is credited with eight treatises on music, yet not a page has come down to us.²¹ Other theorists were Mansur ibn Talhah (d. c. 299/910), a follower of al-Kindi, ibn Tahir al-Khuza'i (d. 300/913), one of the most learned in the philosophy of music,²² ibn al-Munajjim (d. 300/912) whose "Treatise on Music" (Risalah fi al-Musiqi) still exists,²³ Qusta ibn Luqa (d. c. 300/912),²⁴ and Abu Bakr al-Razi (d. 313/925) who penned a "Book of Summings-up of Music" (Kitab fi Jumal al-Musiqi).²⁵ The fame of all these was swept aside on the emergence of the "Second Master" (i.e. second only to Aristotle) whose name became known in Europe as Alfarabius.

Al-Farabi (Alfarabius) was a Turkoman, although educated in Iraq. Celebrated chiefly as a philosopher, he also takes front rank as a music theorist, being known especially for his "Major Book on Music" (Kitab al-Musiqi al-Kabir) which was the greatest contribution to the subject up to his time. He tells us that almost all the Greek works on music had been translated into Arabic. Most of these he studied, although he mentions no one by name, save Themistius. Unlike the latter, who was not a practitioner in music, al-Farabi was an instrumental performer,²⁶ and whilst most of his theoretical discussion was based on Greek authors, on the practical side he supplied original material not to be found elsewhere, especially in his description of the existing instruments of music among the Arabs.

Being a good mathematician and physicist, he was fully equipped to deal with speculative theory ('ilm al-nazari). Although he indebted to the Greeks, he avoided their errors in that he did not agree that sound is heard in water in less degree than in air, nor that wool when struck produces no sound, as Aristotle tells us.²⁷ Neither did al-Farabi repeat the blunder of Nicomachus that Pythagoras discovered the consonances by comparing the weight of the hammers in the blacksmith's shop,²⁸ a legend repeated by Gaudentius of Boethius.²⁹ His treatment of the influence (tathir) of music leaves the Greeks and al-Kindi far behind, as one would readily expect from a naturalistic philosopher.

Further east was Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Khwarizmi (d. c. 370/980) who was in the service of the vizier of the Samanid Prince, Nuh II. He compiled an encyclopedic "Keys to the Sciences" (Mafatih al-'ulum), one key of which unlocked the door of music.³⁰ Another scientist, Abu al-Wafa' (d. 388/998), penned a "Compendium on the Science of Rhythm"

(Mukhhhtasar fi Fann al-Iqa'),³¹ while in distant Muslim Spain a "Treatise on the Composition of Melodies" (Risalah fi tallif al-Alhan) was produced by 'Ali ibn Sa'id al-Andalusi (fourth/tenth century).³² The contemporary Ikhwan al-Safa has been signalized already, especially in their spiritual approach to music. Yet they were well versed in the science of acoustics. One recalls how the famous German physicist Helmholtz argued that musical tones are distinguished by their force, pitch, and quality, and that the force of a musical tone increases and diminishes with the amplitude of the oscillations of the particles of the sounding body.³³

Preece and Stroh questioned the definition saying that loudness does not result from amplitude of vibration only, but that it also depends upon the quantity of air in vibration.³⁴ The Ikhwan al-Safa had proclaimed that view over 800 years earlier when they said, "Hollow bodies, like vessels...will resound for a long time after they are struck, because the air within them reverberates time after time until it becomes still. Consequently, the wider the vessels are, the greater the sound, because more air is put into vibration.

Those encyclopedic philosophers are also recognized the spherical propagation of sound,³⁵ whilst the Aristotelian De Audibilibus (802a) had stated that "the direction of sound follows a straight line."³⁶ Meanwhile, the tractates of the Ikhwan al-Safa were being introduced into Muslim Spain by Maslamah al-Majriti (d. 398/1007), and so widespread was their circulation that the name of al-Majriti was attached to them in that land.³⁷

From Turkestan there came the world-renowned ibn Sina (d. 428/1037), better known in Europe as Avicenna, and it was in his widely read book entitled "The Cure (al-Shifa') that a chapter (fann) was devoted to music. Like al-Farabi, he passed over the Pythagorean dreams of the "harmony of the spheres," being content to deal with the art per se which, as he knew from personal experience, was often a cure from mortal woes. His treatment of the theory of music is different from that of al-Farabi because what was practiced in Bukhara, Hamadan, and Isfahan was alien to that in Syrian. The fretting of the lute was certainly dissimilar, the first semi-tonal fret (mujannab) being the diatonic interval (112 cents), whereas elsewhere the semi-tone was the limma (90 cents), whilst the Zalzalian neutral third was slightly flatter (343 cents).³⁸

He gives the notation of a few of the melodic modes, and from that one sees the Persians were retaining their fanciful names of them, such as Salmaki, Nawa, etc. These Persians terms crept into Arabian music in the third/ninth century, at first their scales agreed with those of the old Arab "Finger modes" (asabi'), but later indiscriminately. All the old Arabian instruments are mentioned together with a few strangers, viz. the 'anqa', evidently a long-necked instrument, the salbaq, probably the Greek symbyke (the Aramaic sabbeka), and the sanj jinni or sini, seemingly the Chinese metalophone.³⁹ Ibn Sina also introduced a chapter on music in a shorter work entitled "The Deliver" (al-Najat) which was translated into Persian - as the Danish Nameh-i 'Ala'i - by his student Abu 'Ubaid al-Juzajani.⁴⁰

Another of his disciples was Abu Mansur ibn Zailah (d. 440/1048), whose "Book of Sufficiency of Music" (Kitab al-Kafi fi al-Musiqi) is even

more valuable than the above treatises of ibn Sina. Although Baron d'Erlanger thought otherwise, it contains much material not to be found elsewhere, especially on the practical art of music, and also passages from a treatise by al-Kindi which has not been known hitherto.⁴¹

Strange to say, al-Kindi had written a work entitled "The Book on the Division of Canon" (Risalah fi Qismat al-Qanun), which might have been a commentary on Euclid's Sectio Canonis since we know that he was acquainted with the book.⁴² Yet it was not until the emergence of a scientist of the eminence of ibn al-Haitham (d. 430/1039) that we do find a "Commentary on the Canon of Euclid" (Sharh Qanun Uqlaid), together with "Discourse on the Commentary on the Harmonics" (Maqalah fi Sharh al-[A]rmuniqi), the latter being probably the Introctio Harmonica of Cleonides.⁴³ A far more remarkable book was ibn al-Haitham's "Treatise on the Influence of Melodies on the Souls of Animals" (Risalah fi Tathirat al-Lahun al-Musiqiyah fi al-Nafus al-Hayawaniyyah).⁴⁴

Unfortunately, we do not know its scope of inquiry because the ruthless hand of time seems to have erased it. Yet it dealt with a set of phenomena which had long enticed the minds of Muslim peoples - the phenomena that the camel's pace could be hastened or retarded by music's power, that horses could be persuaded to drink by its urge, which reptiles could be charmed and stilled, and that birds could be lured by its potency.⁴⁵ Nor should we forget the Andalusian lexicographer ibn Sidah (d. 458/1066) whose Kitab al-Mukhassas contains several sections on music and musical instruments.⁴⁶ There are other famous men of Muslim Spain who "hit the mark" - as the Arabs say - in the science of music, although some of them, owing to the intolerance of the Berber legists, sought other lands where their gifts were appreciated.

One of these was Abu al-Salt Umayyah al-Andalusi (d. 529/1134) who went to Egypt. He not only excelled as a music theorist but as a practical musician as well.⁴⁷ His "Treatise on Music" (Risalah fi al-Musiqi)⁴⁸ must have been an important work since it was translated into Hebrew,⁴⁹ and quoted by Profist Duran.⁵⁰ An outline of its contents has been given in English.⁵¹ His compositions appear to have had some influence in North Africa.⁵² The learned philosopher ibn Bajjah (d. 533/1138) compiled a "Book of Music" (Kitab al-Musiqi)⁵³ which, says ibn Sa'id al-Maghribi, was famed in Western Islamic lands as was al-Farabi's book on Eastern Islamic lands.⁵⁴ He also contributed a "Book of the Soul" (Kitab al-Nafs), doubtless a commentary on Aristotle's De Anima, which deals with the sense of hearing (al-sam') and the physical bases of sound (sout).⁵⁵

Another Andalusian savant was ibn al-Haddad (d. 562/1165). He wrote a work, entitled by Casiri as Musices Discipline, without giving the Arabic equivalent.⁵⁶ Better known was ibn Rashd (d. 593/1198) famed in European books as a philosopher and commentator. In his "Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima" (Sharh fi al-Nafs li Aristatalis)⁵⁷ he naturally treats of the spherical propagation of sound, which was not touched upon by the European writers until Michael Scot translated into Latin which version was printed in 877/1472.

In the Near and Middle East, the names of theorists of music crop up in the pages of cultural history. Abu al-Hakam al-Bahili (d. 550/1155) was highly esteemed as a mathematician and scientist at Baghdad and Damascus. His work on music was “well known.”⁵⁸ More renowned was Ibn al-Naqqash al-Baghdadi (d. 574/1178).⁵⁹ In ‘ilm al-musiqi he was the tutor of Yahya al-Bayasi who was in the service of the Ayyubid Sultan Salah al-Din (d. 591/1193).⁶⁰ Muhammad ibn Abi al-Hakam (d. 576/1180), a son of Bahili, too “had knowledge of the science of music,” in addition to being a good practitioner in it.⁶¹ At the Nizamiyyah College at Baghdad was Kamal al-Din ibn Man‘ah (d. 551/1156); he was “without a rival” in astronomy, conics, music, and mensuration.⁶²

Then there was ‘Alam al-Din Qaisar (d. 649/1251), the “great master of the age in all the mathematical sciences,” a student of Kamal al-Din. Hassan ibn ‘Umar says that ‘Alam al-Din was particularly distinguished for his profound knowledge of music.⁶³ Further East there arose Fakhr al-Din Razi (d. 606/1209), whose “Assembling of the Sciences” (Jami‘al-‘Ulum), an extremely useful encyclopedia, contains chapters in nine sections on the theory of Music. In some respects, he was quite an original thinker.⁶⁴ There is also a small tract on music by Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (d. 672/1274) preserved at Paris, which, however, contains only the elements of the theory of music.⁶⁵

A really important work is one by al-Hassan ibn Ahmad ibn ‘Ali al-Katib (fl. 626/1228) entitled “The Perfection of Knowledge of Music” (Kamal al-Adab al-Ghina’), the solitary manuscript copy of which is to be found in Constantinople. It contains ⁴⁰ sections (abwab) and covers the entire field of music.⁶⁶ Finally, came the famous Safi al-Din ‘Abd al-Mu‘min al-Urmawa al-Baghdadi (d. 693/1294). He was the author of “The Book of Musical Modes” (Kitab al-Adwar) and “The Sharafian Treatise on Musical Proportion” (Risalah al-Sharafiyah fi al-Nasab al-Talifiyyah), which revolutionized the science of music in the Near and Middle East.⁶⁷ He took the scale of the old Khurasanian pandore (tanbur Khurasani) and used its intervallic progression of limman, limman, comma, i.e., 90, 90, 180 cents, as the basis for what came to be called the “Systematist” theory.

The German savant Kiesewetter called him the “Zarlino of the Orient,”⁶⁸ whilst the English musicologist Sir Hubert Parry considered the new scale to be “the most perfect ever devised.”⁶⁹ Riemann, the music historian,⁷⁰ shows that it gives consonances purer than those of the European tempered scale, whilst Helmholtz, the physicist, considered that the theories were “noteworthy in the history of the development of music.”⁷¹ It spread far and wide, and was accepted by Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi (d. 710/1310), the author of the Persian encyclopedia known as “The Jewel of the Crown” (Durrat al-Taj),⁷² and Mahmud al-Amuli of the same century, who compiled “The Precious Things of the Sciences” (Nafa’is al-Funun), also in Persian.⁷³

The theories of Safi al-Din ‘Abd al-Mu‘min are to be seen in the “Treasure-House of Rarities” (Kanz al-Tuhaf) written in the mid-eighth/14th century, although we read in the section on musical instruments in that book that some performers were using older system, i.e., the earlier Person-Arabian

Phythogrean scale of al-Farabi's days.⁷⁴ The books just mentioned were all in Persian, since the Persian renaissance had spread far beyond its frontiers.

Still, Arabic literature held its own in Spain, Egypt, and Iraq, and in the domain of music theory we have many exponents: ibn al-'Ala'i al-Baghdadi (eighth/14th century) in his "Reading of Time in the Art of Melodies" (Qir'at al-Zaman fi'Ilm al-Alhan),⁷⁵ al-Khatib al-Irbili (fl. 731/1329) in "The Jewels of Arrangement in the Knowledge of the Notes: (Jawahir al-Nizam fi Ma'rifat al-Angham),⁷⁶ Muhammad ibn 'Isa ibn Kara (d. 759/1358) in "The Goal of Inquiry in the Science of Melodies and Rhythm" (Ghayat al-Matlun fi Fann al-Angham w-al-Durub),⁷⁷ 'Amr ibn Khidr al-Kurdi (d. 800/1397) in "The Treasury of the Desideratum in the Melodies and Rhythms" (Kanz al-Matlub fe 'Ilm al-Dawa'ir w-al-Durub);⁷⁸ but more important still was ibn al-Tahhan (eighth/14th century), whose "Collector of the Sciences" (Hawa al-Funun) is of extreme value, especially on the construction of instruments of music.⁷⁹

The Persian renaissance had greatly influenced Turkey. This evocation was due chiefly to 'Abd al-Qadir ibn Ghaibi (d. 840/1435), a tremendous personality who had been the chief minstrel at many Courts from Baghdad to Samarqand, and was better known as the author of the "Collector of Melodies" (Jami' al-Alhan) and other works which, with those of Safi al-Din 'Abd al-Mu'min, became the accepted textbooks. The former were somewhat critical of a few axioms of the latter.⁸⁰ Indeed other authors, writing in Arabic, were just as contentious, including the author - probably al-Jurjani (d. 816/1413)⁸¹ - of the "Maulana Mubarak Shah Commentary" and the "Muhammad ibn Murad Treatise" in the British Museum.⁸²

All this reflects the keen critical attitude of these Muslim theorists on music. Although the Persian renaissance had greatly influenced Turkey, which was by this time beginning its political domination of the Near East, Arabic culture still held literary sway in Syria, Egypt, and Iraq. A Turkish writer, Khidr ibn 'Abd Allah, had written a treatise on the "Musical Modes" (Adwar-i Musiqi) for Sultan Murad II, in which he mentions al-Farabi, 'Abd al-Mu'min, Ptolemy, Nicomachus and a certain 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Kirmanji as his authorities,⁸³ while another Turkish author, Ahmad Oghlu Shakhr Allah compiled a book based on the Persian "Treasure House of Rarities" (Kanz al-tuhaf) written in the previous century.⁸⁴

Al-Ladhiqi (d. 900/1494) dedicated his Arabic "Treatise of the Conquest of Music" (Risalat al-Fatihyyah fi al-Musiqi) to the Turkish Sultan Rayazid II.⁸⁵ Meanwhile, ibn Khaldun (d. 808/1406) had written in the famous "Introduction" (Muqaddimah) to his universal history the "Book of Examples" (Kitab al-'Ibar)⁸⁶ with its chapter on music. More important, to the theory and practice of music, was a treatise by al-Maridini (d. 809/1406) called the "Introduction to the Theory and Canons of Melodies" (Muqaddiman fi 'Ilm Qawanin al-Agham). The same writer published a "Commentary in Rajaz verse on the Melodic Modes" (Urjuzah fi Sharah al-Naghamat).⁸⁷

In fact, verse had become a popular, although not a perspicuous - medium for that subject. More satisfying was an anonymous treatise entitled "The Advantage in the Arrangement of the Melodies upon the Times and

the Zodiac” (Fi’ideah fi Tartib al-Angham ‘ala al-Ayyam w-al-Buruj), which reveals that the old conceit in the influence (tathir) of the heavenly spheres was still as strong as ever.⁸⁸ This is also most apparent from the “Treatise Concerning the Knowledge of Melodies” (Risalah fi ‘Ilm al-Angham) by Shihab al-Din al-‘Anjami (ninth/15th century).⁸⁹ On the purely instrumental side is a “Survey of the Concerns and Anxieties in the Explanation of the Instruments of Music” (Kashf al-Humum w-al-Kurub fi Sharh Alat al-Tarab), a most important treatise on music and instruments in the ninth/15th century Egypt, quoting many unknown authorities - Taqi al-Din Muhammad ibn Hassan al-Farabi (or Faryabi), Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ayyub al-Khwarizmi, and others.

The only MS available of this book is in Constantinople.⁹⁰ The names quoted reveal men of Turkoman origin. Two others of that stirps who were music theorists were Sa’d al-Din Kammari (ninth/15th century) who wrote a book on the harp (chang) in the form of a dialogue between master and student, and a Fakhr al-Din al-Khujandi (tenth/16th century) who penned a clever criticism (hashiyah) of Safi al-Din ‘Abd al-Mu’min.

With the dawn of the tenth/16th century came the domination of the Ottoman Turks from Kurdistan to Algeria, and within those boundaries the theory and science of music fell into desuetude. The compendiums of the sciences, which almost always include music, were current - the older Irshad al-Qasid of al-Akfani (d. 749/1348), the Maqalid al-‘Ulum of Jurjani (d. 816/1413), the Unmuzaj al-‘Ulum of al-Fanari (d. 839/1435), and the later Miftah al-Sa’adah of Tashkoprizade (d. 968/1560) dealt with the subject, but in his last work most of it was borrowed from older compendiums.⁹¹

A certain Shams al-Din al-Saidawi al-Dimashqi wrote a treatise called “The Book Concerning the Acquisition of the Melodies” (Kitab fi ma’rifat al-Angham). Like several other such treatises of the period, it was in verse, but it revealed a neoteric device for notation by means of a stave of eight or so lines.⁹² Another tract in rajaz verse was by Nasir al-Din al-‘Ajami.⁹³ Two others in rhymed prose have come down to us.⁹⁴ A really solid work of that century was “The Treatise of the Discoverer in the Science of the Melodies” (Risalt al-Kashif fi ‘Ilm al-Angham) by Muzaffar ibn al-Hussain ibn al-Muzaffar al Haskafi,⁹⁵ while in Morocco, ibn al-Wansharisi (d. 956/1549) contributed a valuable work on “The Natures, Elements and Modes” (Taba’i’, Tubu’, wa Usul).⁹⁶

In the 11th/17th century there lived a certain bu ‘Isami (d. c. 1103/1690) who was the teacher of another music theorist Muhammad ibn Tayyib al-‘Alami (d. 1136/1722), the author of “The Companion of the Performer” (al-Anis al Mutrib), also of Moroccan origin.⁹⁷ Then there was a “Book of the Combinations in the Science of Music and the (Kitab al-Jumu’ fi ‘Ilm al-Musiqi w-al-Tubu’) by ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Fasi (d. 1098/1685).⁹⁸ It must be remembered that Morocco, like Muslim Spain, ignored the scale of the Systematists,” and followed the old Arabian musical system based on the Pythagorean scale with the occasional intrusion of Zalzalian neutral third (355 cents).

In Persian the scale of the “Systematists” was used in the 11th/7th century, the chief authority being Abu al-Wafa’ ibn Sa’id.⁹⁹ Here, treatises

on music abounded, although some of them were trivial in comparison with those of the glorious past. One is named “The Teaching of the Modes” (Ta’lim al-Naghamat), another is the Treatise on the Science of Music” (Risalah ‘Uklum Musiqi),¹⁰⁰ and lastly “The Exquisite Pearl in the Art of Music” (Durr al-naqi fi Fann al-Musiqi). The last was by Ahmad al-Muslim al-Mausili (fl. 1150/1737), but it was in Arabic, having been derived from the Persian work of ‘Abd al-Mu’min al-Balkhi.¹⁰¹

In Muslim India where Persian, Khurasanian, and Turkomanian musicians were favoured side by side with those of India, it is obvious that the former musicians, trained in an art that was in many respects different from that of the Aryan peoples of India, took direction from such books on the theory of music as were known in Persian, just as the Indian musicians turned to Sanskrit sources of information. We know of two Persian books on music theory that were dedicated to the Emperor Akbar (d. 1014/1605). They were the “Excellent of the Modes” (Tahfat al-Adwar) by ‘Inayat Allah ibn Mir Hajj al-Harawi, and the “Treatise on the Science of Music” (Risalah dar ‘Ilm al-Musiqi) by Qasim ibn Dost ‘Ali al-Bakhari.¹⁰²

An Amir of the Court of Aurangzib named Shah Qubad ibn ‘Abd al-Jalil al-Harithi, called Diyanat Khan, caused a collection to be made of Arabic and Persian treatises on music of such authors as al-Kindi, ibn al-Munajjim, al-Farabi, ibn Sina, ibn Zailah, Safi al-Din ‘Abd al-Mu’min, and also of many later writers,¹⁰³ whose works he himself had collated. Two Persians writers appear to have made translations of or adaptations from Sanskrit treatises. One was entitled Rag Darpan issued by a certain Faqir Allah in about the year 1073/1662. Another was Kitab Parjat Sangit written by Mirza Rauzan Zamir (d. c. 1080/1669), praised by Shir Khan Lodhi. A third book was “The Excellent Thing of Hindustan” (Tuhfat al-Hind) by Mirza Khan Muhammad ibn Fakhr al-Din and was dated 1086/1675. ‘Iwad Muhammad Kamil wrote about playing the bin in his Risalah dar ‘Amal Bin wa Thath-i Raghā’i, while Abu al-Hassan Qaisar contributed a book called “The Knowledge of the Melodies” (Ma‘rifat al-Nagham).¹⁰⁴

D. Influence

“Thy neighbour is thy teacher.”

An Arabic Proverb

As mentioned elsewhere,¹⁰⁵ the ancient Near and Middle East had been influencing Greece and Rome from time immemorial. With the dawn of Islam, this stimulation from the Orient increased by leaps and bounds, as the Muslims were on European soil from the second/eighth century in the Iberian Peninsula, and from the ninth/15th century in the Balkans. Culturally, the former impact was a widespread blessing, not only to Spain and Portugal but also to the rest of Europe. The Arabs and Moors comprised some one-tenth of the population of the Iberian Peninsula, and its leisured classes were facile princeps in all the concerned art, literature, and science.

It is not all surprising that this newly imposed civilization from the East should have captivated all eyes, ears, and minds. What we owe to Arabic authors in literature, science, and philosophy, and to Islamic artisans in architecture and the minor arts have been detailed at some length elsewhere

in the present work.¹⁰⁶ Europe's indebtedness in music in Muslim Spain and Portugal has been the favourite theme of the present writer for many years.¹⁰⁷ Of its more general diffusion, a further endeavour should be made to indicate the *primum mobile* which induced other lands to take this exotic art to their hearts.

To the peoples of Islam, music was not merely a diversion of the privileged classes, but the heritage of all, and was, therefore, part and parcel of the social life of the whole community, as the *Ikhwan al-Safa* had thought.¹⁰⁸ That was what the peoples of the Iberian Peninsula found to be the case with the Moors. Of the music of this land before the Muslim invasion in 91 - 93/710 - 712 we know very little. It is true that we read of Isidore of Seville (d. 15/636) whose influence on medieval culture has been lauded to the skies,¹⁰⁹ but what Isidore tells us about music in his *Originum sive Etymologiarum* does not enlighten us on the contemporary music, since almost everything that he has collected under the heading is derived from alien and earlier sources, as Migne has shown.¹¹⁰

In the "Codex Toletanus" (second/eighth century) of Isidore's *Etymologiae*, we have marginalia in Arabic. One may ask why? The answer is that the educated classes in Christian Spain found that the acquisition of that language opened up a new world to them in the arts, sciences, and literature, and the year 188/804, Arabic was in official use in charters and canonical decrees.¹¹¹ The Bishop Alvarus of Cordova (third/ninth century) was lamenting the spread of Arabic culture and learning to the detriment of the Christian Scriptures, shows which way the wind was blowing.¹¹² It is in iconography, perhaps, that the earliest Moorish influence in music may be espied as, for example, in the *S. Medard Evangeliarum* (second/eighth century), the *Psalterium Aureum* (third/ninth century),¹¹³ and in the miniatures (fourth/tenth century) reproduced by M. Serrano Fatigati,¹¹⁴ all of which show long-necked pandores and other instruments, including large and small rebecks.¹¹⁵

Some of these necked instruments, such as the lute and pandore, had frets (*dasatin*) on the finger board, which fixed the Arabo-Pythagorean scale with absolute precision. Prior to that, European musicians had to depend on their ears alone while tuning strings and "stopping" notes. Here is a list of Spanish instruments with their Moorish originals named in parentheses: *atambor* (*al-tanbur*), *laud* (*al-'ud*), *rabe* (*rabab*), *canon* (*qanun*), *axabeba* (*al-shababah*), *albogon* (*al-buq*), *annafil* (*al-nafir*), *sonajas de azofar* (*sunuj al-sufr*), and *atambal* (*al-tabl*). All of these instruments may be seen in the miniatures of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* of Alfonso el Sabio (d. 683/1284),¹¹⁶ whilst the *Libro de Buen Amor* of Juan Ruiz (d. c. 751/1350) makes distinction between Spanish and Moorish instruments such as in the *gitarra morisca* and the *guitarra latina*.¹¹⁷ One is, therefore, not surprised to find Rafael Mitjana, the historian of Spanish music, lauding "this Oriental civilization, so rich and so exuberant...imprinting an indelible mark on so many examples of Spanish art, and more especially upon music."¹¹⁸

The Spanish population, seeing how universal and attractive Moorish music and song were among its people, soon became as ardent auditors and practitioners as the Muslims themselves, and gathered to the "leila" (Ar:

lailah) and “zambra” (Ar. zumrah) of the latter to hear their “cana” ghaniyyah), “huda” (Ar. huda), and “anaxir” (Ar. nashid), since Moorish “aravia” fascinated their ears, and the “mourisca” tempted their feet. So ravished by enthusiasm were the Spaniards with such displays that they were led in excitement to cry “algzara” or “alarido” in admiration. These words are the Arabic al-ghazara (copious) and al-‘arid (amplitude).

One may still hear cries of “Ole, Ole” (Allah, Allah), punctuating the performance of a “cante hondo” in modern Spain, when the audience is carried away by the clever ornamentation (Ar. tahsin) or the melody by a singer or a player.¹¹⁹ As Professor J. B. Trend says, “this tendency to profuse ornamentation is seen in every form of art, whether cultivated or popular, and it...undoubtedly goes back to the time of the Moors.”¹²⁰ Among the dances the “mourisca” was much fancied by the Spaniards and the Portuguese, and in the sports and pastimes of the latter the Moorish influence is quite patent.¹²¹ Joy as well as thanksgiving was at its height during the Great Muslim festivals, and that the dance was given recognition on such occasions seems very probable because the Portuguese had a dance called the “muchachim,” which may be the Arabic muwasim, the name of the six Muslim festivals, as we know from the ibn Battutah¹²² and al-Maqqari.¹²³

On the other hand, Pedro de Alcala (911/1505)¹²⁴ gives word muwajjah the plural of which is muwajjahin (mascarado con caratula), which Dozy and Engelmann link up with “los matachines,” a troop of four, six, or eight persons who performed a clownish dance.¹²⁵ This word is claimed to be derived from the Arabic mutawajjahin (masked people). That leads us to the Spanish words “mascara” (actor) and “zaharron” (merry andrew), which are the Arabic maskharah (cause of laughter) and sakharah (scoffer). Another figure of entertainment was the Spanish “moharrahe,” who was no other than the Moorish muharraj (buffoon).¹²⁶ It was the arts of these people which captivated the Moors and the Iberians alike,¹²⁷ and their influence spread abroad at the hands of the wondering minstrels.

It was these minstrels who were the real disseminators of music during the Middle Ages, for, as Naumann, says they were carrying new themes from one people to another, as well as many “an original and singular rhythm.”¹²⁸ This latter would have far-reaching effect, as we shall see presently. Even the Arcipreste de Hita (eighth/14th century) realized that it was not the bowed instruments which typified the exotic Moorish rhythms, but the plectrum-struck lute and pandore.¹²⁹ The other feature of that Oriental art was the mellisma or embroidery of the melody by Muslim singers and players which Professor Trend has well compared with the arabesque in Mudejar art.¹³⁰ The Spanish Courts were well supplied with Muslim players, singers, as the official records, even their names have been registered.¹³¹

That the wandering minstrel class contained a fair sprinkling of Moors, there is some evidence. It is probable that the long hair, painted faces, and gaudy raiment were prompted by Oriental minstrels,¹³² and the Spanish “mourisca,” already mentioned, with grelots on the dancers’ legs, and the “hobby horse,” both borrowed from the Moors, inveigled the ears and eyes

of audiences. The kurraj or hobby horse of the Moors and its impedimenta of bells (jalajil) are mentioned as far back as Jarir (d. c. 110/728) and have also been described by ibn Khaldun. Let us turn to the diffusion of these arts.

Some of the external features of the music of the Basques reveal a Moorish tinge. Their “mutchikoa,” which was danced by young men armed with batons, immediately suggests that the original was the Arabic muskwikah (bristling with arms). In Catalonia, there was a dance which specialized the water flagon called “almaratxa,” which was the Moorish almirashshah. That feature was dropped about 1215/1800. The Basque “zortzico,” also common in Spain, has a time measure of “five-eight” which immediately reminds one of the Moorish makhuri rhythm.¹³³ P. Donostia assures us that the “zortzico” “does not represent the musical basis of the Basque people.”¹³⁴

In other words, it is an exotic plant, reared among the Moors. Among the most popular of the Basque folk instruments are the “alboka” and “atabula,” the originals of which are to be sought in al-buqi and al-tabl of the Moors. Clearer still is the Moorish influence in the Basque “zamalzain” to which the people still skip about, little suspecting that it is the Arabic zamil al-zain (gala limping horse), the English “hobby horse.”¹³⁵

All of these neoteric devices soon spread over the Spanish and Portuguese borders, as the French, Italian, and English languages and customs reveal, some of them are to be found even today in Pyrenean provinces in something akin to their pristine character. One recalls that the tambourine made its entry into Western Europe as the “tambour de Basque” and “tambour de Biscaye.” Jean Poueigh, in his entrancing book on the Chansons populaires des Pyrenees francaises, shows how the popular song of some regions in France has been influenced by the Oriental art, and in his own particular sphere of research he hears and sees quite definitely the Moorish pattern.¹³⁶

Among his numerous examples in the “mouchicou” of Bearn, which is the warlike Basque dance “mutchikoa.” One of the Pyrenean song dances is a kind of “branle” called the amelet,” which had its origin in Toulouse in the sixth/12th century. There it fell into desuetude, although it may still be heard in the mountains of Foix. Could these binary measured song dances owe their name to the Moorish ramal? Yet the inherent wandering propensity of folk music is notorious, and one example of this is the Bulgarian rhythmic “aksak” which is to be found in Basque instrumental tune.¹³⁷ Its paternity is traceable to the Turkish aqsaq, a 9/8 movement.

In France, iconography supplies the clearest evidence of the Moorish and Saracenic influence in musical instruments,¹³⁸ whilst its literature clinches that certainty.¹³⁹ The Moorish ‘ud, rababah, qanun and tanbur, appear in the seventh/13th century as the “leus” (luth), “rubebe,” “micanon” and “mandore” - the Spanish “guitarra morisca” of Juan Ruiz (eighth/14th century), the “morache” of Guillaume de Mechain (c. 743/1342) in France. With these came the Saracenic naqqarah, tabl, and tabl-zan - the last meaning really “a drummer” - which were Gallicized into “naguarre”

(nacaire), “tabor” and “tabolzan.” Later, the French adopted the Persian tinbal as the “tinballe” in 876/1471.¹⁴⁰

French minstrels were welcomed at the Spanish Courts,¹⁴¹ and these as well as the peregrinating type were the means by which these Moorish instruments and music were spread abroad. The Spanish “mourisca” was danced in France as the “Moresque,” whilst “los matachines” were “les matassins” of that land, all of whom were “masques,” as did the Moorish maskharahs. As late as Thoinot Arbeau (997/1589), the French “Morris dancers,” i.e. Moorish Dancers,” were putting dye on their faces.¹⁴² He calls the “matassins” by the name “les bouffons” (Ar. muharrajat).

The troubadour problem, in relation to the Moorish influence, has been the arena of fierce conflict since the days of Heut’s *Origine Fabularum Romanensium* (1105/1693), as the present writer has shown elsewhere.¹⁴³ The discovery by Levi-Provencal in 1374/1954 that the fifth song in Jeanroy’s *Les Chansons de Guillaume IX* was not only inaccurately transcribed but that its final lines were actually purely Arabic,¹⁴⁴ was a veritable bombshell to the sceptics. Whether the troubadours actually borrowed their form and material from the Moorish mutrib (minstrel) or not, they certainly had the opportunity to do so.¹⁴⁵

Indeed, it is not improbable that the Provençal word “trobador” was coined from the Arabic tarrab (taraba = “to rejoice”, tarraba = “to sing”).¹⁴⁶ The orthodox explanation of the word is that it issued from the Provençal verb “trobar” (French “trouvere”) meaning “to find.” If that be so, it was a very lucky “find,” seeing that it gave birth to the verse of the troubadours. Joseph Anglade says¹⁴⁷ that the “trovador” who lived at the princely Courts was known as a “sergrier,” a name which was no more than the Moorish sakharah.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, Menendez Pidal believes that the “segrier” belonged to a class between the “trovador” and the “juglar.”¹⁴⁹

In Pedro de Alcala (915/1509), the “trobador” equates with the Moorish sha‘ir (poet), nadim (boon companion), and adib (scholar).¹⁵⁰ There can be little doubt that the Moorish muwashshahah and zajal, which were popular verse forms as old as the fourth/tenth century, were the mould from which much of the poetry of the troubadour sprang, as Ribera has claimed.¹⁵¹ Even the scenes and dramatis personae of that poetry reek with the Orient. If they could borrow those features, why could not the melodies which enhanced that verse also be copied? In truth, they were almost inseparable. Even if the troubadours could not grasp the significance of the Arabic language they could at least seize the prosodical structure, the melody of which would be transfixed in their ears with certainty.

In any case, they had their “juglar” who attended them ostensibly for that purpose. Some of the later works of that early troubadour, Guillaume IX (d. sixth/12th century), “can be explained only by muwashshahah and zajal,” as Nykl insists, and he says of the later Marcabru that his two estornel (Ar. zurzur) were, “in all likelihood, made upon an Andalusianbilo” and “stanza” equate precisely with the Moorish markaz and bait. What is stranger still is the literal identity between the Latin musical term “conductus” and the Arabic majra, although we may not at present be able to pin the likeness down to precise identity of usage.¹⁵² What we do know for certainty is that

the Spanish “estribillo” and “stanza” equate precisely with the Moorish markaz and bait. What is stranger still is the literal identity between the Latin musical term “conductus” and the Arabic majra, although we may not at present be able to pin the likeness down to precise identity of usage.¹⁵³

Concerning the famous Cantigas de Santa Maria of Alphonso X (d. 683/1284), the miniatures of which present us with the delineations of many Moorish instruments, Julian Ribera has made wide claims for the Moorish influence in both the melodic and in the rhythmic structure of that work.¹⁵⁴ As his interpretation of the latter does not agree with the Arabian rhythms of the third/ninth to the fifth/11th centuries examples known to us,¹⁵⁵ that part of his elucidation is suspect, whilst his transcription of the melodies has been disputed by many.¹⁵⁶

On the other hand, the literary material which he amassed is extremely valuable to all who are interested in the problem. Yet the failure of Ribera, in the circumstances mentioned, does not validate the sweeping statement of Higinio Angles that there is not the slightest trace of an Arabian (Moorish) influence in the melodies of the Cantigas.¹⁵⁷ Others of the anti-Moorish influence party are more guarded in their utterances, since they admit that because there is not contemporary Moorish music available there can be no absolute proof either “for” or “against” that thesis. They evidently know the reason why there was no written contemporary Moorish music, seeing that the pious Cardinal Ximenes, according to his biographer Robles, committed a million Arabic manuscripts to the flames,¹⁵⁸ believing, as the late Reynold A. Nicholson has said, that he could “annihilate the record of seven centuries of Muhammadan culture in a single day.”¹⁵⁹

Spanish composers of the standing of Pedrell and Falla are outstanding opponents of the claims for a Moorish influence. The former asserts that Spanish music “owes nothing essential” to the Moors,¹⁶⁰ but takes care not to define what he means by “essential.” He prefers to acknowledge a Byzantine influence, but does not quote documentary evidence which he and others demand the pro-Moorish advocates should exhibit. In fact, there are no Byzantine documents of the pre-Moorish days that authenticate his contention.

Fella makes a different approach. He acknowledges the Oriental strain in Spanish music, but he attributes that feature of the “gypsies.”¹⁶¹ In other words, a handful of uncouth gypsies, who entered Spain not earlier than 846/1442, are to be credited with having exerted a more pre-dominant influence on Spanish music than a million Arabs and Moors whose ancestors entered the Iberian peninsula so far back as 94 - 95/712 - 713, without including the countless Mozarabes, Mudejares, and Moriscos, who had adopted the Arabian and Moorish mode of life.

The fact is that Spain is compelled to face the question of the Oriental strain in her national music as exhibited in the “cante hondo” and “flamenco,” but dare not acknowledge the influence of Islamic peoples. Jean Sermet says of the “cante hondo” that it “is certainly of Oriental origin,”¹⁶² while Raoul Leparra states that the “very special mentalite of the ‘flamenco’ goes back, according to the hypothesis most justified, to the domination of the Moors.”¹⁶³ Fortunately, there have been and are men of the stature of

Menendez Pelayo,¹⁶⁴ Mitjana Gordon,¹⁶⁵ Menendez Pidal,¹⁶⁶ Ribera,¹⁶⁷ and Nykl¹⁶⁸ who recognize clearly the Moorish influence as they would the sun at noonday.

The Moorish influence spread quite naturally to Italy, where such instruments as the “liuto,” “rebecca,” “canone,” “tambura,” “taballo,” and “nacchera,” as well as such terms as “maschera” and “mattaccino” reveal their ancestry.¹⁶⁹ Of course, the definitely Oriental Courts of Frederick II (d. 648/1250) and Manfred (d. 665/1266) at Palermo and Naples had their quota of “Saracen” minstrels and dancing girls.¹⁷⁰ A glance at medieval documents enables one to note the frequent appearance of Italian minstrels at Spanish Courts and vice versa,¹⁷¹ all of which conduced towards the interchange of alien ideas in music, including that of the Moors, which the poles asunder from that of Europe proper.

The Sicilian instruments of the period are displayed on woodwork screens of the sixth/12th century of Palermo, while those delineated by Fra Angelica, Bellini, and Montagna (ninth/15th century) are quite revealing of the Oriental influence in their ornamentation as well as in their shape.¹⁷² It was here that the mounted men-at-arms of the English condottiere, Sir John Hawkwood (d. 796/1394), were using a nacarino which was, of course, the Arabic naqqarah. Meanwhile, the crusaders had returned from Palestine with fresh ideas of martial music. Previously they only used trumpets (tubae, litui) and horns (corni, bucinæ), whereas the Saracens were equipped not only with trumpets (anfar, karnat) and horns (buqat), but also with large (kusat), medium (naqqarat), and small (qas‘at) kettledrums, together with reed-pipes (zumar), shawms (surnayat), cymbals (sunuj), and bells (ajras), which were used not merely for signalling but to create fear and dismay among the Christian array.¹⁷³

It is generally believed that the cylindrical bore “trump” of Richard Coeur de Lion, first heard in 587/1191, was borrowed from the Saracens.¹⁷⁴ With the latter the military band was a distinct unit known as the tabl khanah or “Drum House” which was drawn up with the standards away from the actual conflict, where it played unceasingly during the battle for tactical purposes. In times of peace it was the function of the tabl khanah to perform the five-fold naubah for the Caliph and the three-fold naubah for princes or governors. Generals, according to their rank, were allotted a specific number of players, although only the highest of the Amirs were allowed kettledrums.¹⁷⁵ Europe adopted all those customs, and up to the 13th/19th century the various ranks of European generals could be determined by observing the musical honours bestowed on them.¹⁷⁶

In Britain we observe the Oriental current flowing, presumably via France, as one sees in the word “mattachin,” the dance in which a duel was fought with wooden swords typifying the struggle between the Christians and the Moors. Here it was dubbed the “Morris dance,” but, as Brand points out, “the genuine morisco was very different from the European Morris.”¹⁷⁷ Each of the performers being a “masker” (Ar. maskharah), they painted their faces and wore masks. A folk-song and dance authority of today, Maud Karpeles, dismisses the Moorish origin of the British “Morris Dance” by saying it “is now discredited” - by whom, we are not told.¹⁷⁸

Such English authorities as Thomas Blount, Joseph Strutt, and John Brand had no doubts about its Oriental origin, and anyone who has seen the “hobby horse” and knows its history will scarcely be convinced by the latest heresy. “Moor’s garments” are specified in English documents as early as 914/1508 just as “Turk’s garments” for kettle drummers were mentioned a century later, the reason being obvious in both cases. With the general infiltration of Moorish instruments came the “lute,” “rebeck” of “ribible,”¹⁷⁹ “tabor” and “naker,” and they did not necessarily intrude through France, since both English and Scottish minstrels were welcomed at the Spanish Courts, where not only Moorish instruments were in common use, but Moorish minstrels were playing.¹⁸⁰

In the east there came the Turkish eruption into Europe during the ninth/15th century, when the whole of the Balkan Peninsula was conquered. That the music of the latter was influenced by that of the Turks can scarcely be denied, however much collectors of folk and national music may strive to minimize that persuasion. The Oriental strain exists to the present day, more especially in Bulgaria, Albania, and Yugoslavia. According to Raina Katzarova, the Turkish rule only left “infinitesimal traces in Bulgarian folk music.”¹⁸¹ Yet among those immeasurably small vestiges are many irregular Oriental rhythms from 5/16 through odd numbers up to 13/16. Further, did not those instruments of a definite Oriental prompting contribute something - if but the merest fraction - to those “infinitesimal traces?”

Those instruments include the “tamboura,” “kemence,” “kaval,” “daara,” and “tarabouka” - all adopted from the Turks.¹⁸² In Yugoslavia the Oriental impress is deeper, since many of their melodies are acknowledged to be of Turkish or Arabian origin.¹⁸³ The “tanburica” is common to the Yugoslavs together with its cousins the “saz” and “shargy.” The Arabo-Turkish lute (‘ud) is known in Macedonia as the “oot.” Among Balkan wind instruments, the “duduk,” “zurne,” “dzamare,” and “bore,” as well as the percussion group - “daule,” “deff,” “daulbas,” “daire,” “dalbujane,” and “chapara” - all tell the story of their parentage. Albania used a host of Turkish instruments, including pandores of the “yonghar” ad “paraduzen” class.¹⁸⁴

Even Rumania and Russia were influenced by the Turkish kopuz in their “kobsa” and “cobsa,” whilst the latter adopted the Arabian al-tabl, naugah, and tab-li baz in the tenth/16th century “litavri,” “nabat,” and “tulumbaz” respectively for their military bands.¹⁸⁵

Perhaps the greatest of all the “borrowings” from the Turks was made by European military bands. It began about 1138/1725 when the Turkish Sultan presented the ruler of Poland with a complete military band instrumented after the Turkish fashion. The craze soon spread to Russia, Austria, Prussia, France and Britain. The pre-dominant feature of this Turkish music was the use of the bass drum, cymbals, triangle, tambourine, and “Janissary bells.” These not only helped precision in marching for the army, but the new tonal colour attracted the attention of the orchestra, and very soon Mozart (1196/1781) and Haydn (1290/1794) were scoring for such instruments in their immortal works, the former using them in his opera *Il Seraglio*.¹⁸⁶

Indeed, the Orient became the scene for countless libretti: Beethoven’s *Ruin of Athens*, Rossini’s *Turks in Italy*, Webber’s *Abu Hassan*, Boieldieu’s

Caliph of Baghdad, David's Lalla Roukh, Bizet's Djamileh, Massenet's King of Lahore, Bantock's Pearl of Iran, and so on. What would the annual pantomimic productions in Britain be without Aladdin, Sindbad, and The Forty Thieves, all from the Arabian Nights, although some of us may be amused at the pseudo-Oriental music which accompanies them.

The musical influence of Islamic peoples is not confined to the West. South of the Maghrib and Egypt we find the tabl, ghaitah, bandair, and shaqshaq in the Sudanese languages as the "tabala," "tamba" or "tumbul," "algaitaru," "bendere," "bendo" or "bentere," "segesege" or "asakasaka."¹⁸⁷ The "azamari" or troubadours of Abyssinia may have derived their name from the Arabic al-zumar, meaning people who gather together to make music. Their agarit" is clearly the Arabic naqqarat. The neighbouring Somalis use the Egyptian zummarah as the "zomari," just as they do in Zanzibar, although it becomes the "anjomari" of Madagascar.

The lute-like qabbus of the Arabs and Turks became the "kabus'u" of Somaliland and the "qalbus" in Zanzibar. Turning to the west coast of Africa one recognizes the Arabic al-tabl and alghaitah, as well as the Turkish boru in the "tabulaie" of Senegal and the "a-tabule" of the Gold Coast, the "algaita" of the hausa, and the "buro" of the Gold Coast.¹⁸⁸ Returning to the east coast, it should be noted that, in spite of Sanskrit influence on the Malagasy language and the cultural pressure of Indianized Sumatrans, we do not find a solitary musical instrument of Indian or Indonesian origin. That statement takes us to India itself, where the Islamic cultural influences are as patent as the noonday sun.

A recent writer on Indian music avers that "the stories that tell how the various styles of North Indian music were invented by musicians of the Muhammadan period have probably no basis in reality."¹⁸⁹ So far as the "form," the method of performance, the actual instruments, and the technical nomenclature of that music is concerned, the above statement is a distortion. That some "styles" came via the "musicians of Muhammadan period" must surely be allowed, and among them are the qual, ghazal, taranah, and firu dasht. One recalls that Amir Khusrau (d. 725/1325) has been actually censured by the purists of the old Indian school of music for Islamic innovations, and one presumes that the above were among them.

The naqsh, an ornamental piece of music, was another feature in Amir Khusrau's time, and that and the preceding items would seem to be those specifically Islamic features which Alain Danielou believes that "no one can seriously speak of their having any influence" on the development of Northern Indian music. One asks, would that include the khiyal? Surely that deserves some claim to pristine utterance. It certainly lives up to its name, which means "fancy" or "imagination," since the embellishment of its melodic outline becomes perfectly scintillating at the hands of a Muslim ustad (virtuoso). Fox Strangways said that the khiyal received "its highest development" at the hands of the Muslims, having originated with a certain Mahmud Sharqi of Jaunpur (d. 844/1440).¹⁹⁰

The names of such modes as 'ushshaq and nigar, together with such technical terms as basit and sarpardah, are quite alien to Sanskrit. One is prompted to inquire why Sanskrit or Hindi words are not used instead of the

Arabic midrib for the “plectrum,” and khali for a “rest” in a rhythmic pattern. Why call the drum “brace” the diwal instead of its Sanskrit equivalent? Seemingly there is some “basis in reality” for the Muslim claims.

When we examine the musical instruments of modern India, we find overwhelming evidence of the influence of Islamic peoples, which is a sufficient rebuttal to Alain Danielou’s claim that “outside influences” were only “temporary fashions.” Nobody can scan the names and features of those instruments without concluding that Pakistan and parts of Muslim India have been wearing those supposedly “temporary fashions for many centuries. Search as one may in the old Sanskrit treatises, even Sangita Ratnakara (seventh/13th century), one will not discover in their pages the sitar, rabab, or tanburi.

Indeed, the chargah-sitar and tarabdar sitar bear an unmistakable Persian likeness. Even the sarod or sharod can be no other than the old Turkoman shahrud of the fourth /tenth century. All of these instruments as well as the dutarah and chartarah bear names which determine their origin. Grosset claims that the qanun or psaltery was derived from the old Indian katyayanavina or svara-mandala:¹⁹¹ but since the latter is not mentioned in the Sanskrit treatises earlier than the Sangita Ratnakara, which is of later date than the Arabic authorities, the claim for Indian priority is far from convincing. Among the bowed types the kamanchah is the most obvious of the borrowed Islamic instruments. The insistence of Grosset that the Sanskrit term kona stands for both “plectrum” and “bow” cannot be justified, although he claims the Amara kosha (first/seventh century) as his authority for the use of the “bow.”

Yet Ananda K. Coomaraswamy declares that “no Indian vina, whether ancient or modern, was ever played with a bow.”¹⁹² The antiquity of the ravanahasta as claimed by Fetis, who was foolishly influenced by the mythical ravanstron of the Sonnerat, was sheer imagination,¹⁹³ as was his indication of a manuscript at Vienna, dating from the days of the first Caliph (first/seventh century, sic), supposed to delineate a bow.¹⁹⁴ The Fetis design of a ravana and his so-called ravanastron and omerti are actually of Chinese provenance, as was his Indian tambourah.¹⁹⁵ The fact is that the earliest account of the function of the bow is given by al-Farabi.¹⁹⁶ Passing to wind instruments - the surna, alghuzah, moshuk, nafir, and karna - their very names confirm their origin, as do those of the percussion group - the tabla, tablik, naghara, duffda, and da’irah, however much some of these names may have been altered.¹⁹⁷

The music of the peoples of the Malay Archipelago was also influenced by India, especially Muslim India, on the instrumental side. The bowed rabab, or spike-footed viol, which spread with the adoption of Islam is known in the various islands as the “regab,” “repob,” “erbabi,” and “arababu.” The lute-like Arab qabus or qanbus and the Turkish qopuz appear as the “gambus,” “babbus,” and “kabosi,” whilst the surna or sunray becomes the “serunai,” “sarune,” “sruni,” and “sralai.”¹⁹⁸ Further north, when the Mughuls became masters of China (641 - 770/1213 - 1368), the instruments of Islamic peoples began to influence that land. Kuglai Khan

introduced an organ called the hsing-lung-sheng into China; it is being expressly mentioned as coming from the “Muslim kingdoms” of the “lands of the West.”¹⁹⁹

The armies of the Yuan rulers comprised large contingents from Turkestan, and a number of their Court officials were Persians. Was it any wonder that bands and orchestras of Muslim musicians should find favour at Chinese Courts? Here were to be heard such instruments as the “tan-pu-la” (Turki tanbur), “sai-t’o-erh (sitar), “huo-pu-ssu” (qopuz), “la-pa-pu” (rabab), “ha-er-cha-k’o” (ghijjak), “k’o-erh-nai” (qanun), ta-pu-la” (tabl), an “ta-pu” (daf).²⁰⁰ Thus, we discern how the Islamic arts in music traversed land and sea, covering continents and oceans, bringing to distant shores the indigenous music of several Near and Middle east peoples, which was not only fresh and novel, but had a comeliness and grace, a form and symmetry dissimilar from their own, some of which, wherever possible, were eventually absorbed.

Finally, there is the question of the influence of the music theorists of Islamic peoples - especially that of the Arabic theorists - in the practical and theoretical spheres of music. All historians of art and science have openly acknowledged the debt that we owe to Islamic peoples during the Middle Ages,²⁰¹ and one can include the science of music in Europe’s indebtedness, however small it may be, in our modern concept of obligation. Greece had always been a borrower from the East in the distant past. Even in the days of Byzantium she was absorbing from the Orient.²⁰² Yet with all the trumpeted fame of the Hellenic world, not a single treatise on the theory of music was produced - or at least has survived - from Anonymus II (fourth/tenth century) at the same time of Psellos (fl. 442/1050).

It was only the Arabic treatises on that subject which had currency from Seville to Samarqand, viz. those of al-Kindi and al-Farabi up to those of ibn Sina and ibn Zailah (d. 440/1048).²⁰³ One cannot help noticing the complete absence of genuine music theorists in Christian Europe from the pre-sixth century A.D. to the mid-third/ninth century.²⁰⁴ The reason for the decay has been described by the Muslim historian al-Mas’udi (d. 345/956). He says, “In the days of the ancient Greeks...and Byzantium, science was developed and scholars were honoured. Natural science was particularly studied...as well as the quadrivium, i.e. arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music...Then came the Christian religion, which...destroyed and blotted out the teachings of science. All that the ancient Greeks had placed before the world vanished, or was distorted. Among the noble sciences which were thrown aside...was the science of music.”²⁰⁵

This is not a biased picture by a Muslim. The facts can be proved up to the hilt by Christian historians who had the *ipissima verba* of the Fathers of the Church before their very eyes. Tertullian (d. c. 240 A.D.) decried Pagan literature,²⁰⁶ i.e. the literature of Greek and Latin philosophers, which was in strict accord with the authoritative Apostolic Constitutions which laid down, “Hold aloof from pagan books entirely.”²⁰⁷ Saint Jerome (d. 440 A.D.) was warned not to dabble in heathen literature,²⁰⁸ although he actually lamented that so few knew of Plato and Aristotle.²⁰⁹ Even Saint Augustine (d. 430 A.D.) pandered to his readers saying, “Heaven is for the ignorant.”²¹⁰

Cassian (d. 480 A.D.) reveals that the decrees against Pagan literature were still being observed.²¹¹ Even 60 years later Saint Benedict (d. c. 544 A.D.) recommends only the Bible and expositions thereon to be read by the Catholic Fathers.²¹² It has been admitted that “at no time have the general mass of Benedictines has learned.”²¹³

Under such conditions one can readily appreciate the total neglect of the works of the great Greek theorists of music. Europe knew of them only through fragments - often mistranslated as Roger Bacon affirmed - offered by Martinus Capella, Boethius, Cassiodorus and Isidore of Seville,²¹⁴ whereas the scholars at the House of Learning” (Bait al-Hikmah) at Baghdad had made Arabic translations of the works on music by Aristotle, Aristoxenus, Nicomachus, Euclid, Cleonids, and probably Ptolemy and Aristides Quintillians by the third/ninth century.²¹⁵ We have seen how both Euclid’s Canon and Aristotle’s De Anima had been the subject of Arabic commentaries (shuruh), and all were part of collegiate studies in Islamic lands, since music (‘lim al-musiqi) was part of the course of mathematics (riyadiyah), i.e. the quadrivium of the medieval European studies.²¹⁶

To appreciate the meaning of the impingement of Arabic learning - in the sciences especially - on Western Europe, one has to consider the prevailing cultural conditions there. In Spain, the hub of Islamic culture in Europe, we have Bishop Alvarus (third/ninth century) complaining that whilst his congregations could not pen a letter in their own tongue, they could accomplish mono-rhyme in Arabic,²¹⁷ while the ignorance of his clergy was deplorable.²¹⁸ At the centre of Europe’s intellectual culture - the Carolingian Empire - learning had so declined that studies had almost ceased, whilst at Cluny the subjects of the quadrivium were but little studied.²¹⁹ The Monk of Angouleme admits that “there existed in Gaul scarcely a trace of the liberal arts” before the days of Charlemagne, and it was no better in Rome, the very centre of Christianity.²²⁰

In Muslim Spain the cultural atmosphere was far different. Sa’id ibn Ahmad al-Qartabi (d. 462/1070) writes of that land thus, “The learned of al-Andalus exerted themselves in the cultivation of science, and laboured in it with assiduity.”²²¹ Ibn al-Hijari (d. 590/1194) testifies that under the Umayyad regime in al-Andalus (second - fifth/eighth - 11th centuries) “students from all parts of the world flocked...to learn the sciences of which Cordova was the noblest repository, to derive knowledge from the mouths of the doctors and ‘ulama’ who swarmed in it.”²²² What was taught specifically of the theory of music we do not know. The treatises of al-Farabi, the Iqwan al-Safa, ibn Sina, and the later Abu al-Salt Umayyah, ibn Bajjah, and ibn Rushd were available to all, most of these authors being known by their Europeanized names as Alfarabius, Avicenna, Avempace, and Averroes. (See H. Albert, Musikanschauung des Mittelalters, Halle, 1905, pp. 143, 169).

In spite of the destruction of Arabic manuscripts by Cardinal Zimenes in 898/1492 et seq., a few manuscripts on music theory have survived, notably that of al-Farabi, the “Major Book on Music” (Kitab al-Musiqi al-Kabir), now preserved at Madrid, being a sixth/12th century copy made for a

student of ibn Bajjah (Avempace).²²³ Al-Farabi's treatment of the physical bases of sound, also dealt with by the Ikhwan al-Safa, was a notable advance in that particular sphere.²²⁴ His description of the musical instruments of his day stands unique in the history of music. European theorists seem not to have considered the subject worthwhile. His minute account of the accordatura of the necked stringed instruments, the scales of harp-like instruments, and the compass and digit holes of the wood-wind family were subjects unheard of before his time,²²⁵ although al-Kindi had dealt with the lute in that fashion a century earlier.²²⁶

In a Persian treatise, the "Treasure House of Rarities" (Kanz al-Tuhaf), dating from the eighth/14th century, we have another example of the thoroughness of Islamic music theorists. In this we have not merely the musical gamut of an instrument described, but recommendations as to the style of fature, the best types of wood for use, an elaborate account of the manufacture of silk and gut strings, devices for amplifying the tone by means of sympathetic strings - the first account of its kind as well as the sprinkling of powdered glass on a glue covered interior of an instrument so as to improve the tone. The earliest mention of that device in Britain is a patent (No. 7454) taken out in 1253/1837. Ibn Sa'id al-Maghribi (d. c. 680/1280) says that books on "the various instruments and the art of making them are common among us," while in the days of Ibn Rushd and al-Shaqundi (d. 629/1231) Seville was the centre of the manufacture of musical instruments, and had an export trade.

How much of the Arabic material recorded above was translated into Latin we have no record. Yet seeing that Arabic was not only spoken by the Arabs and Moors, but also by the Mudejars and Mozarabes, who were, respectively, the Muslims who remained in the reconquered Christian Spain, and the Spaniards and Portuguese who lived under Muslim rule, much would have been passed on orally. One outstanding man in the former group was Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Riquti, who, when the Christian armies took Murcia in 640/1242, was retained by the Christian king to teach in his schools, he himself being a famed as a music theorists and mathematician.²²⁷ That some of it was passed on via the Latin tongue or script we know from Anthony a Wood who says that when Roger Bacon lectured at Oxford, using faulty Latin translations, he was ridiculed by Spanish students, who have known the Arabic originals.

According to Bacon, there were few mathematicians among the Latins, and both he and Adelard of Bath strongly advised students abandon European schools and seek the fountain-head in Muslim Spain.²²⁸ Two Arabic tractates on the sciences which contained a section on music were translated into Latin, viz. al-Farabi's "Register of the Sciences" (Ihsa' al-'Ulum) and an anonymous "On the rise of the Sciences" (De ortu scientiarum), both of which became formal textbooks in European schools. Neither was of much value per se, since each merely outlined the bases of the study.²²⁹ Yet they were quoted by Gundisalvus, Magister Lambert (Pseudo-Aristotle), Vincent de Beaufais, Roger Bacon, Jerome of Moravia, Walter of Oddington, and others.²³⁰

The Islamic impact on musical instruments has already been shown, especially in the stringed variety with their frets. These latter were fixed according to the old Arabian system of ibn Misjah (d. c. 97/715), which was based on Pythagorean tuning, a circumstance which completely dispels the erroneous assumption of the Director of the “Museo-Laboratorio de Musica Marroqui” at Tetuan, D. P. Patrocinio Garcia Barriuso, that the music of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunis is not “Arabian music.”²³¹ As H. G. Farmer has been demonstrating for many decades, the “musica hispano-musulmana,” which he believes originated in Spain, was actually the old Arabian system of ibn Misjah, Ishaq al-Mausili, Ziryab, ibn al-Munajjim, al-Kindi, and al-Farabi, a “sistema model distonico y cromatico,” as he terms the present Moroccan music.

According to him - and his book has received the “Imprimatur” of the Roman Church - those “eminent musicologists” who have studied Moorish music have approached the subject with “prejudice, lack of knowledge, and impropriety of nomenclature,” when they have dubbed “Spanish-Muslim music” as “Arabian music.” So as to demonstrate the “superficial affirmation” of those erring musicologists mentioned above, he would enlighten the octave, of which Europe was an *au fait* so early as Sir John Chardin (1123/1711) and about the quasi-Arabian quarter-tone system, really Turkish, which succeeded in the 11th/17th century, the latter being illustrated by Dr. Barriuso, who copies a diagram from a music treatise of Kamil al-Khalu‘i (1322/1904), so as to prove that his “Spanish-Muslim” music of a thousand years earlier was not “Arabian music.” *O sancta simplicitas!*

So far back as the third/ninth century, when Christian Spain was in its intellectual childhood, the Baghdad scholars had translated from Greek into Arabic the *Muristis* treatises on the organ and hydraulic. Such works enabled the Arabs to construct similar instruments which led to some interesting results. An organ or hydraulic was being used in the Caliph’s palace at Baghdad in the time of Princess ‘Ulayyah (d. 210/825),²³² and there is evidence that organ constructors were known in Syria during the sixth/12th century.²³³ There is no reference to the hydraulis in the Orient since the time of Isaac of Antioch (fl. 459 A.D.), and in the Occident since the days of Apollinaris Sidonius (c. 483 A.D.),²³⁴ because the Greeks had adopted a weighted blast bag instead of hydraulic pressure.

Could the resurgence of the hydraulic in the third/ninth century have been due to the Arabic translations of *Muristis*?²³⁵ Amedee Gastoue says that “the makers of the first large organs in the Occident in the third/ninth century were, without doubt, either Greeks or Syrians,” and since he shows that the hydraulic had died by that time among the Greeks, the greater probability rests with the Syrians at the revivers.²³⁶

Returning to the question of the frets on the necks of stringed instruments, the Arab theorists used an alphabetic notation to designate the notes produced as those frets as we see in the “Treatise of Music” (*Risalah fi al-Musiqu*) of ibn al-Munajjim (d. 300/912),²³⁷ which the author specifically stated was based on the system of Ishaq al-Mausili (d. 235/850) who was the teacher of Ziryab (d. c. 238/852), the famous musician of Moorish

Spain. Europe, however, possessed no definite and practical notation of that sort. In its church music, neumes were used as a means of registering the melodic outline, but they did not convey any precise intervallic steps. By the time of Hucbald (fourth/tenth century), we find an alphabetic notation on very much the same lines as that of the Arab system, giving a major diatonic scale.²³⁸

No wonder that the latter has been attributed even to the Arabs,²³⁹ or to the Semitic Orient.²⁴⁰ It may also be pointed out that the instrumentalists of the minstrel class possessed a practical knowledge of music theory (*ad delectandos audientes artis ratione temperare*), whereas the church singers did not. This was stated by pseudo-Huebald.²⁴¹ Later, the Arabic influence on the alphabetic tablature for stringed instruments is openly admitted in a Latin manuscript entitled *Ars de pulsatione lambuti*²⁴² *et aliorum similium instrumentorum* (902 - 903/1496 - 1497) in which the tablature is said to have been "invented" by a "Moor of the Kingdom of Granada."²⁴³

Conde de Morphy said that Spanish lute tablature was "probably of Oriental origin," whilst his helper, Gevaert, more positively asserted that the Castilians and Aragonese "elaborated their tablature in imitation of that of the Muslims."²⁴⁴ Some other strange coincidences crop up in history. In his section on the "Eight Tones," Odo of Cluny (d. 330/942) attached names to the chordae which have more than casual interest because three of them are Arabic, viz., "schembs" (shams), "caemar" (qamar), and "nar" (nar).²⁴⁵ This terminology belongs to the doctrine of the ethos (tathir) as related to music, firmly believed in by Islamic peoples up to the present day.²⁴⁶ The General influence of Islamic culture on Gerbert of Aurillac (d. 394/1003) and Constantine the African (d. 480/1087) is not unworthy of notice. The former studied the mathematical sciences (matheses) at Barcelona, and that included music,²⁴⁷ which had been neglected in France.²⁴⁸ Indeed, he had been dubbed "Gerbert the Musician."²⁴⁹

Constantine was born at Tunis (Carthage), and then held by the Muslim Zairids. He spent 39 years in the East among the Chaldaens, Arabs, Persians, and Egyptians, and studied their sciences, including music. Because of his settling in Sicily and at Monet Cassino in Italy, his writings had considerable influence on European culture.²⁵⁰ One theorist who used him was Aegidius Zamorensis (seventh/13th century), a protégé of the Arabophile Alphonso X el-Sabio,²⁵¹ but a recent writer, Gerhard Pietsch, does not perceive any "Arabian influence" in his writings. Aegidius could scarcely have avoided the "Arabian influence" since we read in the incipit to his *Ars musica* that he learned "chiefly from Iraquian (Chaldaen) and Egyptian books."²⁵²

The music practiced by the Arabs and Moors also influenced Western Europe in other directions, notably in the melodic arabesque, organum, and the hocket. The arabesque or free embellishment of the melody (tahsin) was the art in which the Moorish virtuoso excelled. His "excesses" (zawa'id) - as those melismata were called - were usually vocalized on such words as ai or laili, which were introduced even into Spanish songs. (See E. L. Chavarri, *Musica Popular Espanola*, Barcelona, 1927, p. 36.) All sorts of tricks prevailed - the mabturah (staccato), istirahat (repose), shadhharah (short,

soft note), and the nabrah (a glottal catch like the coup de glotte).²⁵³ This last may possibly be the device hinted at by Magister Lambert, which Merchetus of Padua calls a “feigned voice.”²⁵⁴

On the other hand, it may have been the “embellishment” known to the Arabs and Moors as the shahajah (a whining sound), which was accomplished by the singers making a swift glissando from a low note to its fourth, fifth, or octave.²⁵⁵ This latter was in partial accord with the instrumental device known as the tarkib illustrated by al-Kindi under the name of jass, which meant plucking two lute strings with the thumb and forefinger.²⁵⁶ Ibn Sina gave the name tarkib only to the simultaneously struck fourth or fifth, whilst striking with the octave was called the tad‘if.²⁵⁷

In other words, he recognized the distinction between “organizing” and “magadizing.” It was that Arabian and Moorish tarkib, which, most likely, prompted the European “organum,” although with the Muslims the tarkib was, at that time, simply an “embellishment.” Today, the music of the Turkoman peoples is an “organum simplex” with the “diapente.”

The most significant influence by the Moors on the music of Western Europe was in mensural music. Neither the Greeks nor Romans were particularly interested in other than prose rhythms. With the Arabs, rhythmic modes (iqa‘at) in music, six in number, had existed since the first/seventh century, two or more were added later.²⁵⁸ Up to the third/ninth century the singer and instrumental accompanist observed the same rhythm, but Ibrahim ibn al-Mahdi (d. 224/839) and his Romantic school introduced schemes whereby a singer and the accompanist used different rhythms.²⁵⁹

When to that contrariety there was added a further diversity in the prosody (‘arud) of the verse, a performance became more than intriguing, and H. G. Farmer has given an illustration of that in an article on iqa‘at in the Urdu Encyclopaedia of Islam and in Grove’s Dictionary of Music (1374/1954).²⁶⁰ No wonder the Muslims referred to their rhythm as the “heartbeats of Allah,” for its content was infinite and boundless. Islamic music is fundamentally homophonic, and therefore quite different - in that respect - from that of Europe which is harmonic or polyphonic. Yet the Muslim seeks his harmony (muwafiqah) in the variegated rhythmical and prosodical structure of song and in the tonal differences of the rhythmic beats (durub). At first, such disparate things must have appeared to Christian Europe as a lucus a non lucendo.

Yet the time came when the Spanish singer and instrumentalist found themselves imitating the Moorish mughanni and mutrib in their rhythms. In the very nature of things the beats of the plectrum (midrib) on the lute or pandore strings, or the taps on the tambourine or drum, often left intermediate silences (sukun), which were the very anti-theses of the sustained notes of the melody. It was because of that circumstance that Europe - after it had adopted mensural music - called the Moorish iqa‘ by the name of cantus abscisus: hence Simon of Tunstede’s chapter called De truncationibus sive hoketis.²⁶¹

The latter word, “hocket,” “hoquet,” or “ochetto,” is simply a phonetic reproduction of the Arabic iqa‘at, a fact which European scholars only very tardily acknowledge,²⁶² although H. G. Farmer had claimed that derivation

as far back as 1344/1925.²⁶³ Most of them still adhere to the non-sensical - when it is not actually laughable - derivation from the English “hiccough” or “hiccup.”²⁶⁴ We see the same intrusion of the “h” in “hocket” as in Latin translation of Avicenna’s “Canon” (Qanun) where ‘ishq becomes “hash.” Of course, not all of the Moorish rhythms were borrowed by Europe.

Such an outlandish design as the makhuri of al-Kindi or the khafif al-ramal, both quintuple, were rejected, although Johannes de Grocheo (c. 700/1300) admitted that the music of the peoples was “not precisely measured,” and that included the Basque “zortzico,” which was also a quintuple rhythm. Curiously enough, the examples which only used two note values of the “longa” and “brevis” in “hockets” were dubbed musica resecata, whereas those which used many more note values were classed as hoquetus vulgaris, and this may imply that it was more used by the people at large.

The mention of note values and the popular “hocket” raises two vital points which deserve consideration. We are told by one of our leading musicologists, R. Thurston Dart, that in Europe “the first steps towards a convention establishing the duration of a note were made in the late sixth/12th century,”²⁶⁵ and there were only two or three duration values to notes in those days. Yet the Arabs recognized five different mensural types of sound at least, although they had no definite “notion” for the latter, save a cumbersome tablature and onomatopoeia,²⁶⁶ up until the seventh/13th century, when an alphabetic (abjadi) and numeric (‘adadi) notation or tablature was introduced.²⁶⁷

Concerning the hoquetus vulgaris, it is worth recalling what Jerome of Moravia (seventh/13th century) quotes on the authority of Franco of Cologne (fifth - sixth/11th - 12th centuries) who was the earliest of the mensural theorists. He affirms that the “hocket” was applied to songs which had already been composed, whether in Latin or in the Vulgar tongue, which means that the “hocket,” that is to say the Moorish iqa‘at, was a new device which was being applied to older material, notably the music of the people. Lastly we should remember that the approach of the Arabs and Moors in their iqa‘at and that of Christian Europe in their borrowed “hocket” were different; the former, because they viewed music horizontally, using rhythmic contrariety between the vocal line (prosodic) and the accompaniment (rhythmic), the latter, because they visualized music vertically and introduced those mensural features into three or four melodic parts.

European notation may also have received novel outlook from Arabian or Mozarabian sources, as H. G. Farmer pointed out in 1344/1925.²⁶⁸ One of the Latin mensural theorists, known as “Anonymous IV” of Coussemaker, mentions in the work entitled *De mensuris et discantu* (c. 674/1276) two technical terms, “elmuarifa” and “elmuahym,” as the names of notation symbols.²⁶⁹ The words are Arabic, although the first of them appears in the fifth/11th century *Glossarium Latin-Arabicum*, under the term al-ma‘rifah which equates with “nots.”²⁷⁰ It may be identified with the form al-ma‘rifah (cognition).²⁷¹ It is explained in “Anonymous IV” as having “a stroke on the left side in descending, just as the English depict it.”²⁷²

As for “elmauhym,” that word looks suspiciously like al-mubhim (shutting) or rather al-mubham (locked, closed).²⁷³ In the Latin translation of the Arabic of Euclid’s Elements the word “elmauhym” stood for the “rhomb.” We are told that some music scribes penned that note with a square head, whilst others made it rectangular. In one form it was a “plica” with an ascending and/or descending stroke (tractus). When it was written as an obliquely protracted line it was one of the “currentes” running notes), in which character it could be a “double, triple, or a quadruple ‘elmuahym’” - and could even be extended to sevenfold.²⁷⁴

The problem raised by this Arabic technical nomenclature is not easy to solve. One naturally asks, “Why were Arabic words used in a Latin work if there were technical equivalents in that language?” The author of “Anonymous IV” was certainly well acquainted with Pamplona and other Spanish works on the subject, and that Arabic terminology may have come through a Mozarabic scribe who would, in southern Spain, be acquainted with that language. Could we not assume that “elmuarifa” and “elmuahym” represented some new mensural devices in notation? Incidentally, “Anonymous IV” features both Leonin of Paris (sixth/12th century) and Perotin, his successor (seventh/13th century).

Gustave Freese sees in the “Currentes” of Leonin a synonymity with the “elmauhym” and “elmuarifa,”²⁷⁵ i.e. that it “may owe something to Arabian sources, by way of the troubadour influence,”²⁷⁶ whilst in Perotin, “the quick-moving upper parts would seem to suggest some troubadour and folk influence.”²⁷⁷ One of the last tributes to the music of Islamic peoples by A. H. Fox Strangways, the author of *The Music of Hindustan*, was to say this, “The Arabs, who taught to Europe their mathematics and medicine, have influenced our music in ways that we are only now finding out.”²⁷⁸

Yet whatever the “pros” and “cons” in the subject may be, both East and West agree fully in their praise of music, and Walter do Odington (eighth/14th century) quotes Avicenna (ibn Sina) side by side with St. Gregory, St. Bernard, and the Psalmist, saying, “Inter omnia exercitia sanitatis cantare melius est.”²⁷⁹

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253. R. d'Erlanger, op. cit., 2, pp. 86 - 94.
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259. Al-Isfahani, op. cit., 5, p. 53.
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267. Idem, in *New Oxford History of Music*, 1957, 1, pp. 453 - 55.
268. Idem, *The Arabian Influence on Musical Theory*, pp. 17 - 18.
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Chapter 59: Minor Arts

A

Anyone embarking on the study of Muslim arts would, during the course of his investigation and research, have to answer three fundamental questions satisfactorily.

(1) What is the reason for the surprising unity of style which we observe in works of art throughout the Muslim countries during a certain period?

(2) Why is it that a period of almost hectic artistic activity is followed, sometimes almost immediately, by qualitative decline and technical decadence?

(3) What is the reason for the remarkable success achieved by the Muslims in the domain of minor arts?

The answers to the first two questions rest on an appreciation of the relation-ship which existed between the artists of the Muslim countries and the rulers thereof.

The development of Muslim arts-major or minor-is related inalienably to the rise and fall of powerful dynasties of rulers. Every dynasty invited to its Court craftsmen and artists from all over the land under its sway. If an invitation was not enough, force was sometimes employed to compel their appearance. Under the Umayyads, the 'Abbasids, and the Fatimids, therefore, artists flocked to Damascus, Baghdad, and Cairo which alternately became centers of artistic activity, learning, and letters. Artistic traditions were developed and techniques perfected under the patronage of the rulers and the aristocrats. The middle class, obviously, had no say in the matter, and the artists kept themselves aloof from the masses.

As a particular dynasty fell from power and another emerged as its successor all the artists flocked to the new center of patronage, and overnight, as it were, the new dynasty "at one stroke inherited an artistic tradition that had been matured elsewhere." The transport of works of art themselves over great distances also helped to spread style and technique.

This answers more or less the first question. The second question is, per-haps, easier to answer. Since the development of arts was linked primarily with the fortunes of ruling dynasties, as soon as political conditions were disturbed at their center of activity, the artists deserted it and proceeded to other centers to put their fortunes to the stake. If a new dynasty arose which was capable of patronizing the artists and maintaining the artistic tradition, the artists' activity continued unabated, but if there was a period of chaos or political disturbance spread over a considerably wide area, artistic traditions had a tendency to evaporate into thin air. The artists de-prived of royal patronage could not produce great works of art and, thus, in a few years the tradition built up by conditions of stability and prosperity would lose force, and products of art suffer qualitatively. It may be observed that just as the decline of artistic traditions was amazingly swift, the stabilizing of artistic activity was also correspondingly quick. Now for the third question.

The line of demarcation between arts and crafts is admittedly fine. It necessarily follows that it is finer still between major and minor arts.

In the case of Muslim minor arts there is another factor which has to be taken into account, if we are to assess correctly the value and worth of the contribution made by the Muslims in this domain.

On account of certain restrictions imposed upon Fine Arts even where State patronage was available, there existed a lurking suspicion in the mind of the artist that he was working contrary to the precepts of religion. Since religion has always been a living force and a vital factor governing human activity, especially in the East, artists in Muslim countries were forced to adapt themselves to the conditions created by theological restrictions on Fine Arts and to devote themselves to the minor arts, such as calligraphy, carpet-making, wood-carving, etc. This is why we find that the Muslim peoples have achieved such remarkable success in the minor arts. The inspiration which would have molded works of Fine Arts was diverted into other channels. The Muslims, therefore, developed crafts indicative of such exquisite skill, superb craftsmanship, and artistic sensibility as is not to be found among the artists of any other nation, race, or country.

As a matter of fact, arabesque-a minor art of great importance-derives its name from those who originated and practiced it with great skill-the Arabs. Before we proceed to discuss in detail the phases of the various minor arts it would perhaps be expedient to take note of another remarkable pheno-menon related to artistic activity in Muslim countries.

It is generally believed that the fall of the 'Abbasids and the destruction of the Caliphate as a symbol of authority and a pivot of political sanction led almost immediately to qualitative decadence in the realm of major and minor arts. This is not the whole truth. As a matter of fact, the fall of the 'Abbasids did lead-as was usual in Muslim countries with the fall of a powerful dynasty-to qualitative decadence in the realm of art for some time immediately after the destruction of the Caliphate.

However, the opening up of the trade routes by the Mongols, the diffusion of cultural and artistic traditions generally, and the establishment of powerful dynasties which in-herited, as it were, the cultural and the artistic legacy of the 'Abbasid Caliphate, resulted after a century or so in the creation of conditions which were favorable to the birth of new ideas in the domain of art and were also responsible for the continuity of new artistic traditions which had come into being due to the diffusion of cultures and the admixture of civilizations as a direct result of the Mongol invasion.

This remarkable phenomenon of the development of artistic traditions can be observed to be occurring almost simultaneously under the Mughul rulers of India (933-1119/1526-1707), under the Safawids in Persia (908-1052/1502-1642), and the Ottoman Kings in Turkey during their most glorious period (768-1058/1360-1648).

B

Of the leading minor arts we shall consider one by one the following: (1) calligraphy and illumination, (2) book-binding, (3) pottery, (4) textiles and rugs, (5) wood-carving, ivory and bone-carving, and (6) metal-work, glass, and crystal.

1. Calligraphy and Illumination

The art of calligraphy or artistic writing can be divided into two principal types: (a) the Kufic, deriving its name from Kiifah where it was probably first used and (b) the naskh.

The Muslims have shown themselves to be worthy practitioners of both types. The earliest copy of the Qur'an which has come down to us is in Kufic characters. This style of calligraphy with angular letters remained popular for many centuries amongst the Islamic peoples.

After the fifth/eleventh century the Kufic script gave place everywhere almost invariably to naskh with rounded letters in sharp contrast to the angularities of the Kufic script.

The Muslim genius in Spain, having come in contact with Western influence, gave birth to another distinctive school of calligraphy known as Maghribi (western). This school is also known as Cordovan.

In Iran, after the Islamic conquest, the indigenous artists cultivated the scripts adopted by the Arabs and also the methods of illuminations which were then popular in other Muslim countries. The Iranian calligraphers, under the Great Saljugs, however, generally emphasized in their calligraphy the vertical as distinguished from the horizontal. The type of illumination and calligraphy found under the Saljugs is varied, rich, and extremely beautiful since the Iranian genius could fall back upon the tradition of Mani. Maui (third century A.D.) himself was reputed as an excellent painter, but his disciples were also well known for beautiful illumination and charming calligraphy. Specimens of the works of Mani's followers have been unearthed in Central Asia in the Turfan basin and it has become abundantly clear that the Iranian calligraphists and artists gave free reign to their indigenous genius while adapting the Arabic script and method of calligraphy.

The most beautifully illuminated copy of the Qur'an of this period was prepared by Abu al-Qasim in the fifth/eleventh century. It is preserved in the British Museum.

It was perhaps during the sixth/thirteenth century that a new school of writing was developed in Iran which was to be known as ta'liq: the characters in this type of writing tend to slope downward from right to left. Ta'liq flourished but naskh also remained in use especially in religious texts.

It is the irony of fate that the descendants of Hulagu, who was responsible for massacring millions of Muslims and killing the last 'Abbasid Caliph, became the patrons of calligraphy when they embraced Islam.

These convert kings known as 11-Khans of Persia had many fine works executed under their patronage. Uljaitu Khuda Bandah Muhammad was one of the most celebrated patrons of this art.

It was perhaps during the regime of 11-Khans (654-750/1256-1349) that illuminated pages of books were for the first time decorated with abstract ornamental designs. This may have been due to Chinese influence which permeated painting, and since calligraphy was considered to be a branch of painting, it was bound to be affected thereby. The illuminated manuscripts of this period show geometrical compositions of great beauty and charm, the favorite colors being gold and blue. It may be remembered that the use of gold-dust was a peculiar feature of the book-illuminations produced by

Mani's followers. There is no doubt that the Iranian artists never forgot their national heritage and used the background colors-mainly gold and blue-in sharp contrast to other colors in the foreground with great dexterity and sensibility.

It was during the rule of Timilrids in Iran that calligraphy really came into its own. The princes of the House of Timur were polished diplomats, skillful administrators, and celebrated devotees of Fine Arts. Their possessions were vast and the talent which mustered to their courts was correspondingly impressive. It was during their regime that the art of calligraphy underwent a revolutionary change and the Nasta'liq was invented which is a highly develop-ed type of writing combining the elegance, vigor, and charm of both Naskh and Ta'liq.

It is generally stated that Mir'Ali of Tabriz was the inventor of this type of writing, but most probably his calligraphy was the culmination of the fusion of the two types, namely, Naskh and Ta'liq-a process which must have been going on for a very long time. One of the princes of the House of Timor, namely, Sultan Husain, is justly celebrated for being one of the greatest .patrons of arts and learning. Sultan 'Ali Meshedi, the famous calligraphist, was a protege of his. Other celebrated calligraphers of the period were Ja'far of Tabriz, 'Abd al-Karim, and Sultan Ibrahim (son of 4h rah Rukh). The story goes that Sultan Ibrahirn was capable of writing in six different styles. A copy of the Qur'an written by him in 828(1424 is preserved in the shrine of Imam Rida' (Meshed, Iran).

In the domain of illumination also certain changes occurred after the Mongol invasion. Arabesque was interlaced with figures of grotesque Chinese dragons and fantastic imaginary plants. The use of gold-a remnant of the Sassanian tradition-however, remained a constant feature.

Calligraphy and illumination as developed under the patronage of the Timarids continued to flourish also under the Safawids, who were contempora-ries of the Great Mughuls and who gave to India the gift of miniature painting. One of the most famous calligraphers of the Safawid period was Mir 'Ali of Herat who prepared a manuscript of one of Jami's famous Mathnawis.

The art of the book-calligraphy and illumination-found its most worthy and celebrated exponent in Mir 'Imad Katib whose name for all practical purposes is even today synonymous with elegance, charm, and beauty of writing. He settled in Ispahan in 1008/1599 and copied for Shah 'Abbas many manuscripts revealing superb skill and unique craftsmanship. His rival 'Ali Rida' 'Abbasi-not to be confused with a painter of the same name, well known for his devotion to the Chinese technique of painting-also executed many works of beauty and elegance.

Illumination painted in gold also came into its own under the Safawids and reached the culminating point of the development of the Sassanian tradition. Mahmud, a celebrated painter and calligraphist of Bukhara, appended to his signature the cognomen Mudhahhib. Sikandar Munshi, the celebrated historian of the Safawid princes, opines that "Hasan Baghdadi was unmatched, un-surpassed, and unique in his time in the art of gilding.

In short, he brought the art of gilding almost to a miracle ... and the gilding of Bari cannot bear comparison with his minute and fine work.”

Several other techniques practiced by Safawid artists may here be named: stenciling in which the design emerges in the form of light or dark silhouette, de coupe work in which the design is cut out and then pasted on colored ground, generally blue.

Turkish calligraphists also achieved distinction but, as compared with the Iranians, their contribution does not appear to be very significant.

2. Book-binding

It is obvious that book-binder had played a very im-portant role in the preservation of valuable manuscripts before the press made it possible to produce mass duplicates of valuable works. It is quite possible that the bookseller was also the book-binder because it was one of his duties to ensure that valuable manuscripts are not destroyed or damaged by the passage of time. This view is strengthened by the fact that the word warraq means both a book-binder and a bookseller.

The earliest known book-covers of the Muslim period were made by Egyptian artists and we may safely assert that they may be dated from the second/eighth to the fifth/eleventh century.

Book-binding also reached its zenith under the Timurids. The artists of the Herat Academy executed leather work of great beauty and distinction, leather being the ideal material for book-binding.

The exterior of the cover generally shows stamped decoration with Iranian landscape, Chinese motifs, and arabesque interlacing.

Under the Safawids the book-covers were more decorative, and gold was used more abundantly. Gilded arabesque was interlaced with very fine and beautifully executed floral scrolls and Chinese cloud bands. Birds and animals were also represented, but, generally speaking, it was arabesque interlacing which was more emphasized.

Under the Safawids painted and lacquered book-binding also became the rage of the day. The process was as follows. The covers which were to be painted were given a coat of very fine plaster or gesso and then a thin layer of lacquer. This constituted the background for watercolor painting. Again, the watercolor was given several layers of lacquer so that climatic changes may not prove damaging to a fine work of art.

Ustad Muhammad was one of the most notable book-binders who painted lacquer covers. The Cartier Collection in Paris and the Royal Asiatic Society, London, possess some very beautiful examples of lacquered book-binding.

The Turkish artists, as usual, followed in the footsteps of their Persian brethren in book-binding, but, though their work was beautiful, it bore no comparison with the original and polished products of Iranian craftsmen.

In concluding this short note on calligraphy and book-binding, it is necessary to point out that book-binding and illumination in the West is indebted to the East. The Italian painters, book-binders, and artists, especially in Venice in the late ninth/fifteenth and tenth/sixteenth centuries, imitated Eastern technique especially that of the Iranian craftsmen, and

through them many Oriental motifs and decorative features were introduced in the West, the book-binding of which today is the envy of the East.

3. Pottery

There seems to be no doubt that Mesopotamia or the “Land lying between the two rivers” was the most important center of the potter's art even in the most ancient times. In the ancient kingdoms of Assyria and Babylon the potters were at their best, especially when using what is commonly termed as the “naturalistic style.” The Parthians (249 B. C. to 226 A. D.) whose language is known as Pahlawi, the forerunner of modern Persian, and the Sassanians (226-641 A. D.) who were justly celebrated for the grandeur of their architecture and the splendor of their monuments and inscriptions, liked their artists to express themselves in abstract patterns. Mr. Arthur Lane in his monograph, *Early Islamic Pottery*, would have it that the Assyrian and Babylonian traditions almost died out after the Sassanian times and that Islamic pottery developed in accordance with the technique current in the Mediterranean area and not with that in the Asiatic hinterland. It is difficult to agree completely with this assessment of the Near Eastern influences as they contributed to the development of pottery in Muslim countries be-cause when pottery came into its own in the third/ninth century it was in Mesopotamia that it found its most skillful exponents and designers.

Pottery fragments found in Samarra show signs of great skill and craftsmanship. Not only the variety of the different specimens of the potter's art found at Samarra is interesting and significant but it so appears that there were certain secrets pertaining to the manufacture of luster pottery which were known only to the Mesopotamian potters. These closely guarded secrets, however, became common property when the Mesopotamian potters migrated to the Courts of the Fatimid Sultans. By a curious anomaly of fate the descendants of these immigrant artists again came to Persia after the collapse of the Fatimids and brought to this country a skill which had been vastly improved in the congenial atmosphere of Egypt under the Fatimids from 359-567, 969-1171.

The conquest of the Near East by the Arabs was responsible for the evolu-tion of a new technique of the potter's art. In the beginning the Muslim potters followed in the footsteps of the local artists but, in due course of time, they became the originators of new and far more elegant and beautiful varieties of pottery.

Under the 'Abbasids, Iranian potters from the second/eighth to the fourth/tenth century achieved astounding success in their art and their products revealed such richness of pattern, warmth of color, and beauty of design as were never seen earlier. Usually designs were painted under a transparent glaze or over an opaque one. In the former case, the painting was usually over white or dark slips. Nishapor was a great center of this branch of art and excavations made reveal that even before the advent of the Saljfigs, the potter's art had achieved maturity if not that consummate elegance which was to characterize the products of the Saljaq period.

The greatest contribution of the Muslim potters is the luster technique. It would appear that the Muslim potters were infatuated with the patterns

created by light—"light mysteriously refracted by their luster pigment; light playing over a carved or subtly modelled surface; light gleaming through the glazed windows pierced in the walls of a vessel or through the translucent material itself," as Arthur Lane would have it.¹

Almost all historians suggest that it was the Chinese porcelain or pottery which inspired the Muslim artists, but it may be pointed out that, whereas the art of China is a little stilted and stiff, the pottery of the Muslims is at once "easy, harmonious and well bred."²

After Nishapour it was Kashan which became the center of the activity of the potters of the Saljiq period. It was here that the potters gradually learnt the art of manufacturing wall-tiles painted in luster. The origin of luster-painting is uncertain, but it would appear that it was first used in Egypt in decorating glass. Even if we concede that the Iranian artists of Kashan are indebted to Egyptian artists it does not detract from the originality and brilliance of their technique in manufacturing glazed tiles. If we compare the specimens of Egyptian pottery found in Fustat (it was at the same time a city of some importance under the Fatimid rulers) with Iranian pottery and glazed tiles, we arrive at the conclusion that the Iranian artists showed grater skill in execution and mature sense of color.

The glazed tiles of Persia, especially of Kashan, became so celebrated that the word Kashi is now a synonym for a glazed tile. The most beautiful works were executed by the members of one single family (602-735/1205-1334). Apart from tiles the Kashan luster-ware is justifiably praised for technical per-fection. The decoration is typically Persian-flowers and birds on the wings and interlaced arabesque. After the Mongol invasion, Mongol hats, Chinese dragons and lotus flowers also appear as a natural consequence of the fusion of the traditions of Chinese and Iranian arts. The three mihrabs in the sanctuary of Imam Rida' at Meshed are perhaps the most elegant examples of the Iranian artists' skill so far as glazed tiles are concerned. These were made by Muham-mad abi Tahir.

During the Mongol period lustered tiles were commonly used for the decoration of public buildings, mosques, tombs, and the houses of the great and the rich. Some of these tiles are cross-shaped, some rectangular, and some in the form of stars. It was during this period that another technique was evolved, viz., and the faience mosaic, which became very popular.

The technique of the Mongol era was followed by the artists of the Timurid period, but it may be observed that almost all types of pottery had suffered qualitatively. It may be due to the fact that the Chinese influence being predominant during this period, the artists, instead of reviving the indigenous traditions, tried to imitate specimens of art imported into Iran.

During the Safawid period Iranian artists continued to imitate the Chinese ware and the imitation was sometimes so skillful that the copy was mistaken for the original. Even the decorations consisted of Chinese landscape with typical birds, animals, and foliage, especially legendary dragons and serpents.

In the time of Shah 'Abbas the Great the art of lustre-painting, however, was revived by the potters of Isfahan. Typically Iranian decoration came into vogue. Iranian landscape with birds, animals, and foliage came into its

own. The products of these Isfahani potters show great originality and can be clearly distinguished from the imitations of Chinese pottery, especially in porcelain.

Turkish and Egyptian potters also continued to execute beautiful works of art, but there is no doubt that supremacy rested with the Iranian artists.

Gradually, industrialized Europe excelled the East even in the field of pottery, and the Persian market was flooded with white earthenware from Staffordshire.

4. Textiles and Rugs

(a) Textiles under the `Abbasids, Tulunids, and the Fatimids of Egypt (second/ eighth to sixth/twelfth century).-When the Arabs conquered Egypt in 21/ 641, the weaver's art began to undergo a change of great artistic significance. In the early stages, the Copts, who were really very skillful technicians and weavers, were pressed into the service of the Arab Caliphs and noblemen. They taught and practiced the weaver's art in royal factories, known technically as Tiraz factories. It is necessary to point out at this juncture that the term "Tiraz" was used for (i) bands containing woven or embroidered inscriptions, (ii) embroidered garments and clothes, and (iii) institutions where such garments were manufactured. Unless this three-fold significance of the word "Tiraz" is kept in view, one is liable to get confused.

The importance of the Tiraz factories may be gauged from the fact that many of these were situated in the very homes of the Caliphs-palaces and State mansions.

The Tiraz factories, having been established in Egypt and working under the skillful guidance of the Copts, produced linens and silks of very fine quality. The city Tinnis near Port Said had 5,000 looms and was justly celebrated for producing fabrics of great excellence, such as Kasab, Bukalimun: the former was used generally for turbans and the latter with amazingly changing colors for saddle cloth and for covering the litters for the Caliphs. Every year the 'Abbasid Caliphs sent a covering for the Ka'bah at Mecca known technically as Aiswah manufactured by the craftsmen of the Royal factories established in Tuna. Another city famous for its silks was Dabiqi; the term "Dabiqi" is men-tioned very often in Persian lyrics and Arabic odes. Fustat or old Cairo was also a celebrated center of the weaver's art.

During the regime of the Fatimids, the Egyptian craftsmen surpassed their Coptic masters. The linens and silks of the Fatimid period became so elegant and fine that they were exported to all parts of the civilized world. Generally speaking, the Fatimid artists followed the artists of the `Abbasid regime in the sense that they used either geometrical patterns or figures of animals for decorative purposes, although the Kilfic writing was also observed flanking the decorated pattern. When naskh replaced the Kilfic script, the linen and silk fabrics were decorated with arabesque motifs and the cursive writing of the naskh.

The linen textiles on which decorations and inscriptions were painted or stamped were even more skillfully manufactured. These inscriptions were occasionally in liquid gold, again reminding us that the Sassanian traditions

were very strong even under the Fatimids. The technique of stamping and printing decorations on fabrics was developed to such an extent by the Fatimid artists that it spread to Europe, and the Germans showed great skill in imitating the artistic patterns and motifs of the Egyptian Muslims.

(b) Textiles of the Ayyubid and Mamluk Dynasties.-From the sixth/twelfth to the eighth/fourteenth century, the weaver's art continued to flourish but signs of decline were occasionally noticed. As a matter of fact, the decorations of this period are simple as compared with the superbly executed Fatimid, embroideries in polychrome silk or gold thread.

Stamping and printing were also practiced in accordance with the traditions inherited by the artists. There was a departure in the manufacture of silk which deserves mention. During this period the silk fabric was usually woven with a shuttle on a draw-loom in sharp contradistinction to garments and fabrics with tapestry-woven decorations wherein the weft threads of the designs were introduced with a bobbin or a needle. With the advent of the Mongols and even earlier, the Chinese technique began to influence the weaver's art. It would appear that the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt especially favored the Chinese style of decoration.

(c) Iranian Textiles-When Tiraz factories were established throughout the territorial possessions of the Caliphs, Iran was no exception. As a matter of fact, the Iranian craftsmen who had inherited the traditional skill of the Sassanian craftsmen very soon adapted themselves to the new conditions and began to produce incomparable works of art. During the earlier period Merv and Nishapour housed famous Tiraz factories.

The Iranian artists of these cities produced silk textiles which appear to have been influenced by the fusion of many artistic traditions-the Sassanian, the Coptic, and the Egyptian. The use of the gold thread is certainly reminiscent of the Sassanian traditions, while the decorative patterns bespeak of Coptic influences. History is curiously silent about the place occupied by Samarqand so far as textiles are concerned, but in literary works we find many allusions to the beautiful fabrics, silks and linens, woven in this great city which witnessed the emergence of the Persian renaissance and which under the princes of the House of Saman became a great center of intellectual activity, learning, and cultural movements.

Under the Great Saljuqs, the Iranian artists proceeded from strength to strength. There was a revival of almost all crafts and minor arts, and Ray during this period became the most celebrated weaving center. The Sassanian tradition lost its hold, and, slowly but steadily, arabesque motifs of Islamic origin with finely executed scrolls came into their own.

It would appear that Baghdad also was a famous center of the weaver's art during this period, since Marco Polo (seventh/thirteenth century) praises the silks, linens, and gold brocades of Baghdad and Mosul. Allusions in works of literature would tend to show that weavers in this period had spread all over the territorial possessions of the Saljuqs: it has been proved beyond any shadow of doubt that many fine brocades, silk fabrics, and linens preserved in European museums were manufactured in Asia Minor, especially at Qunyah.

It is an admitted fact that the Mongol invaders of Persia patronized the craftsmen and the artisans and massacred the learned and the erudite, con-sidering the latter as useless appendages of civilized life. Amazingly, however, very few Iranian textiles can be assigned with any amount of certainty to the Mongol or Timfirid period. M. S. Dimand has pointed out that many brocades attributed to Iran by Falke are most likely of Spanish origin. The matter, however, is not free from doubt. All that we can assert safely is that the weavers continued to flourish under the Mongols and Timfirids; unfortunately, however, very few genuine fabrics manufactured by them have been preserved.

As with other branches of art, Iranian weaving blossomed forth into its full splendor under the Safawids who had become infatuated with craftsman-ship of all types except that of words since poetry excluding the elegy was looked at askance by them. Safawid silks were primarily of three types: (i) plain silks, (ii) silk brocades, and (iii) silk velvets. All the three types were most elegant and were used commonly for the garments of the rich, as hangings and curtains of palaces, and as gifts from the Safawid princes to those who deserved them or who had the good fortune of being present when the kings and princes were in their high spirits during festivities or celebrations.

The decoration of these fabrics is almost typically Iranian-animals moving about gracefully, birds on the wings or perched on branches and foliage moving or still as in breathless suspense. The Iranian artists painted even scenes taken from the famous Persian romances or the epic of epics, the Shahnameh. Nizami seems to have been one of the most favorite authors; inci-dents from the stories that he weaves have been interwoven by the weavers into silks and fabrics manufactured for their royal patrons and generous nobles. Linens, brocades, and velvets of this period are to be found in many museums all over the world and appear amazingly fresh, spick and span, glowing with life, with warm and soft colors.

Under Shah `Abbas the Great who was a generous patron of all Fine Arts, artists manufactured textiles of great beauty in Yazd and Kashan. Some of these fabrics have come down to us and we know also the names of some artists, for example, Ghiyath and his son. All critics and historians of art agree-and it is very refreshing to observe this agreement-that the velvets and the brocades manufactured under the Safawids, especially during the reign of Shah `Abbas, constituted the most glorious fabrics ever produced in any part of the world.

Under the Safawids the Iranian artists also developed the art of embroidering and printing cottons. Many specimens of block-printed cotton hangings known technically as *galamkar* have come down to us and it appears that they were made most probably in Isfahan, Hamadan, and Yazd.

(d) Turkish Textiles and Embroideries.-The fabrics of the Ottoman period consisted mainly of finely made brocades and velvets, but it may be observed that the decoration of these fabrics is far less skillful and varied than of those manufactured by the Iranian or Egyptian artists. The Turkish artists almost invariably confined themselves to floral and geometrical patterns. However, Turkish textiles are important in the sense that the artists

of Venice imitated the Turkish craftsmen and, slowly but steadily, this art spread to Europe via Italy.

Turkish artists were very fond of embroidering handkerchiefs and towels, and it is obvious that they were used merely for decoration or ceremonial purposes. Most of them belong to the twelfth/eighteenth and thirteenth/nineteenth centuries.

(e) Indian Textiles.-The Indian artists of antiquity were justly celebrated for manufacturing cotton muslin so fine as to be considered miraculous.

When the weaver's art came into its own under the Moghuls, both Iranian and Hindu motifs became clearly discernible in fabrics manufactured in India. During the period of Shah Jahan very fine velvet was produced. The decoration consisted primarily of floral scrolls.

Silk brocades were the specialty of the Indian artists under the Moghuls. We know on undisputable authority of Abu al-Fall and others that Lahore, Aurangabad, Benares, and Ahmedabad were great weaving centers. Silk brocades were very skillfully designed with vivid colors and abundant use of gold. The elegant saris and head-dresses and sashes (shash) manufactured during the Moghul period have been justifiably claimed to be specimens of the finest weaving in the world: some of them are to this day preserved in museums.

Europe knows Indian textiles most probably through Kashmir shawls, some of them embroidered and others woven.

The art of block-printing and resist-dyeing reached its zenith under the Moghuls. Specimens of printed cotton known to Europe as palampores and pintados were beautifully designed and executed with great skill and ingenuity.

(f) Rugs-Although fragments of rugs have been excavated at Fustat in Egypt which would show that rug-making was very well known to the Egyptian artists, yet there is no doubt that it was only with the advent of the Saljugs that fine rugs were manufactured for the first time. Marco Polo, who passed through Asia Minor in 669/1270, informs us that the most elegant rugs in the world were made by Greek and Armenian artists under royal patronage. It is surprising, indeed, that the Saljugs Turks, barbarian by origin, were responsible for reviving many major and minor arts throughout their territorial possessions. The Saljug rugs have simple decorative patterns-interlacing arabesque, geometrical figures, and medallions.

As is the case with textiles, very few rugs of the Timurid and Mongol periods have come down to us, but if we closely observe the rugs as represented in miniature paintings and as described by poets, we have to concede that the art of rug-making had achieved considerable maturity under the Timirids. As a matter of fact, spring with all its beauty, colors, and abundance of flowers and foliage is described by the poets as inferior to the decorated rugs found in royal palaces.

The finest Iranian rugs were manufactured admittedly under the Safawids. Tabriz was the center of Iranian arts and crafts and it was here that the weavers of Kashan, Hamadan and Herat would learn the craft of rug making and go back to their homes to spread this artistic activity throughout the possessions of the Safawids.

The most celebrated types of rugs manufactured under the Safawids may be grouped as follows: (i) medallion and animal rugs with arabesque and floral designs, (ii) woolen rugs with animal figures drawn, with the greatest skill, realistically and not in stilted conventional manner, (iii) silk rugs, (iv) rugs with floral designs, and (v) vase rugs.

Under the Moghuls rug-making or carpet-making in India became very favorite with kings and princes and Abu al-Fadl, eulogizing Akbar, writes that "all kinds of carpet weavers have settled here and drive a flourish-ing trade. These are found in every town, especially in Agra, Fatehpur, and Lahore."

Some of the Moghul rugs have been preserved, particularly those in the collection of the Maharajah of Jaipur. Dimand is of opinion that "in technical perfection the Indian weavers of the time of Shah Jehan often surpassed their Iranian Masters."

Turkish rugs are mainly of two kinds, (a) manufactured by royal factories with all facilities attendant thereupon, (b) made by ordinary villagers and peasants who occasionally grouped themselves with industrial ends in view. The design of the Turkish rug is mainly geometrical and this characteristic can be traced even in the peasants' productions right from the tenth/sixteenth to the thirteenth/nineteenth century.

Some time back a series of beautifully designed rugs of different sizes with floral patterns was wrongly attributed to the skill of Damascus craftsmen, but recent research has established beyond any shadow of doubt that these rugs are the products of Turkish looms; many technical specimens of these are to be found in the Metropolitan Museum. Rugs bearing floral patterns and designs may safely be assigned to Court manufactories, especially those established by Sulaiman (906-974/1500-1566) in Constantinople or Brusa (Asia Minor). Obviously, the rugs made by the peasants are comparatively coarse and their patterns and designs clearly show that the sensibility of the designers was not fully developed.

There is no doubt that these Turkish rugs, whether manufactured by artists attached to the Court or by peasants, are, on the whole, inferior to the Persian rugs of the Safawid period which were brilliantly conceived and superbly executed as works of art.

5. Wood-carving, and Ivory and Bone-carving

(a) Wood-carving.-There is no doubt that the Muslim artists during the early centuries of Islam developed the art of wood-carving under Hellenistic and Sassanian influence.

The most celebrated specimen of wood-carving produced during the early 'Abbasid regime is the prayer pulpit in the mosque of Qairawan situated in North Africa which, it would appear, was brought from Baghdad during the third/ninth century along with some lustered tiles by some notables of the Aghlabid dynasty. This pulpit contains panels decorated with geometrical patterns and designs. It is regarded as a masterpiece of wood-carving of the Baghdad School and was most probably executed under the patronage of Harun, the `Abbasid Caliph. The abstract art of modern times would benefit to a great extent if its exponents study carefully the fine patterns and designs executed during the early 'Abbasid period.

Gradually, the `Abbasid artists developed a style of their own and freed themselves from the fetters imposed upon them by the Sassanian and Hellenistic conventions. The 'Abbasid style of decoration was imitated by the Egyptian artists under the Tulunids (324-359/935-969) and it became very popular in all parts of Egypt, especially in Cairo.

The craftsmen of Egypt, however, gradually improved upon the `Abbasid technique and evolved out a style of their own in the fourth/tenth century. The motifs “were more deeply undercut and there was a tendency towards roundness.”

It is extremely difficult to estimate the part played by the ancient crafts and arts of Egypt in the development of wood-carving by the Egyptian artists. After all Egypt had inherited artistic traditions of great significance and value and it would perhaps be safe to assert that the artists must have benefited from the heritage of ancient Egypt.

With the passage of time geometrical patterns gave way to other types of decoration, namely, the carving of animal figures and arabesque scrolls; the devotion to detail in these works is amazing and is indicative both of the skill of the artist and of his painstaking labor.

Some of the panels of wood made during the Fatimid regime are magni-ficently carved and depict typically Egyptian scenes; the figures of birds or animals are emphasized and this is but natural because the ancient Egyptians worshipped certain birds and animals as gods and goddesses.

During the Ayyubid period the Fatimid tradition continued to influence wood-carving with the difference that arabesque scrolls became more delicate, fine, and complicated, and nasj h replaced Kiific inscriptions. With the passage of time the devotion to detail which has already been noticed was emphasized still further. It was in this period that various valuable types of wood including ebony came into use.

The art of carving in Egypt declined in the ninth/fifteenth century.

The wood-carver's art in Iran showed signs of considerable maturity even during the regime of Mahmnd of Ghaznah; a door from his tomb has been preserved, ironically enough, in the Museum at Agra. This door reveals that the Iranian artists evolved a style of their own and arranged the deep undercutting of the ornament in several planes. This characteristic feature is undoubtedly of Iranian origin.

Wood-carvings of the Saljug period have, unfortunately, not come down to us in sufficient quantity to enable us to evaluate their artistic worth but it may be safely asserted that the artists of Asia Minor during the sixth/twelfth and seventh/thirteenth centuries produced works of very high quality the decoration of which compared favorably with that of the Egyptian and the Syrian artists.

Wood-carvings pertaining to the early Mongol period are also very rare but there is no doubt that in the second half of the eighth/fourteenth century the Iranian artists, especially in Western Turkestan, achieved a technical perfection which leaves nothing to be desired.

The art flourished for some time under the Safawids but in the eleventh/seventeenth and the twelfth/eighteenth centuries signs of decline were

notice-able: during this period the panels were painted and lacquered, not carved.

(b) Ivory and Bone-carving.-Ivory and bone-carving of the early Islamic period has been found at various places in Egypt, especially in old Cairo, and shows that Coptic traditions influenced the work of the earlier artists to a large extent. Artists flourished under the Fatimid, Ayyubid, and Mamliik dynasties. Decoration during this period was very elaborate and finely executed.

Sicilian ivory-work has also been preserved in certain museums and it reveals a fusion of the Eastern and Western styles. The decorative motifs are mainly arabesque, human figures, animals, birds on the wings and perched on the branches of trees with dark somber and sober outlines and occasional flashes of vivid red, bright violet, blue, and dazzling gold.

6. Metal-work, Glass and Crystal

(a) Metal-work.-The Sassanian tradition in Iran was so strong that the earlier products of Muslims, particularly silver and gold vessels, have been attributed mistakenly to the artists of the Sassanian era. However, it is easy enough to distinguish earlier Islamic metal-work from the Sassanian because vessels which are decorated with Kiiiflic inscriptions, birds, interlaced arabes-que, and medallions are definitely of Islamic origin. It has been conjectured- and there seems to be merit in this conjecture-that the earliest products of the art of metal-work pertain to the period of the Samanids who were res-ponsible for heralding the Persian renaissance in letters, learning, and Fine Arts.

Early Islamic vessels consist mostly of trays and ewers fashioned in the shape of animals and birds.

With the advent of the Saljuq Turks in 429/1037 Muslim metal-work came into its own. The bronze, gold, and silver utensils which have been preserved in different museums reveal patterns and decorations which are extremely original and seem to have been developed by the artists of the Saljuq period. Enamel-work was also known, although it was not of very high quality. Gold jewelry of a considerably high standard consisting mainly of ear-rings and pendants, fashioned again in the shape of animals and birds, has come down to us. During this period both Iran and Mesopotamia became centers of the art of casting bronze objects with relief decorations-mirrors, plaques, and animal figures. Two mirrors which have come down to us (preserved in the Harari Collection in Cairo) reveal that the artists devoted great care in the execution of their work and paid painstaking attention to details.

Metal-work during the Fatimid period consists mainly of jewelry and is relatively very rare. Some specimens are to be found in the Harari Collec-tion mentioned above.

It is interesting to note that some of the metal-work under the Ayyubid Sultans is decorated with Christian motifs.

Although artists in metal-work continued to flourish during the Mongol period and after, signs of qualitative decline were apparent.

Under the Safawids, however, the metal-workers achieved great distinction in moulding iron and steel and produced works of art which are

technically perfect and in no way inferior to the earlier masterpieces. Unfortunately, very few specimens of Safawid metal-works have survived, but in the tenth/sixteenth-century miniature paintings we can observe the elegance and charm of some of the metal-works represented therein.

The artists of other Muslim countries did not achieve any great distinction in this art as compared with the Iranian artists.

(b) Glass and Crystal.-During the Roman period the artists of the Near East, particularly Syria and Egypt, were justly celebrated for their skillfully executed glass-ware. The Muslim artists learnt the various techniques of decorating glass from the local artists.

Excavations made at Susa, Rayy, and Sava have given to us specimens of glass-work which prove that the Iranian artists continued to walk in the footsteps of their Sassanian masters and even copied the Sassanian forms and decorative features.

The glass-work of the earlier Islamic period consists mainly of bottles, flasks, cups, and receptacles for oil and perfume. The earlier works were un-decorated but with the passage of time the artists learnt the art of decoration and produced works which were exquisitely beautiful. Especially charming were the small thick prismatic perfume bottles.

Under the Fatimids the glass industry reached its zenith. Excavations at Fustat and Alexandria have revealed that the artists had achieved great skill in this art and developed technical perfection. The greatest distinction achieved by the artists of the Fatimid period was the decoration of glass with luster-painting and enamel. It is unfortunate indeed that this type of work has come down to us only in fragments.

Some pieces, incomplete as they are, in the Arab Museum in Cairo, the British Museum, and the Berlin Museum, each decorated with beautiful scroll work and abstract geometrical patterns of Kufic inscriptions, sometimes painted in brown luster and sometimes in silver, reveal great skill.

The cut decoration was also perfected by the Fatimid artists.

There were signs of deterioration of this art under the Mongols and the Tienfirids and it was under Shah Abbas the Great (996-1039/1587-1629) that glass-making again reached technical perfection most probably due to the impact of the West, especially the influence of the Italian art. It would appear that Shiraz and Isfahan were the greatest centers of the glass-maker's art.

After the Safawids, industrialized Europe gave the quietus to this branch of artistic activity in the East.

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Notes

1. Arthur Lane, Early Islamic Pottery, Faber and Faber, London, n.d.
2. z Ibid.

Part 3: Social Studies

Chapter 60: Historiography

Chapter 61: Jurisprudence

Chapter 60: Historiography

The debt that history owes to the efforts of Muslim writers is generally recognized by Orientalists, but the consciousness of the value and significance of the Muslim contribution is rare among Western historians. Every known sizable collection of Islamic manuscripts includes a good proportion of historical works¹ which in itself is a fair indication of the importance attached by Muslim scholarship to history. A comparison between the outputs of historical literature by the Muslims before decay set in and the Islamic civilization began to decline and the histories written during or before that period by other peoples will show what great interest was taken by the followers of Islam in history. A similar comparison in the standards achieved will be equally illuminating. It would be no exaggeration to say that in the Middle Ages, history was very much a Muslim science. Their contribution is even more remarkable in view of the fact that the Muslims had inherited very meagre traditions on which they raised so glorious an edifice.

For several decades the Orientalists were not impressed with the Muslim traditions regarding the magnitude of ignorance in pre-Islamic Arabia. They saw in them an endeavor to exaggerate the achievement of Islam by belittling pre-Islamic Arab effort; even the silence of Muslim writers was suspect. Partly for this reason and partly with the desire to belittle the success of Islam in uplifting the Arabs, the Orientalists made strenuous efforts to find proofs of pre-Muslim attainments, but they did not discover much. In the words of a recent authority, “the cultural and economic level of the nomad population was, as it has always been, too low to support any literary effort.”² The Arabs did produce some poetry, a fact mentioned and recognized by Muslim authorities, but they had little conception of other branches of literature. They do not seem even to have a word for history. Some of the earlier writers have used the term *akhbdr* for history; the singular form, *khbar*, is used even today for a report or information.

This has been the meaning of the word in Muslim times; the earlier meaning of this word is obscure. As the name implies, *akhbdr* is generally understood to mean a string, a collection, or, at best, a connected sequence of reports, and only in the last form does it achieve the form of a historical narration of events. The origin of the word *tdrikh*, which is now generally used for history, is even more difficult to trace. Its root form perhaps came to be used in the Yaman in the pre-Islamic days, but, in all probability, it referred to time, not to history.³ This significance of the word has not yet been lost; indeed, the word *tdrikh* is used more often in the meaning of a date than of history.

It is obvious that with-out even a proper word for it, the Arabs could have little conception of history before the advent of Islam. They had a few stories of what they had considered to have been important or interesting events and vague, probably untrue, legends of the peoples who had inhabited the old ruins that were scattered in some parts of the peninsula. They lacked even a proper epic; indeed, they were a people with no consciousness of history. The Muslims, therefore, could not have drawn any

inspiration for the development of a tradition of historiography from the pre-Islamic Arabs.

The Greek sciences made a most significant contribution to Islamic culture, but in the field of history, the Greek influence is difficult to trace. No classical Greek history ever reached the Arabs; the Greek and the Latin annalistic literature has been lost and is not available even to the modern scholar.⁴ History, however, was a much less important sector of Greek and Latin scholarship; it was not considered of sufficient merit to be included in the curriculum of regular studies. The Muslims adopted the branches of learning that were considered to possess sufficient importance in the eyes of the Greeks themselves; the Greek tradition was kept alive in these subjects. One of the reasons for the loss of classical Greek historical literature may be the fact that the Arabs showed no interest in its preservation.

The Byzantines had traditions of historiography and it is not beyond the range of possibility that some of their works came into the hands of the Arabs through Syrian Christians and converts to Islam. They might have contributed some techniques, but these techniques could not have been important.⁵ In any case, the Arabs could not have derived their historical sense from the Byzantines.

The other two great civilizations with which the Arabs came into close contact were those of the Iranians and the Hindus. The Hindus never developed an interest in history. There is little indication of the Iranians possessing any notable historical literature at the time of the Muslim conquest.⁶

It is, therefore, more likely that the Arabs developed a sense of history as a result of the Prophet Muhammad's mission. Indeed, all indications point in this direction; hence they need exploration. It should be remembered that Islam itself claims to work in the context of history. It fulfils the previous missions of the prophets who had come before Muhammad.⁷ It seeks to abrogate the excrescences that came to disfigure truth in the course of time, because the generations that had gone before had failed to preserve the earlier revelations.⁸ Prophets had come in various societies at different times and had preached the same essential truth, but there had grown up errors and misunderstandings, some deliberate and perverse and others as the result of folly, and divine revelation had become clouded. Now this basic belief shows a consciousness of history. It is concerned with the past, the present, and even the future.

The future comes in because Muhammad being the last of the prophets⁹ and the bearer of a message of transcendent importance, his mission will remain effective throughout the future. This conception of religion is not concerned with the present only. It does not look upon the present as merely transient, nor upon the past as the sum total of merely so many transient and insignificant presents. This is borne out by the fact that the Qur'an draws attention repeatedly to the misdeeds of previous peoples and their destruction as the result of these misdoings.¹⁰ The warning is implicit in the narrative itself, but it is also given explicitly on many occasions. If the past produced all those disastrous results, or if, conversely, virtuous deeds in the past were fruitful in producing good results, there is a relationship between

the past, the present, and the future which is significant in fashioning human life. History, in this manner, achieves great importance in understanding life.

There is another aspect of Islam that has an important bearing upon history. Muhammad has 4 unique place in history. According to the Muslim belief, Muhammad stands, as if it were, on the watershed of time. The progress that had been vouchsafed to humanity before him was to find fulfilment in his mission. The previous messages were limited to particular peoples and their environments and conditions. They had the special circumstances of these people in view; hence they had contained, in addition to an emphasis upon the universal nature of the absolute values, certain teachings that were valid only in the circumstances in which they were revealed.

The succession of the previous prophets had worked for the completion of religious belief, for a perfection in the unveiling of the great truths, and for giving humanity the essence of religious truth, untrammelled by the need to circumscribe it by a consideration of the transient environment. Muhammad, thus, represents the culmination of one divine plan and the beginning of another. The first plan was designed to meet the differing needs of various segments of the human race, the second plan for the entire humanity. The very pattern of religious progress changes after Muhammad, because now there is a universal message to follow, the essence indeed of all that has gone before.

With this belief about the position of the Prophet in time, it was natural that the Muslims should cultivate the historic sense. Christianity also believes in a divine plan of history; indeed, the Church, encouraged by the power and expansion of the Christian nations, came to believe strongly that it was the will of God that Christianity should prosper in the world and in this manner the Kingdom of God should be ultimately established on earth. Only recently with the growth of communist States has this belief somewhat weakened. However, even when the Church held a strong conviction regarding the ultimate triumph of Christianity and looked upon history as the gradual revelation of the divine plan, its conception of the importance of the unfolding of the historical processes was not the same as that of the Muslims.

According to the Christian dogma, Christ is the man-god; he did come at a particular time in history, but that time has no special significance because, as God, Christ is eternal, timeless, and infinite. Only for the time that he was in this world, did he put upon himself the limitations of a finite human existence. He came to redeem the world and he did it by paying for it with his own life. In a sense this redemption is the culmination of religious evolution. It was for this reason that the earlier Christians saw in every disaster the approach of the end of the world. Having been redeemed, the world had achieved the goal; there was nothing beyond it. The further unfolding of history was irrelevant.

The Muslim position was basically different. The Qur'an enjoined that there should be a body among the Muslims dedicated to the task of preaching the truth¹¹; indeed, the Muslims themselves were to form a nation

to invite others to accept the truth and to set an example for the world.¹² Muhammad was the last of the prophets, but his mission was to be carried on by the learned among his people. It was for this reason that he had said that these learned people were to be like the prophets of Israel; in other words, what had hitherto been achieved through a succession of prophets was to be accomplished through the agency of learned men.

This sharp contrast between the destiny of Islam and the earlier religions was bound to set people thinking about the elements responsible for this change in the divine plan. How had the world changed to need a new dispensation so radically different, in its purpose from what had gone before? This question was even more pertinent since it was not the nature of the truth that had changed; for did not Islam claim to be all revealed truth, whether it had come before Muhammad or through him? And what was the truth that had come before? How far did it conform to the message of the Qur'an?

How much of the truth claimed by the previous religions was interpolation, and how much of it incidental to the circumstances of those days and the peoples who had been its recipients? These were the questions that arose naturally, and all of them are either directly historical or have historical overtones. They were rooted not only in natural curiosity, but, as we shall see later, also in theology itself.

In its exhortations for belief and righteousness, the Qur'an does not depend entirely upon appeal to emotions. It argues and appeals to reason at innumerable places. Phenomena of nature, legends contained in older Scriptures, the impact of ruined cities and buildings upon the imagination of a sensitive people, and historical events are all pressed into service. Indeed, there are considerable historical data in the Qur'an.¹³ The inclusion of these allusions in large numbers led the critics of the Prophet to question the relevance of human experience in the past. They dismissed them as being merely the records of peoples who had gone before.¹⁴ The unbelievers implied that what had happened in the past was of little importance to them. They certainly did not believe that history had any lessons for them.

The Qur'an, on the other hand, considers the experience of the past generations and of other peoples to be of vital importance. The underlying argument is that similar actions and circumstances produce similar results. The Qur'an thus lays down one of the first principles that guided the Muslims in their study of history. They wanted to learn from the experience of others. Besides, human activity is not an isolated phenomenon; it is linked with the past as much as with the future. Being implicit in the very conception of Muhammad as one of the prophets and the last of them, it found confirmation in the insistence of the Qur'an on the importance of historical phenomena in the determination of right and wrong.

If any human action has brought disaster, that action could not be right except as the vindication of the principle of righteousness itself. And in judging the results of human activity, the Qur'an does not take into consideration the individual. It is the sum total of communal activity which cannot be right if it produces disasters.¹⁵

A good man working for the common good in a bad community may suffer, but he has his other rewards. A bad man in a good community may not suffer, but he has his other punishments. This is the reason why prophets and martyrs seemingly failed in bad communities which hurled themselves into disasters; from a purely worldly point of view they even suffered grievously, but actually they were saved and the evil-doers really suffered. And in the stories of the bad communities and the suffering prophets, there is another implication. The good that the prophets had sought to achieve might not have been established in their own times or communities but it ultimately did prevail, and this shows a continuity of the historical process in which righteousness ultimately wins.

Apart from their moral and philosophical implications, which helped in creating a historical sense in the Muslims, the historical allusions in the Qur'an presented a challenge to the Muslim mind. The Muslims wanted to learn more about them, and thus began a search for more detailed information. It is true that with their limited resources and the condition of human knowledge in their days, the information collected by the early Muslims was not always accurate. Considerable legendary material, folklore, and mythology entered into their understanding of the historical facts mentioned in the Qur'an. A fertile source of legendary material was the Jewish tradition. The net gain was that historical curiosity had been aroused. Some of the earlier mistakes were never corrected, but others were discarded when critical faculties got sharpened by greater experience and knowledge.¹⁶

There was yet another aspect of religion that directly led to the cultivation of history. Muhammad is a historical figure; he lived in the limelight of history. His biography has always been considered to be a cornerstone of Muslim theology¹⁷ and, therefore, the events of his life were eagerly sought and collected. So long as his immediate disciples and Companions were alive, this was a simple matter, but as time elapsed, it was considered increasingly necessary to collect all information about him. Where the believers could not find clear guidance from the Qur'an, or where there was dispute in the interpretation of its text, the best authority could be the Prophet's actions and sayings.

Thus, there grew up the tradition of collecting the ahadith, and after some time when the original narrators had died and there had intervened several generations so that for every hadith there were several narrators in succession, it was necessary to submit the reports to searching criticism. The scholars developed canons of criticism that have not only endured but have earned the respect of the succeeding generations for their soundness¹⁸

Modern scholarship can find fault with some of the traditions that have been judged to be sound, but the canons of criticism and of testing the validity of reports are trustworthy even today. This was no mean achievement and shows not only a keen sense of responsibility but also a high perception of the criteria which should be applied to any narration. After all this is the kernel of all methods of historical research.

A by-product of this search was the compilation of working biographies of all the better known narrators. In this process those considered unreliable

were branded as such. The biographers made the most careful and impartial scrutiny, and if they found any trace of deceit or even a charge of lying in any respect, they exposed the narrator so that the traditions, in the chain of the narrators in which he appeared, might at least be treated with extreme caution. As it was a theological and religious matter and concerned the beliefs of all Muslims, the critics developed the highest sense of intellectual honesty. Despite these efforts and precautions, some unreliable traditions have found their way into the “authentic collections,” but when it is remembered that the collectors discarded many more traditions than were considered sufficiently sound to be accepted, it would be clear how well the criteria were applied.

A remarkable testimony to the historical sense of the Muslims is their success in preserving the text of the Qur'an. It really arose from two of the teachings of the Book itself. The first of these is the doctrine of the corruption of the previous Scriptures through changes or interpolations. The other is the promise that the Qur'an shall be preserved.¹⁹ According to the Muslim belief, the corruption of the previous Scriptures resulted in the misguidance of the people to the extent that the shape of the original faith was changed beyond recognition. The Muslims had been given the Qur'an, which they were to cherish and preserve in the original form. They believe in the verbal sanctity of the Qur'an. This led them to preserve the text. Taking into consideration the differences in languages in the Muslim world and the rise of various sects in Islam, this is quite an achievement. The preservation of the text of the Qur'an could not but have engendered a respect for the texts of documents of any importance.

It would be seen from this discussion that historiography in the Muslim world had religious beginnings. It was religion that gave the Muslims their historical sense, and the requirements of developing a theology made it imperative for the Muslim theologians to undertake historical research and to lay down canons of evaluating historical data for eliminating doubt and error so far as it was humanly possible. It led them to explore the traditions of religions allied to their own which had preceded the mission of the Prophet in point of time. Indeed, historical studies started in Islam as a necessary adjunct of theological development²⁰. It was necessary, therefore, for the Muslims to cultivate a religious attitude towards history, which could not be discarded easily. Indeed, even when history ventured out into the courts of worldly monarchs, it was not able to overcome some of the conceptions developed in the cloisters of the mosques and the colleges of theology.

The theologians looked upon their work as an act of worship; hence it was to be approached with the utmost sincerity. In such work all merit was lost if any selfish motives were permitted to interfere with its objectivity. The scholar considered himself to be accountable to God for every fact that he reported or any opinion that he expressed.²¹ Indeed in the beginning he was doubtful whether he was justified in expressing an adverse opinion about anyone.²² However, he was strengthened by the Prophet's example of not hesitating from censuring a person in the public interest, or from expressing an opinion that would save others from trouble and hardship.²³

In the reporting of facts and the expression of opinions, therefore, the writer felt himself bound by the ethics of a witness or a judge. He would not report anything about which he was not certain; he would weigh all the evidence at his disposal and try to adjudicate fairly upon the merits of the report and the character of the narrator. He would not be a party to the perpetuation of a false report. In reporting a tradition of the Prophet he was conscious of the Muslim belief that the Prophet had strongly forbidden his followers to ascribe a saying or a tradition to him falsely. Therefore, he wanted to avoid at all costs any participation in such an act. The secular historians unhesitatingly imbibed these ideas and adopted the same attitude in their fields.²⁴

This attitude created high standards of objectivity. Indeed, quite often objectivity was carried to ridiculous extremes. Not a few books written by Muslim authors are dry and jejune chronicles of events without any comments or value-judgments. The authors felt that it was their duty to narrate the events and that it was the business of the reader to arrive at his own conclusions. They did not believe that the historian's function was to narrate the facts as well as to interpret them. Such an attitude was crippling for a proper develop-ment of history as a social science. There was, however, a brighter side to this objectivity, a scrupulous regard for the truth. Even when history was written with a political objective in view, the facts were not mutilated.

The best examples are furnished by two Muslim historians of the Indo--Pakistan sub-continent. Abu al-Fadl wrote the Akbarnameh with the blatantly clear object of extolling his patron, Akbar.²⁵ Mulla 'Abd al-Qadir Badayuni, on the other hand, wrote his Muntakhab al-Tawarikh, it seems, to prove to the world that Akbar had strayed away from the right path. Shorn of the propaganda against Akbar, Badayuni's book is merely an avowed redaction of Nizam al-Din Ahmad's Tabagati Akbari. Badayuni has added information about Akbar's lapses from his personal observation and also from hearsay.

The general effect is pretty damning from the orthodox Muslim point of view. On closer analysis, however, it appears that Badayuni has suggested more than his words really convey, and, being a master of studied ambiguity and innuendo, he is able to create impressions without taking responsibility for some of the events that he reports. Wherever he is reporting an incident or a fact that is obviously not correct, he prefaces it by a vague remark like "It is reported that...." Sometimes he writes sentences that can be translated in more than one way.²⁶ Such ambiguity, however, occurs only where the author deliberately seeks to suggest what he does not want to say. This was not done for any fear of the monarch, because Badayuni's book was kept secret during Akbar's reign.²⁷

It was Badayuni's regard for the verbal and the literal truth that led him into these devious paths. He was perhaps not bothered about the general effect because he was probably convinced, as were several other men of high repute, of Akbar's heterodoxy. Badayuni left the path of historical rectitude only in heightening an effect that he considered to be true. Abu al-Fadl, who approached his task with an entirely different purpose, is hard put

to it where he finds it difficult to justify or explain away some measure or action of the monarch. He adopts the method not of ignoring it, but of making a veiled reference to it that a discerning reader can well understand. Abu al-Fadl, his general panegyrics apart, shows a high regard for truth in reporting events. He was probably also convinced of the truth of the general theme of his work, namely, that Akbar was a monarch of unusual ability and that he was inclined to show remarkable benevolence towards his subjects.

Whatever axes the two authors had to grind are, however, quite apparent to the reader, but he cannot help being impressed by the pathetic regard for truth that is so apparent in these works and that is so difficult to maintain because of the patently partial approaches of the authors. These are perhaps extreme examples, but they are by no means unique in the history of Muslim historiography. Nizam al-Din Ahmad, whose work has been mentioned above, provides a good example of the extreme objectivity observed by some Muslim historians, because, living in the midst of such acute controversy regarding the monarch's religious policies and attitudes and himself being orthodox in his own religious beliefs, he does not even as much as mention the topic. He could not have considered it unimportant, being an observer of good sensitivity, but he left it out because he did not want to pass value-judgments on matters which he disliked.

The Muslim monarchs were extremely sensitive regarding the verdict of the posterity on their deeds. They had the common human weakness of being desirous of leaving a good name behind them. Historians were, therefore, courted and patronized. A number of histories have been written by men who in varying degrees can be called "Court historians." In some European circles their works are treated with suspicion, which is not justified in all cases. We have seen how men of probity have not twisted facts even when they seemed to mar their own thesis; at worst, they may have been guilty in some instances of the suppression of some unpalatable truth or the suggestion of virtues that did not exist. They could not have invented events.

Their faults can mostly be remedied easily-any hyperbolic praise of a patron is understood to be merely a matter of form; the pure and unabashed panegyric can be easily dismissed as being out of context.²⁸

When a weakling is called a world-conquering hero by a writer, it is understood that the epithet is only an expression of courtesy conveying nothing, but a Muslim historian does not invent imaginary victories to adorn sober history. If a historian misses some event, he knows that others are likely to mention it and that he will be held guilty by posterity; therefore, there are few instances of deliberate misrepresentation by Muslim historians, and these have often been corrected by subsequent writers or even their own contemporaries.

The historians who had access to monarchs and their ministers were well informed and to that extent are more reliable. In an age when the printing press had not made the daily newspaper possible and governments were not publicity-conscious in the modern sense of the term, the isolated scholar was hard put to it to collect the necessary data for an informative book relating the events of a reign. One has only to compare the bazaar gossip

related by European travelers to India with the sober histories of the period to see how distorted the reports of events did become once they had left the pre-cincts of the Court and the circles of persons in contact with the high officials.

A Court historian was in no less desperate a position than a historian of today who is overwhelmed by the information material issuing from the publicity departments of modern governments, especially when his own emotions are also deeply involved, e.g., in a crisis in which his own nation is concerned. The Court historian had his own reputation at stake because he intended to write for posterity. The professional code established by histo-rians could not be transgressed with impunity.

However, not all historians who were otherwise attached to a Court can be called Court historians. There have existed men of the highest probity who were attached to Courts and wrote historical works, but they cannot be termed Court historians. Amir Khusrau enjoyed the patronage of several monarchs but he was not employed as a historian. Badayuni, while attached to Akbar's Court, wrote against him. Nizam al-Din Ahmad held a high office in the government, but the recording of history was not one of his duties. It is doubtful whether even abu al-Fadl can be called a Court historian in spite of his great par-tiality for Akbar, because his official assignments were of an administrative or military nature.

The famous Abmad bin Yabya al-Baladhuri was a nadim of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil; 'Ata bin Muhammad al-Juwaini was a wazir; other government officials who were also historians of some eminence include Muhammad Yabya al-Siili, Sinan bin habit, Abu 'Ali Abmad bin Muhammad Miskawaih, and Salah al-Din Khalil bin Aibak al-Safadi, to name only a few. The great ibn Khaldun was a Qadi, but this was not considered so much of a government office as a religious obligation to be discharged by those quali-fied for it if they were called upon by the monarch to assume the responsi-bility.

There were some princes and rulers who took an interest in history and wrote works of considerable merit. An outstanding example is Isma'il bin 'Ali Abu al-Fide' who, in the midst of the busy life of a statesman and soldier, found time to write authoritative history. The 'Abbasid prince Abu Hashim Yosuf bin Muhammad al-Zahir wrote a history of the reign of his brother, al-Mustansir bi-Allah. Some of the rulers of the Yaman, like Jaiyas bin Najah (d. 501/1107), al-Afdal al-'Abbas bin 'Ali (d. 779/1377), and al-Ashraf Isma'il bin 'Abbas (d. 805/1402) were responsible for historical works.²⁹ None of these can be called Court historians, nor are their works prejudiced because of their high offices.

Diaries and memoirs are a fruitful source for historical studies. Indeed, some memoirs are our mainstay so far as the historical information regarding some areas at certain times is concerned. In this category come the memoirs of Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur, whose stormy life presents not only one of the most exciting studies in history, but also gives us an insight into the political conditions of Central Asia after Timur's Empire had collapsed. He is rightly known as the prince of all diarists because of his frank narration of events, in which he also discloses his own humane

personality, telling us in a most charming manner his weaknesses and recording his triumphs with-out any bragging. He hides neither his elation at success, nor sorrow at his defeat.

This chiaroscuro of victory and defeat, of weakness and strength, of lapses and piety, and of ambition and frustration reveals a sensitive and lovable personality possessed of artistic sensibilities, all of which makes the Tuzuk extremely readable in addition to being informative. To take another example, his great grandson, Nur al-Din Muhammad Jahangir, also wrote his memoirs. Jahangir had known no adversity; his tale could not be so thrilling as that of Babur;' besides, he wrote not as an ambitious adventurer, albeit crowned and of imperial descent, as Babur did, but as an established ruler of a great empire. And yet, Jahangir's memoirs do not show any lack of sensitivity. He is as keen an observer of human character as his illustrious ancestor was, as artistic in his own manner, being one of the greatest patrons of art, and an excellent critic and connoisseur. In spite of the inherent pomposity in the writing of an emperor who knows that his book will be read by his subjects even in his own lifetime, the book does not lack obvious sincerity.

These examples can be multiplied from other periods and other lands in the context of Muslim historiography. The main point is that the suspicion in which certain Western writers uncritically hold any writer associated with a Court is not justified. Those who transgressed the requirements of historical objectivity were forgotten and subsequent scholars and historians did not fail to criticize or even condemn them for their lapses. In the words of Diya' al-Din Barani, "it is necessary that the historian be ... known and famous for his truth and just dealing" and when "he writes of the excellences, the good deeds, the justice and equity of the ruler or of a great man, he must also not conceal his vices and evil deeds. ...; the attention of the truthful, pious, and sincere historian should be directed towards writing the truth. He should be in fear of answering on the Day of Judgment.... In sum, history is a rare and useful form of knowledge and its writing is a great obligation.³⁰

As the writing of history was looked upon as a religious duty, the highest objectivity and impartiality were its criteria in the mind of the Muslim historian. There were black sheep as well and sometimes the desire for gain or the fear of a tyrant overcame the sense of responsibility of the writer, but he generally was relegated to oblivion.

Muslim historiography took several forms. The pre-Islamic Arabs took great pride in their genealogies. Like other primitive peoples, they generally kept verbal records which on some occasions were even publicly recited. Of course this often resulted in bragging and was a fruitful source of tribal war-fare and vendetta. The practice of maintaining genealogies was kept up under Islam as well, and many non-Arab families seem to have adopted the habit. It is unlikely that in the pre-Islamic period the Arabs bothered to remember the main events connected with the life of every ancestor. Some famous anecdotes or events might have been associated with some outstanding names, but an idea of a connected family history or biography, however sketchy, of even the better known men in the family tree was

unknown. It is even more improbable that any of these genealogies were committed to writing in the pre-Islamic period. The main features of these genealogies were fairly well known even outside the group of those to whom a genealogy belonged and any fraudulent claim was soon countered. In a way this was the early Arab way of remembering their tribal origin, but it had little to do with real history.

When the Muslims took up historiography, genealogies proved helpful in understanding the part played by the Arab tribes in Islamic history. With the growing participation of the non-Arab Muslims in the affairs of the Islamic world the genealogical pattern came to be discarded in the greater part of the Muslim world. The origin of the genealogical works like Zubair bin Bakkar's *Nasab-u Quraish* was the exaltation of the Quraish; this was feasible because the ruling dynasties of the Umayyads and the `Abbasids were alike Quraish. Baladhuri's *Kitab al-Ansab* is the classical example of history being dealt with from the angle of genealogy. However, with the inclusion of so many non-Arab peoples in the world of Islam and their rise to power, such treatment became obsolete. It, however, thrived in the Maghrib, especially in Spain, because tribal considerations continued to play an important part in the area and history could be grouped around the activities of some tribes and clans. Private families, particularly some of the 'Alids and Hashimites, were interested in keeping a record of their ancestry.

Family histories have continued to be written up to this day. Most families, however, contented themselves with keeping their genealogies in tabular forms. *Shajarahs* were quite common in the Muslim world, but they cannot be classified as history. The Arabs, however, were given to tribal fighting which continued for considerable time and had the tendency to be rekindled at the slightest pretext. The memory of a spectacular or significant victory was kept alive. The battle-day tradition occupied an important place in the folklore of early Arabia. Those who had distinguished themselves in a battle or had inflicted a humiliating defeat on their adversary continued to brag about it long after. In fact, scholars are inclined to think that this form of narration was common to the earlier Semites as well. It is present in the older sections of the Bible.³¹

These traditions did not form a continuous narration like an epic; every anecdote stood by itself and spoke of a single event. In the Bible they have been grouped into a continuous narration, but each event can be read separately. It is improbable that any such anecdotes were committed to writing in pre-Islamic Arabia.³² They were, however, known to the Arab historians of the Muslim period. They did not find their way into the Muslim historical literature before the seventh/thirteenth century, because the earlier historians were doubtful of their historical worth. They were valuable for philological studies, but not as sources of history, because they partook of fiction, being generally one-sided and meant to glorify one side.

Besides, they were not intended to be sober history; indeed, their original purpose was not the preservation of any historical fact, the conception of which was unknown to the pre-Islamic Arabs, but to be sources for entertainment for the listeners when recited. They were, however, significant in one sense: they created a tradition of recording a single event.

The narration of single events and their reporting is capable of independent and impartial treatment, and thus provides us with the raw material of history. These events can be strung together either chronologically or on the basis of a period, a locality, or even a topic. The treatment, however, tends to differ from continuous narration, because every report is a unit in itself. The line is not easy to draw and yet it is not difficult to see where the emphasis upon individual events is, even though they may be connected. This form of historiography came into vogue among the Muslims fairly early and is referred to by the name of akhbar. In its singular form, khabar, the word means a report, an item of news. In the oldest form of Muslim historiography one comes across small pamphlets written to describe a single event, like the pre-Islamic narra-tion of single battles.

The simple narration soon gave place to the description of the event followed by a discussion of the causes which were responsible for its happening. Even though such a description related to only a single event, it came closer to the present method of discussing the genesis of a happening. The single khabar gave place gradually to akhbar, a collection of several or many khabars. Theoretically, this could be quite disconnected, but the events or anecdotes came to have a focal point regarding a place or a subject and in their arrangement showed a consciousness of chronological sequence. Even in this form the method had serious handicaps.

A khabar was a well-rounded narrative, but the continuity of a historical process is difficult to convey in this manner. Any deep interpretation of facts also is ruled out, because the tendency is to look upon life as a series of separate incidents without much anxiety to discover their interaction. Every khabar was told like a vivid short story, hence it tended to sacrifice clarity and factual-ism for the creation of effect. This was sometimes achieved by the insertion of a few verses to drive a point home or to give it a dramatic quality. Indeed, it was not uncommon for the historian to retreat into the background and let the chief characters speak for themselves, very much like a dramatic dialogue.

In this form the facts were lost in the midst of the emotions of the speakers, who, to ring true, had to be shown saying what, in the opinion of the historian, they would have felt in the circumstances. Being the earliest form of historiography among the Arabs, the khabar was naturally integrated into other forms and was rarely found in its original and pure shape. It occurs in other works as well and can be spotted by its vivid style and the insertion of faked or actual conversations.³³

Its most developed form was the mono-graph on some single historical event. A well-known historian in this style was 'Ali bin al-Mada'ini (752-830/1351-1417), known only through quotations from his works in other histories. A list of the books written by him is pre-served in al-Fihrist. In the sub-continent of India and Pakistan, perhaps Amir Khusran's Khaza'in al-Futuh furnishes the best example. His Tughluq--namah, though written in verse, which is not usual with Khabar histories, has many of their characteristics.

It would, however, be a mistake to think of all books written on single reigns as falling into the category of the khabar literature. Its beginnings

were, as has been mentioned, religious because it developed out of the desire to collect all the information about the life of the Prophet. The biographies of the narrators of hadith were a by-product. The biographies of religious and political persons followed naturally. Some biographies were written for sec-tarian purposes, for instance, the earlier works on the descendants and sons of the Caliph 'Ali; several biographies of Husain, Zaid bin 'Ali, and others fall in this category. Sometimes biographies were written at the request of a noble or a monarch.

Thabit bin Qurrah wrote a biography of al-Mu'tadid, which was completed by his son Sinan; this was supervised by the patron himself. Shams-i Siraj 'Afif's Tarikh-i Firuzshahi is a typical biography of a monarch; the Sirat-i Firuzshahi partakes of memoirs because it was super-vised by the monarch. Sometimes the biography of a patron was also a record of the author's own times and it is not always easy to draw the line between biography and memoirs. An excellent example is the Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah w-al-Mahasin al- Yusufiyyah, being the biography of Sultan Salak al-Din by ibn Shaddad. It achieves a high standard in depicting the character of the great monarch. Abu al-Fadl's Akbarnameh can be looked upon as a highly successful biography of a remarkable man in spite of the author's obvious endeavor to paint the monarch in as favorable a light as possible.

The success of the book lies in a faithful record of the events of the reign, which find confirmation in other authorities as well. The character of the monarch stands out clearly and in spite of the profusion of the adjectives in praise of Akbar, the panegyrics can be separated quite easily from what is the sub-stance of the narration, because these are introduced as much to deliver formal homilies of praise as to show off the capacity of the author as a master of ornate style. They are not spun into the texture of the narrative in a manner to confuse the reader.

A biography sometimes includes accounts of some of the ancestors of the sub-ject, but their lives occupy a minor place in the book and are introduced more often to trace the exalted line of descent of the main character. Sometimes, how-ever, the biography is extended to include others. In this category would fall the histories of dynasties or families. There are good examples of dynastic histories; the Tarikh al-f~hazdni by Fadl Allah Raid al-Din (d. 718/1318) being a history of Chingiz Khan and his family³⁴ may be cited as one.

Another form of the collected biographies was the tadhkirah. Some of the tadhkirahs dealt with poets, others with Sufis, yet others with scholars, but they all had the common characteristic of being collections of short biographies of a number of persons. As a matter of fact, like other forms of biography, they differed considerably not only in their subject-matter, but also in the standards achieved. The tadhkirahs of poets always incorporated some critical material; the best of these were highly instructive as essays in literary criticism. The tadhkirahs of the Sufis were extremely popular, partly because of the growing popularity of the Sufi silsilahs and the great esteem in which some of the saintly Sufis were held by the populace, and also

because of the Muslim tradi-tion of teaching religious truths through the biographies of learned and pious personages.³⁵

This was based on the fundamental Muslim thinking that the best way of understanding Islam was through the study of the life of the Prophet. It was for this reason that biographies of jurists and scholars also were not neglected. Apart from monographs on biographies, it became the fashion to include sections on the biographies of important people in general histories.³⁶ These would include the lives of theologians, Sufis, physicians, poets, and nobles. The disciples of famous Sufis sometimes collected their sayings into *maljuzat*; these consisted of the more significant utterances of the shaikh with a record of the circumstances in which they were made.³⁷

In a way this may be considered to be a form of the *kabar* literature; it is, however, different in spirit, because the intention here is not to entertain but to instruct. Some *tadhkirahs* of the Sufis suffer from the admixture of supernatural fictions with truth. The defect is generally found in books written long after the subject of the *tadhkirah* had died and legends had grown about his super-natural powers. The writers of the *tadhkirahs* were seldom guilty of deliber-ately inventing tales; they only uncritically incorporated what they had heard. The *tadhkirahs* are very valuable because they generally give a picture of the social conditions of an age in which the general histories seldom devoted sufficient space to non-political topics.

The chronological order of the development of Muslim historiography has been transgressed in tracing the growth of the *khabar* form of historiography. Long before some of the developments narrated above, there had grown the annalistic form, in which the events were grouped around years. The historian took up the years in succession and then narrated the important happenings of each year. This was an excellent device for fixing the chronological sequence of events; and in all probability it gave to history the name of *tarikh*. It has been mentioned above that the word *tarikh* seems to have come into use in the pre-Islamic Yaman in the sense of fixing a deed in time; in other words, giving a date to a transaction. The earliest Islamic use is in connection with the establishment of the era of the Hijrah.³⁸

Thus, apart from the narration pure and simple, which was *khabar*, *tarikh* was properly the assigning of a date to an event and, conversely, the fixing of an event in time by giving it a definite date. The annalistic form, therefore, seems to have played an important role in giving the name of *tarikh* to history. The greatest name in this form of history is the well-known Abu Ja'far al--Tabari, whose famous history was written in the early fourth/tenth century. This is the first history in the annalistic form written by a Muslim that has come down to us. Tabari's greatness is recognized now in all quarters because of his accuracy and great diligence in collecting data and giving them the form of authentic history by sifting evidence, which he must have done to achieve the result.

There are indications that others may have preceded him in using this form; indeed one 'Umarah bin Wathimah has been mentioned to have written a history in the annalistic form in the third/ninth century, but we know very little about the book.³⁹ It is, however, reasonable to believe that Tabari was not the first to use the form, but he is undoubtedly the greatest

among those who have used this method both before and after him. The tradition, however, was continued and 'Ali bin Yusuf al-Qifti has mentioned a succession of trustworthy authors beginning with Tabari and ending with the year 616/1219.⁴⁰ The best example in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent is the *Tarikh-i Alfi* composed by a commission appointed by Akbar.

The annalistic form had serious limitations; for this reason it was not imitated on a large scale. It made an absolutely reliable chronology indispensable but where dates could not be determined with absolute certainty it was useless. Besides, this treatment tends to become merely a catalogue of facts in the hands of an unimaginative historian. Even at its best, it leaves little scope for philosophical synthesis or analysis. Even the inclusion of cultural and administrative data becomes difficult; the tracing of the growth of cultural, social, and administrative institutions is ruled out. The understanding of social or even political processes is not aided by this form of history.

When this form was combined with the idea that the highest expression of objectivity lay in a bare statement of the naked fact unadorned by any illuminating comment or opinion, it became little better than a chronology in tabular form that many historians found useful to append to their works. The sub-sequent arrangement of information in decades, generations (*qarun*), or centuries, may have been derived from annalistic historiography. In any case, the grouping of biographical information in accordance with periods of time seems to have been affected as much by annalist traditions as by other considerations like the convenience of grouping people together by the years of their death.

An outgrowth of these forms was the genre of *tabaqat*. A *tabaqah* means a layer; it generally refers to a generation. The word *Barn* meaning a generation preceded the word (*tabaqah*, but later (*tabaqah* came to be used more often until works were called by the names of *tabaqah*. The term was originally applied to different generations of the narrators of Hadith; then it began to be applied more loosely, until it embraced the succeeding generations of all kinds of men. A history which was named by its author as *tabaqat* was meant to give information about various classes of people; however, the author seldom used the term in this wide sense and, therefore, only the classes that mattered in the opinion of the author were included.

Quite often a *tabaqat* work could limit itself to a single reign. Some of these are more like *tadhkirahs*, as, for example, *ibn abi Usaibi'ah's* history of physicians or *abu Ishaq al--Shirazi's* history of the jurists. *Tadhkirahs* and *tabaqat* of this nature alike gradually adopted an alphabetical arrangement to make reference easy, so that some of them came to be biographical dictionaries, often concise and limited to the barest facts. There were notable exceptions and, as has been mentioned earlier, many books dealing with poets incorporated critical reviews of their main works.

The Muslim historians developed many useful mechanical techniques. They were not averse to putting statistical and other factual information in the form of tables.⁴¹ They appended in many places their authority for a statement.⁴² Indeed, with the more careful historians, the sources of their information are almost invariably revealed. They attached bibliographies to

their works, utilized official documents and correspondence, and when they thought that it was necessary to do so, they quoted the document verbatim. Consequently, some important documents have thus been preserved for us.⁴³ They utilized all official material that was available to them including the more important decisions of the courts. The Muslim governments kept good records; the courts also had records of all the cases that came before them. The historians, therefore, had no dearth of official material and they used it whenever they found it relevant to their subject. They were aware of the importance of numismatic and epigraphical evidence and used both frequently.

It has been mentioned that the Muslims look upon themselves as a world community. Muhammad as a successor to all the prophets of the world came to fulfil the missions of all of them. The history of the world was, therefore, a matter of vital concern to the Muslims. A fairly large number of histories were, therefore, planned as world histories. The knowledge about the history of the non-Muslim world was fragmentary and depended upon the accuracy of the local tradition which was not reliable in most instances.

There were large regions which had no history; it is, therefore, obvious that the Muslim histories could not be perfect in the recording of the events of other regions or of the past of the regions where Islam had domination. The science of archaeology had not been developed; the methods of deciphering dead languages had not been invented. Because of these factors some non-Muslim pretenders to knowledge practiced curious frauds upon Muslim rulers and Muslim scholars.⁴⁴ History based on traditions and legends cannot be satisfactory; hence we find that the Muslim accounts of the ancient history of Mesopotamia or of Egypt are unreliable and fragmentary. The knowledge of the Arabs grew as their geographers succeeded in accumulating knowledge. Yaqut bin 'Abd Allah al-Hamawi's geographical dictionary, *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, seldom fails to incorporate biographical material of the people of note belonging to a locality. 'Ali ibn al-Husain al-Masudi is the best example of the interaction of geographical and historical knowledge; indeed, he combines the two disciplines in a remarkable manner. Today the works of the Arab geographers form a good source of history and are indispensable; even to their contemporary historians they were of extreme importance.

So far as the world of Islam was concerned, it was a real entity. In the earlier period before the rise of the 'Abbasids split the Muslim world into the East and the West, it formed a single polity. Juristically and theologically, the indivisibility of the Muslim world is an axiom, based as it is upon the Qur'anic doctrine of the brotherhood of all Muslims and upon the implied universalism in the conception of the unity of the Muslim community. It is, therefore, a matter of no surprise that it seemed only natural to the Muslim historians that they should look upon the whole of Muslim history as a single entity. Some of the works, thus, became huge compendiums because they had to treat the various regions and States which in spite of the theory came to have separate histories. With the weakening of the 'Abbasid Caliphate, it remained no easy matter to treat the entire Muslim world in one work. The most outstanding work that achieved great success in this respect

is ibn Athir's *Kamil fi al-Tarikh*. It maintains its balance despite the length of the period which it covers and the large number of countries that it deals with. Despite its annalistic arrangement, it is not devoid of philosophical reflections on the happenings of some importance.

However, this trend of writing universal histories could not last long. For one thing, the distances were enormous and it was not easy to keep an eye on the happenings of so many corners of the Muslim world. Ibn Air himself complains; "A man sitting in Mosul cannot but miss some events happening in the remote corners of the East and the West."⁴⁵ It must be remembered that ibn Athir was more successful than anyone else. Broken into numerous independent States, even though most of these continued to owe allegiance to nominal Caliphs, the Muslim world could not, despite the doctrine of the unity of the Muslim world, ignore its division. It entered the domain of religious thinking as well and there grew up proponents of legally sovereign States, every monarch exercising the functions of the Caliphate within his own dominions and enjoying the prestige of being the Caliph in his territories. The Moghul Emperors of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent were an outstanding but not the only example of the dynasties that accepted this theory of divided Caliphate. Even before, there had been written dynastic and local histories, but gradually the new trends brought to an end the tradition of universal histories of the Muslim world. The intermediate stage was that of the historian who would begin with the beginnings of the Islamic history and then trace the developments in the area about which he was writing, thinking that the Islamic traditions in his own land were a continuation of the history of Islam. Abu 'Umar Minhaj al-Din 'Uthman bin Siraj al-Din al-Juzjani's *Tabaqati-i Nasiri* is a good example. The dynastic and local histories have already been discussed.

The connection between political science and history was generally understood by the historians. As a matter of fact, the knowledge of history was considered essential to the work of statecraft. The policies pursued by previous monarchs were put forward as object lessons to illustrate the consequences of foolish as well as wise methods. For this reason many authors included a good deal of information about administrative measures in their books and summed up their success or failure. In the sub-continent of India and Pakistan a considerable amount of space was devoted to the administrative reforms undertaken by the rulers. Diya' al-Din Barani's *Tarikh-i Firuzshahi*; Shams-i Siraj 'Afif's *Tarikh-i Firuzshahi*, the *Sirat-i Firuzshahi*, and the *Futu-hat-i Firuzshahi*. Abd al-Qadir Badayuni's *Muntakhabat al- Tawarikh*; Abd al--Hamid Lahori's *Padishahnameh*; 'Ali Muhammad Khan's *Mir'at-i Ahmadi*, to name but a few, are replete with this kind of information.

The most out-standing work, however, is abu al-Fadl's *Akbarnameh*, of which the *A'in-i Akbari* is intended to be an appendix. But what an appendix it is! It is a virtual gazette of the Moghul Empire and contains so much economic and administrative data that scholars have not yet been able to utilize them fully. The administrative institutions, the policies of the State, the divisions of the population, the agricultural produce of the various areas, the crafts and industries in the different parts of the Empire, and a host of

other matters have been recorded. In addition, a considerable amount of cultural material is included. Compared to al-Biruni's *Kitab al-Hind*, there is no medieval book that gives such a sympathetic account of the Hindu faith and philosophy.

The incorporation of the accounts of alien faiths and cultures is an old Muslim tradition of Muslim historiography. The great geographers seldom mentioned an area without giving some account of the religious beliefs and social customs of its inhabitants. For the non-Muslim times, whenever, for want of historical information of a political nature, the Muslim historian felt at a loss to collect much data, he fell back upon the knowledge of the culture of the people.⁴⁷ The histories quite often incorporate large sections of the biographies of men noted in some fields of culture.

Abu al-Fadl's data are mainly based upon al-Biruni so far as Hinduism is concerned, but his book also contains his own observations and research. In view of the immediate sources of knowledge available to him and because of his voracious thirst for knowledge, it is unlikely that he did not check all that al-Biruni had said, especially when the Emperor himself was taking so great an interest in Hinduism and abu al-Fadl was his constant consultant. The fact that abu al-Fadl had so little reason to differ shows how well al-Biruni had dealt with the subject.

The fact that history had a deep relationship with statecraft was recognized by the monarch's themselves.⁴⁸ The Caliph Mu'awiyah is reported to have spent some time regularly every night in the study of history; the narrator of this story gives details that show that the Caliph devoted this time to the study of mundane and secular history.⁴⁹ These examples can be multiplied ad infinitum. Harun al-Rashid, the Moghul Emperors of India, the Iranian rulers, indeed, monarchs of practically every part of the Muslim world and in every age attached the greatest importance to the study of history. Gradually, a literature grew up that emphasized only those aspects of history that had some direct relevance to statecraft. Sadid al-Din Muham-mad al-'Aufi's *Jawami' al-Hikayat wa Lawami' al-Riwayat* contains selections of historical stories and information that illustrate some principles of politics or administration.

This kind of literature gave place to treatises on administrative matters pure and simple and on politics and statecraft. Even the latter were replete with historical anecdotes. Some were written by men of administrative experience like 'Unsur al-Ma'ali Kaika'us bin Sikandar bin Qabus' Qabusnameh or Nizam al-Mulk Tfsi's *Siyasatnameh*; others were written by professional historians like Diya' al-Din Barani-*Fatawa-i Jahdandari*; yet others by saintly Sufis who were interested in securing the welfare of the people through the instruction of monarchs. In this last category falls the *Dhakhirat al-Muluk* by Sayyid 'Ali bin Shihab Hamadani. The great Ghazali also has a treatise of this nature in his *Nasa'ih al-Muluk*. Some were written by obscure writers and to give importance to their works, they ascribed them to well-known historical characters, as the *Tauqi'at-i Kisra* is ascribed to Nushirwan and the *Wasaya-i Nizam al-Mulk* to the statesman whose name it bears.

History today is related to sociology and endeavors to find the relation-ship between economic, social, and political factors and course of events. Indeed, history is no longer a mere recording of facts; it seeks to understand the significance of these facts as agents in fashioning the social and political fabric; it explores the impact of the past on the present in a more vital and deeper sense. It would be idle to expect the developments of the fourteenth/twentieth century in classical Muslim historiography because a good many of the sciences that are so important in understanding the full significance of historical processes had not developed until recently. For instance, the science of economics has made such rapid strides that it can hardly be recognized to be in the least related to the medieval economic thinking.

Economic relations were neither so widespread nor were they so complex in a world where rapid means of transport were not known and the impact of world forces was not felt so quickly as in the world of today. Yet the Muslim historians were not unaware of these considerations. It is a truism to repeat that ibn Khaldin's contribution in connecting history with sociology has been outstanding. He has been highly praised by modern authors and he has richly deserved this praise. "In the Prolegomena (Muqaddimah) to his Universal History (Kitab al-'Ibar) he has conceived and formulated a philosophy of history which is undoubtedly the greatest work of its kind that has ever been created by any mind in any time or place."⁵⁰ "Ibn Khaldin was a historian, politician, sociologist, economist, a deep student of human affairs, anxious to analyze the past of mankind in order to understand its present and future."⁵¹

Ibn Khaldin (732-808/1332-1406), considered simply as an historian, had superiors even among Arabic authors, but as a theorist on history he had no equal in any age or country until Vico appeared, more than three hundred years later."⁵² So far as ibn Khaldin's own position and contribution are concerned, it would suffice here to give these quotations, because a fuller discussion of his work is given in Chapters XLVI and XLIX of this work. It is true that ibn Khaldin had no peers in the world of Islam, but it is not correct as has become fashionable to assert that he had neither predecessors nor successors in what he set himself to do.

Muslim historians do, in their search for causes, go into fields that are not merely political and search out causes that are not discernible on the surface. The Muslim writers had tried to understand the working of economic laws and were conversant with the Greek works on the subject.⁵³ The writers on revenue in particular brought in economics and sound finance within the scope of their work.⁵⁴ Of these perhaps Qudamah bin Ja'far deserves special mention, who in one of his chapters presents a systematic discussion of political and social sciences.⁵⁵ He enters into fundamental considerations regarding the social and economic needs of human beings and the steps taken to meet them. Observations on political, economic, and social factors are found scattered throughout the books of ethics, politics, and history.

In the Indo--Pakistan sub-continent, abu al-Fall among others has brought in questions of economics and social organization while commenting upon administrative measures. The most outstanding example

is Shah Wall Allah, who based his philosophy on economic and social foundations.⁵⁶

Being confronted with the problem of the decline of the Muslim political power in the sub-continent of India and Pakistan, he analysed the forces at work to diagnose the disease from which the polity as well as the society suffered at that time and came out with his suggestions for curing their ills, in doing which he explored a wide range of economics, sociology, history, and politics. He examined the relations subsisting between the producers and consumers and laid down the dictum that in a balanced society everyone must contribute to its welfare. Then he pointed out how some sections of the society had become parasites and, thus, had upset the balance. This kind of analysis runs right through his discussions, whether he is discussing social conditions or examining political and economic ills. He has a historical mind because he brings in the examples of the great civilizations that had preceded Islam and draws relevant conclusions from their fate.

In conclusion one may say that history has been a favorite discipline with the Muslims. They brought the highest standards of objectivity into their writings; they showed great enthusiasm for the discovery of true facts; they produced a vast literature of considerable merit at a time when even among the civilized peoples there was not much flair for historiography; indeed, there were cultures of a highly developed nature that had no place

Jurisprudence in their learning for historiography. At such a time the Muslims established standards which have not always been improved upon in the modern world. For instance, contemporary nations have to learn a good deal in standards of objectivity and in distinguishing between national glorification and history. The Muslims were able to expand the scope of history from mere recording of facts into a repository of political, administrative, and cultural experiences and made fruitful essays into the analytical field as well. They failed like the political thinkers of Islam in suggesting the evolution of institutions that would have enabled greater and more responsible participation of the people in the affairs of the State, but they did help in making the Islamic governments beneficent and benevolent at a time when other governments tended to be arbitrary and even tyrannical.

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al-Mas'udi, *Muraj al-phhahab*, Cairo, 1346/1927; C. Issawi, *An Arab Philosophy of History*, London, 1950; Muham-mad bin Sulaiman, *al-Mukhtasar fi 'Ilm al-Tarikh*, English transl. by Rosenthal.

Notes

1. I C. Broekelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, 2 Vols., Weimar, 1898; Berlin, 1902; *ibid.*, Supplementbande, 3 Vols., Leiden, 1937-42; C. A. Storey, *Persian Literature, A Biobibliographical Survey*, London, 1935-59; F. Babinger, *Die Ge8chithtsschreiber der Osmanen and Are Werke*, Leipzig, 1927 (gives good surveys of the literature discussed in this chapter). Details of the works mentioned here have not been given because they are available in these surveys.

2. Franz Rosenthal, *a History of Muslim Historiography*, Leiden, 1952, p. 16.

3. e A. Jaussen and R. Savignac, *Mission Archeologique en Arabia*, Vol. II, Paris, 1909-14, *Minaen Inscription No. 32*.

4. Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 66, n. 5.

5. The main argument in favor of Byzantine influence is that some historical works written before the known Muslim histories show a similarity in arrangement. The annalistic arrangement, thus, could have been taken over from the Byzantines. On the other hand, the annalistic form could be a natural development. The argument against the acceptance of the view that the Byzantines had any influence is that the Muslim historians do not mention Byzantine authors, in spite of the fact that they were fond of mentioning their sources of information.

6. The work that has come down through an Arabic translation is *Khuatainamak*, which can hardly be called a history. Other sources of Iranian history were translated into Arabic towards the second quarter of the eighth century A.D. None of these was considered important enough to be preserved in spite of the Iranian tendency to glorify their past. *Firdausi's dhah Ndmeh* written in the fourth/tenth century depended upon legend rather than history. If there had been any sober history available at that time, more of it would have entered the poem.

7. This is inherent in the Muslim belief, based upon the Qur'an, v, 48; vii, 30, etc.

8. *Ibid.* v; 68ff etc.

9. *Ibid.* xxxii, 40, where the Prophet has been called "the seal of the prophets." The seal comes at the end of an epistle. There is also a hadith which says, "There shall be no prophet after me."

10. Qur'an, e.g., vi, 6; x, 70ff.; xi, 25ff.; xix, 74; xxix, 20ff.; xxx, 9, 42-47; xxxv, 44, 45, etc., etc.

11. *Ibid.*, iii, 104

12. *Ibid.* iii, 110.

13. *Ibid.*, xi, 100

14. 14 *Ibid.* VI, 25; viii, 31; xvi, 24, etc., etc.

The Qur'an uses the word "aadtir" which has generally been considered to mean stories, because of its resemblance to the Greek word *historia* (Golius, *Lexicon Arabico-Latinum*, Leiden, 1653, column 1171), but this seems to have little sub: stance in fact, except for the coincidental resemblance. Several European authors have followed Golius, but opinion has now changed. Indeed, the Arabs should have been the first to notice the resemblance and to use the word in the sense of history if there were any substance in this identification. It is more likely that the word has been derived from *satar* (to write); hence *asdtir* should mean a record. They certainly do not seem to imply that the Prophet was reciting to them merely fables.

15. This is obvious from the references to communities like 'Ad, Thamnd, etc., vide note 10; also Qur'an, xiii, 30; xiv, 36.

16. Many religious thinkers in Islam refer to the Jewish legends adopted by some *mufassirin* as *Isra'iliyat* and disapprove of their use.

17. Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sakhawi, *al-Flan bi al-Taubik li man Mamma AN at-Tarikh*, translated into English by Rosenthal, op. cit., pp. 246, 247, 263.
18. 18 Muhanunad bin Sulaiman al-Kafiyaji, *al-Mukhtarar T 'Itm al-Tdrik_h*, selected passages translated into English by Rosenthal, op. cit., pp. 189, 190; al-Sakhawi, op. cit., pp. 205ff.
19. Qur'an, VI, 116; the corruption of previous Scriptures finds mention also at other places, e.g., v, 13.
20. Al-Sakhawi, op. cit., pp. 259, 261.
21. Ibid., p. 299.
22. Ibid., p. 264.
23. Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Kifayah*, Hyderabad, 1357/1938, pp. 39ff.; also, al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, iv, 121, 126, 142 (Krehl).
24. E.g. *Diya' al-Din Barani*, *Tarikh-i Fireczshahi*, Calcutta, 1860-62, pp. 16, 17.
25. Jalal al-Din Muhammad Akbar (1556-1605), third in the line of succession among the Moghul Emperors of India.
26. His subtle insinuations have, through faulty translation, caused grave mis-understandings among European writers like Vincent Smith.
27. E.g. passages quoted in *Sources of Indian Tradition*, ed. William Theodore de Bary, Columbia University Press, New York, pp. 527, 528, show quite clearly that the authors do not intend the readers to take all their adjectives seriously. Akbar was certainly not "the ruler of the world and of all who inhabit it" nor the "origin of the canons of world-government" and "author of universal conquest."
28. E.g. passages quoted in *Sources of Indian Tradition*, ed. William Theodore de Bary, Columbia University Press, New York, pp. 527, 528, show quite clearly that the authors do not intend the readers to take all their adjectives seriously. Akbar was certainly not "the ruler of the world and of all who inhabit it" nor the "origin of the canons of world-government" and "author of universal conquest."
29. O. Lofgren, *Arabische Texte zur Kenntnis der Stadt Aden im Mittelalter*, Ljpsala, 1936, II, pp. 20, 43-47.
30. Barani, op. cit., pp. 16, 17.
31. "Exodus," xiv, 30; "Samuel," I, xvii.
32. Some scholars are of the opinion that no written prose literature existed in pre-Islamic Arabia, e.g., William Marçais, "Les Origins de la prose litteraire arabe," *Revue Africaine*, LXVIII, 1929, pp. 15-18.
33. A good example is Sultan 'Ala' al-Din Khalji's conversation with Qadi Mughith, reported by Barani, op. cit., pp. 293-97.
34. Many of the histories written in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent do not fall into the category of dynastic histories. They generally take up certain periods of Muslim rule or of a dynasty, but few works are devoted entirely to a dynasty.
35. E.g., Sheftah's *Gulshan-i Be-khar*, Azad's *Ab-i Hayat*, and Shibli's *in-i r at-'Ajam*
36. E.g., Badayuni in his *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, Abu al-Fadl in his *A'in-i Akbari*, etc.
37. E.g., Hasan'Ali Sajzi's *Fawa'id at-Fuwad*.
38. Al-Sakhawi, op. cit., p. 310; al-Kafiyaji, op. cit., p. 183.
39. 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Ali al-Jauzi, *Muntazam*, Hyderabad, 1357-58/1938-39, p. 37.
40. 'Ali bin Y6sufal-Qifçi, *Tarik_hat-Hukama'*, ed. A.Muller and J. Lippert, Leipzig, pp. 110ff.
41. *A'in-i Akbari* abounds in such tables; Barani gives tables of the names of officers in each reign, etc.
42. This was derived from the way ahadith were narrated: "A heard from B who heard from C who heard from D that the Prophet said....."
43. Some examples are: Baihaqi in *Tarikh-i Baihaqi* has preserved the oath of allegiance taken by Mas'ud of Ghaznin to the Caliph; Badayani has preserved the text of the mahdar recognizing Akbar's authority to choose an interpretation where the doctors of law disagreed; abu al-Fadl has preserved the letter Akbar wrote to 'Abd Allah Khan Uzbek of Transoxiana, etc.

44. When Asoka's pillar was brought by Firuz Shah from Meerut and erected at Delhi, the Hindu pundits who do not seem to have known Pali said that the inscription on it prophesied the great success of Firuz hah as a ruler; also cf. Rosen-thal, op. cit., p. 111.
45. Ibn Aqir, Kamil f al.Tarikh, Cairo, 1301/1883, I, p. 3.
46. This was the reason why historical studies formed an essential part of a prince's education, e.g., Sinan bin Thabit bin Qurrah quoted by ibn al-'Adam, Bughyat al-Talab, Cairo, MS. Tarikh, 1566, I, p. 137; ibn Hamdun, Tadhkirah, Bodleian MS. (Ar.) Marsh 316 part 3, 80b, etc., etc.
47. The reason has been given by al-Tha'libi, Qhurar, Paris, MS. (Ar.) 1488, f. 247a, where he says, "The narration of these matters is like reporting about their kings, because people follow the religion of their kings, especially the Indians who immolate themselves for the glory of their kings and some of them even wor-ship their kings." The author has explained earlier that historical data regarding India are difficult to obtain.
48. Ibn Hamdun, op. cit., says, "Genealogy, history, and elements of jurisprudence, are royal sciences." Compare Yaqut, Irshad, Cairo, I, p. 27, who says, "the know-ledge of genealogy and history belong to the sciences of kings" bah Jahan made a habit of listening to history every evening ('Abd al-Hamid Lahori, Padishah-nameh, Bib. Indic&, Calcutta, I, p. 153).
49. Al-Mas'udi, Murdj al-Dhahab, Cairo, 1346/1927, II, p. 72.
50. Charles Issawi, An Arab Philosophy of History, London, 1950, p. x, quoting Arnold J. Toynbee.
51. Idem, pp. x, xi, quoting George Sarton.
52. Ibid. p. xi, quoting Robert Flint.
53. M. Plessner, Der ouxovuir.6S des Neupythagoreers "Bryson" and sein Einfluss auf die islamische Wissenschaft, Heidelberg, 1928, Orient and Antike, Vol. V.
54. The various books on Kharaj and the A'in-i Akbari of abu al-Fadl are good examples.
55. Rosenthal, op. cit., pp. 462-63, gives a table of contents.
56. Such material is found in several of his books, especially Hujjat Allah al. Balighah; an Urdu translation is available, Lahore, 1953.

Chapter 61: Jurisprudence

In this chapter it is proposed to bring into relief the philosophical significance of certain salient points and aspects of Muslim Law, otherwise known as Fiqh. But before doing so, let us have a tolerably precise idea of what one understands by law, and in particular what the Muslim jurists have understood by it.

A - The Law

Law roughly means the rules of conduct. But not every rule of conduct forms a part of law. There are things people instinctively do under the dictates of their normal impulses. These do not concern law, nor are the concern of law the modes of behavior regarding things which persons do deliberately but which relate to their private lives, and have no repercussions on other members of the society or are of rare occurrence. Men differ enormously among themselves in their capacity for reasoning and the power of choosing an action out of the various possible alternatives. Even some matters of general occurrence and those affecting other persons besides the agent himself do not come under law. Law does not take cognizance of the behavior of individuals which is infinitely varied, for if it did, it would lead to chaos and conflicts rather than uniformity in behavior.

The cases which fall under law are as follows:

(i) Sometimes certain individuals do things of their own accord and thus their private initiative sets precedents, customs, and usages if experience shows their utility, or in case historical reasons create a halo of prestige and awe around the names of their initiators.

(ii) Sometimes actions are done at the instance of others. For example, a child may do something or abstain from doing something because its mother, father, or some other superior directs it to do so. A young student may behave similarly at the instruction given by his teacher. A grown-up man may do something at the suggestion of his friends in whose sincerity and intelligence he has confidence, on the direction of his spiritual guide, or at the dictates of public opinion. Rules of conduct are also sometimes determined by the orders of a superior to whom we delegate powers out of our own free choice, such as an elected or accepted ruler with or without the power of revoking our decisions. On other occasions a rule of conduct may arise from a superior's order, obedience to which is a lesser evil than its disobedience. Such is the case with prisoners of war, slaves, and the like who must abide by the order of their master under pain of coercion and punishment.

(iii) A rule of conduct may also be considered to be of divine origin. Our forefathers in different parts of the world at various epochs have continuously believed certain individuals possessed of lofty character to be messengers of God and later generations have inherited this belief. It goes without saying that of all the superiors' orders those that proceed from God must remain the most meritorious to obey. God's orders, according to religious beliefs, are received through the agency of certain human beings chosen by Him and called by some prophets and incarnations of God by others. The commandments communicated by such persons are accepted by

those who believe them to be the orders of God, the Creator and Master who will judge them all on the Day of Resurrection according to their deeds.

(iv) Lastly, there are deductions from and interpretations of basic laws, such as lead to new laws.

Muslim Law is a collection of all the four types of rules mentioned above, viz., rules of customs, orders of superiors, divinely revealed Laws, and the rules arising from the deliberations of jurists. There is the Qur'an, which is taken as the uncreated Word of God; there is the Hadith and Sunnah (sayings and doings of the Prophet of Islam) which include not only what the Prophet said or did himself, but also what he tolerated of the existing practices among his Companions, practices coming indeed from pre-Islamic habits and customs. Moreover, there are individual or unanimous opinions of experts and special-ists (jurists), there are customs which do not go against express laws, and there are foreign laws acted upon on the basis of treaties, reciprocity, and so on and so forth.

Whether the legislators of Islam abolished some old customs and practices, retained and confirmed some others, intact or in a modified form, or took the initiative of ordaining new rules of conduct-the sole principle that guided their legislative activity in all these cases was to "do what is good, and abstain from doing what is evil." According to al- Ghazali¹, this principle of good and evil (husn wa qubh) was propounded by the Mu'tazilite jurists. Being more rationalist than their contemporary traditionists, it was the Mu'tazilites who were perhaps the first to be struck by the curious and repeated stress which the Qur'an has laid on the rational side of life. To persuade men to abide by the precepts of Islam, the Qur'an again and again appeals to reason (tadabbarun, tatajakkarun, ta'qilun, etc.), and repeatedly refers to ma'ruf and munkar² as the bases of Muslim Law.

Now, ma'ruf means a good which is recognized as such on all hands, and a munkar is an evil disapproved as such by everybody. It cannot, therefore, be true that the rules of conduct laid down by the Qur'an and the Sunnah are arbitrary and merely for the purpose of testing the will to submit on the part of the Faithful. Evidently, not every man in the street will be able to understand the underlying principles of each and every Qur'anic order or injunction. That is the domain of the specialists of the philosophy of Law. An anecdote will explain the point. Abu Hanifah, one of the early jurists, had a penetrating mind, and was also endowed with a sense of humor. Not always being able to understand the reasons that led this great jurist to hold certain opinions, stupid people began to accuse him of heresy; according to them, he legislated by his personal opinion in disregard of the sayings or practice of the Holy Prophet. Once somebody had the audacity to tell this to his face.

Abu Hanifah replied: "I never promulgate rules on my personal opinion; on the other hand, I always deduce laws from the sacred texts of the Qur'an and the Hadith. Had I relied on my personal reasoning, I would have ordered that in the act of ablutions, one should pass a wet hand not on the uppers of a shoe (khuff)-as is ordered by the Prophet-but on the sole, for that is the part which requires cleansing more than any other part of the

footwear.” In this humorous way, abu Hanifah succeeded in silencing and even calming the apprehensions of his well-meaning critic.

The answer was humorous, because abu Hanifah did not refer to the reasons for not washing the soles of one's shoes for if the sole of the footwear is moistened and then one stands up for the service of worship, it is the more apt to get dirty if one prays on the ground, and to soil the carpet if one prays on one. In other words, a single issue may have several aspects, but it is the duty of the philo-sopher to give preference to the more important of such aspects.

However, the principle of the Islamic Law is that its rules must be based on the good and prohibitions on the evil inherent in a given act. This was an original contribution of Muslims to the legal science; no other civilization had thought of it before, as has been admitted by Professor Ostrorog in his brilliant essay “Roots of Law,” contained in his book Angora Reform. In fact in expounding the Qur'anic statement, “Do what is ma'ruf (what is good in the eyes of God and man) and abstain from what is munkar (what is evil in the eyes of God and man),” the Muslim philosophers of Law developed an all-embracing system. A brief expose is all that we can take up here in dealing with a subject which fills scores of pages in works on Usul al-Filth (the Prin-ciples of Law).

In this world in which everything is infested with relativity, it is often impossible to obtain unmixed goods, and sometimes it is even possible to say that a given act contains neither good nor evil. Therefore, what seems to be unmixed good will be ordained as an obligatory rule (wajib); what is unmixed evil will be declared as an obligatory prohibition (haram); in complex cases, predominance will decide the preference: a matter of predominant good will be recommended (mustahab), and one of predominant evil discouraged (makruh), without going so far as to declare them obligatory to perform or to abstain from. And in matters where good and evil are equal, or where one is unable to see either good or evil, Law will leave it to the discretion and choice of the individual to act or not to act.

This five-fold division of actions giving rise to five rules of law-order, prohibition, recommendation, discouragement, and indifference-resembles the cardinal directions of the compass. Even as we can subdivide the directions and say North, NE, NNE, and so on, we can also find out intermediary grades between good and evil. The absolute good will be divine order, obligatory on each person in a group (fard'ain) or obligatory on at least a few in the group (fard kifayah); the good with less sure absoluteness will be legal order (wajib), and practice of it will be enjoined with insistence (sunnat mu'akkadah). The act with pronounced inclination towards the good will be recommended or preferred (mandub or mustahab) and the one on the deadline will be superero-gatory (nafl). Similarly, the evil may be prohibited (haram), tending to be prohibited (makruh tahrinai), better to shun (makruh tanzih) and so on.

It is true that the application of these mathematically perfect rules of the legal geometry to concrete cases will be affected as everywhere else by play of the human element, more so in matters of intermediary grades with subtler points to judge. With regard to such matters the judges and jurists

differ among themselves. Abu Hanifah would say that to eat prawns is forbidden, but al-Shafi'i would declare it to be perfectly lawful. Certainly this respective relegation of the prawns as food to what is good or bad is only relatively so, and the forbidden character of their consumption has not the same degree of prohibition as, say, that of wine. Jurists call it deduced prohibition (Haram istinbati) as distinct from legal prohibition (haram shar'i).

Narrow minds may fail to see this point and enter into quarrels. Here a case may be cited which seems to be the model to follow in such cases: abu Hanifah and al-Shafi'i are doubtless two of the leaders (imams) of Muslim Law, completely independent of each other in legal judgment. According to al-Shafi'i, the qunut prayer at dawn (fajr) is obligatory, whereas abu Hanifah suppresses it completely. The story goes that once al-Shafi'i went to Baghdad (where abu Hanifah lies buried), and during his stay there he renounced his own view on the qunut prayer. When questioned, he said: "I continue as firmly to cling to my opinion as before, yet in the presence of the great abu Hanifah I feel ashamed to follow my own opinion." Needless to say that the implication is that such learned differences do not concern the general public who should not only follow their leader (imam) but should also be tolerant of those who are followers of other leaders.

B -Law And Ethics

Islam attaches very great importance to ethical values, yet it makes a distinction between Law and morals. In the books on Filth, one comes across such expressions: "that is the rule of Law (fatwa), though the rule of piety (taqwa) requires just the contrary." The meaning is clear: the jurist wants to say that there is some difference between human justice and divine justice. Far from being impeccably perfect, what is human must fall short of the divine. The jurists consult and the judge decide cases on the basis of facts and evidence produced before them. If certain important facts, with bearings on the nature of the litigation, are concealed from the arbiter-no matter intentionally or otherwise-the decision may be correct de jure but not de facto, the latter being beyond human possibility, at least in some cases. For this very reason, the Holy Prophet once said: "Some of you are better pleaders, and I decide according to facts submitted to me. If I decide in favor of any of you what is not his due, let him know that I award him only a part of the hell-fire with which he will fill his belly,"³ if he profits by such a decision based on mistake or the only available material facts.

The law which claims to be based on the good is often hard to distinguish from ethics. Nevertheless, it may be said that there exists a measure for differentiating between them. For, the rules of Law in Islam have a double sanction, namely, the coercive power of the court of justice (a court may enforce its verdict to get the rightful owner his due, or, in case it is impossible, the court may punish the doer of the injustice), and the divine punishment on the Day of Judgment; but the rules of piety, the ethical rules, as distinct from the legal injunctions have only the other-worldly sanction apart from the more or less effective public opinion.

As Islam inculcates belief in Resurrection and the Day of Judgment, a true believer prefers a loss here to the divine wrath in the hereafter.

C- Sanctions

As we have just observed, the Muslim Law is more fortunate than its counterparts in some other civilizations, for it is endowed not only with the material sanctions enjoined by modern secular States but also with a spiritual sanction, and this in addition to persuasions both material and spiritual. The belief in Resurrection and the Day of Judgment, combined with the mere coercive force of a country's court of justice, assures a greater observance of the law by its believing subjects.

It is common knowledge that the Qur'an repeats scores of times the formula, "Establish service of worship and pay the tax (zakat)," pronouncing prayer and tax in the same breath. Even a beginner in the study of Muslim Law knows that zakat has always been included in the section of liturgical rites ('ibadat) in the manuals of Fiqh. With a word of explanation of the meaning of the term zakat, even the most uninitiated may realize the signi-ficance of this seemingly curious combination of prayer and tax.

Zakat is not almsgiving or charity. Its proper place is in the books on Law. In the time of the Holy Prophet and his successors, the Muslim subjects of the Islamic State-we exclude the non-Muslim subjects for the present paid no tax to the government other than zakat which covered the entire fiscal system. Zakat al-ard was the land revenue; zakat al-tijarah was tax on commercial capital as well as on import customs; zakat al-mashiyyah was im-posed on herds of domesticated animals (ovine and bovine animals and camels) living on public pastures; zakat al-ma'ddin on the sub-soil products; zakat al-'ain was imposed on savings of money, and so on and so forth. Every tax imposed by the government on Muslim subjects was included in the term zakat; this may be corroborated from the sayings of the Prophet on the subject of zakt (as also more or less the equivalent and synonymous term sadaqat).⁴

Now, reverting to the main point, mention of the service of worship and payment of tax in the same breath and, consequently, inclusion of the taxes in the category of liturgical acts ('ibadat) should not astonish us. It is in fact deliberate. In Islam one must do everything for the sake of God. As al-Ghazali has forcefully put it, if you pray or fast for ostentation, it will be a kind of polytheism, the adoration and worship of your own self; on the other hand, if you eat delicious food (with the sole intention of acquiring energy for the performance of acts pleasing to God), and if you cohabit with your wife think-ing that it is the performance of a divinely ordained duty, then these mundane enjoyments constitute real acts of the worship of God ('ibadah). Authors of the works on Muslim jurisprudence (Fiqh) since very early times have affirmed that acts of worship of God can relate both to our body and soul and to our property: if true faith is our spiritual act of worship, and prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage are the physical expressions of the same faith, then zakat is no less than our monetary mode of worshipping God.

A true believer does his spiritual and bodily duties with respect to God, without being forced to them by an organization (such as the government); he also pays his taxes to whomsoever they are due, even when the rightful person ignores his right or finds himself incapable of having it enforced.

Which finance minister of the world would resent that the subjects of the State should believe that paying the government taxes is one of his religious duties, such as would bring eternal salvation in the life to come?

D - Law And Religious Affairs

We have already made passing remarks, in the foregoing paragraphs that the subject-matter of Law consists of the practical affairs of men. It deals with affairs from birth to death, and, to a certain extent, even with those after death (such as the questions of funeral, payment to the creditors, execution of the will, distribution of heritage, remarriage of the widow, etc.).

It will be observed that the Fiqh excludes questions of non-practical nature, such as beliefs and dogmas and, as already pointed out, those of piety and charity, which are questions of conscience rather than those relating to practical affairs properly considered so.

All practical affairs of public nature fall within the purview of Islamic Law because it prescribes for each of them the degree of obligation (fard, wajib, mustahab, sunnah, mubah, etc.). Many a question of politics and ad-ministration too falls under the subject-matter of the legal science, although some latitude obtains in such matters.

It is perhaps useful to point out a certain resemblance that exists between the Roman fas and jus on the one hand, and that between the Islamic Fiqh and Siyasah Shari`ah on the other. In ancient Rome all laws were religious (and called fas) and as such depended on the decisions of the priests; later, the kings arrogated to themselves the right to decide in certain matters (rules of which were called jus) which the priests reluctantly conceded, but slowly more and more matters entered within the competence of jus or civil law of Rome, on which lay authorities could promulgate rules. The Fiqh is also a religious Law, inasmuch as its principal source is the divine revelation, yet the same Law left a number of points, including certain matters of penal law, to the discretion of the ruler and his delegates; this was termed Siyasah Shari'ah. But the nature of relation between Fiqh and Siyasah Shari'ah was such that the latter could not replace the former or encroach upon its privileges. For in Islam the "priestly class" does not exist, at least in the past it was not separate from the class of civil authorities, the Caliph himself being the head at all religious functions.

It is to be pointed out that in other civilizations, human affairs are divided into temporal and spiritual. In Islam the greater part of spiritual affairs is vested in the hands of the same authorities as have the charge of temporal affairs. It seems that the Muslims divide their religious affairs into external and internal. Declaration of faith, service of worship, fasting, and hajj, although closely related to spiritual matters, are yet matters concerning the State, and are, therefore, external affairs. Internal affairs, by which one understands one's relation with God, form the subject-matter of mysticism and are left in the hands of spiritual guides who are also considered successors of the Holy Prophet and, therefore, Caliphs in the spiritual sphere. In this realm, there are no rivalries. Several Caliphs could and did simultaneously exist in the Muslim community. On the death of the Prophet, Abu Bakr and 'Ali could not co-exist as Caliphs for external affairs, yet both

were at the same time regarded as Caliphs of the Prophet in internal or spiritual affairs. As a result of this natural division of functions, Islam has been able to avoid the possibility of a tug of war, and the consequent bloodshed, between a king and the chief spiritual authorities.

It must further be pointed out that the division of spiritual and temporal powers is perfectly lawful in Islam, and does not upset its religio-legal system. The Qur'an⁵ lays down that the practice of former prophets remains valid in Islam, unless expressly abrogated; and it relates, as a precedent, how in the presence of the Prophet Samuel and with his approval the Israelites could accept the famous Talut as king.⁶ The presence of a king and a prophet in the same community necessarily implies the division of powers, temporal affairs falling within the competence of the king. It goes without saying that in Islam the Qur'an is the basis of all rules of conduct, both for the lay authorities and for the religio-spiritual functionaries.

As to the object of Muslim Law, its comprehensive nature admits of no doubt regarding the fact that it aspires the well-being both here and in the hereafter. The Qur'an has condemned those who neglect any of these two, and approves of those who aspire simultaneously after welfare in both.⁷

E - The Chief Sources

The life and longevity of a legal system depends much on its sources; unless these sources are adaptable to changing circumstances, it may not survive for long. Let us see if the recognized sources of Muslim Law satisfy this requirement of longevity. The chief sources of Muslim Law may be classified as under.

Divine Revelation. This is of three kinds: (a) Recited (matluww); (b) non-recited (ghair matluww), i.e., not employed in the service of worship; and (c) a previous revelation. A few details may not be out of place.

(a) The recited revelation as preserved consists solely of the Qur'an, which the Muslims believe to be the Word of God, a collection of divine messages revealed from time to time to the Prophet Muhammad, and preserved from his very time by the double method of writing and learning by heart. If the written document has some error due to inadvertence of the scribe, or even due to an exterior evil such as effacement, damage to the copy, etc., memory comes to rescue. Similarly, if one who has learnt a passage by heart, but while reciting it cannot recall a word, reference can be made to the written document. From the time of the Prophet down to these days, this double method has everywhere in the Muslim world been employed to preserve the integrity and purity of the sacred text, which in this respect is unique in the world.

(b) The non-recited revelation consists of three distinct things: what the Prophet said (Hadith), what he did himself (Sunnah), and what he approved of and tolerated among his Companions such as an ancient pre-Islamic custom consistent with Islamic norms. For lack of a comprehensive term, Hadith and Sunnah have been used as co-extensive, interchangeable, and synonymous terms to cover all the three aspects of the non-recited revelation. It was quite natural for the community receiving a messenger of God to treat every message given and every act done by him as being in conformity with the will and wish of the sender of that messenger, more so

because the Qur'an itself has enjoined that the practice of the Prophet should be treated as the best model to imitate and follow.⁸

The non-recited revelation was both explanatory of and complementary to the recited revelation. As such it helped to clarify the Law and also to interpret it.

A number of the Companions of the Holy Prophet put their memoirs on the subjects of Hadith and Sunnah to writing in the very lifetime of the Prophet. One such compilation, the Sahifah Sadiqah of 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'As, is reputed to contain one thousand reports.⁹ The case of Anas is much more interesting. In later times, when requested by his pupils, he would bring out a box and show them note-books (majallat) saying, "That is what I wrote from the sayings and doings of the Prophet, and also read to him from time to time, so that if there was any mistake be removed it himself." Many more Companions prepared their memoirs after the death of the Prophet, yet they were all supposed to have been based on first-hand knowledge. Later generations compiled the memoirs of these different authors, always scrupulously mentioning in each case its source. How careful and honest they were may be realized from the following fact.

Al-Bukhari's collection of the Hadith is considered to be one of the most authentic collections. He has cited for each tradition the chain of narrators, i.e., the sources and the sources of the sources up to the Prophet. Supposing he uses the clause: "From ibn Hanbal, who from 'Abd al-Razzaq, who from Ma'mar, who from Hammam, who from Abu Hurairah, who from the Prophet heard. ..," it would be perfectly legitimate for an objective and impartial student to be skeptical and to start fresh investigation by assuming that al-Bukhari has forged the chain of the sources and invented the narration. But we possess also his source, the Musnad of ibn Hanbal, and find that this latter author also cites the same narration, on the basis of the same sources, and gives exactly the same wording of the contents of the narration.

Al-Bukhari is acquitted honorably, but perhaps ibn Hanbal had forged. But no, we possess fortunately also the Musannaf of 'Abd al-Razzaq (now in press in Hyderabad-Deccan, having been edited by Dr. Yusuf al-Din), and there the remaining chain of sources is given and the hadith is recorded in the same words without the least difference. Now say, perhaps 'Abd al-Razzaq was the falsificator. But we possess his source also, for in the Jami' of Ma'mar now being edited by Dr. Fu'ad Sezgin of the University of Istanbul, the same hadith is found, with a shorter chain, but with no difference in the wording of its contents. Perhaps Ma'mar was the forger. But no, his source, the Sahifah of Hammam ibn Munabbih dictated by Abu Hurairah to his pupil, is there to attest his perfect honesty. We also know that Abu Hurairah possessed many books on Hadith. Even in the absence of these books other chains of transmission narrate the same with and attest to its truth and there remains no possibility of its having been falsely attributed to the Holy Prophet.

There is no denying the fact that forgeries in the Hadith have crept in, due to unscrupulous or dishonest authors, yet the double method of riwayat (un-interrupted chain of transmission by reporters known for the integrity of

their character) and of dirayah (scrutiny of the contents and internal evidence) has practically eliminated the chances of forgery in the more important collections, such as the “Six Canonical Collections” (Sihah Sittah). If, how-ever, a certain report seems to us to be incompatible with the dignity of the Prophet as envisaged by our modern conception that alone would not justify our declaring it to be a forgery or a falsification. Many a time the context explains what an isolated phrase does not. A subjective approach must be replaced by an objective one, and everyone should try to understand things with reference to their context-not in isolation-and in the light of the whole system of Islamic Law.

The hadith comprises also the taqir or confirmation of some of the customs and practices of the pre-Islamic days. It shows on the one hand that Islam is a reform of the past and not a complete break with it, nor an entirely new implantation. It also gives an authoritative interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an according to which all that is not expressly forbidden is lawful.¹⁰ The same notion is stressed in two interesting sayings of the Prophet, namely:

(i) “The virtues of the days of ignorance (jahiliyyah) will be acted upon in Islam” (Ibn Hanbal, III, 425).

(ii) “A wise counsel is the lost property of the Faithful (mu'min); wherever he discovers it, he takes hold of it” (al-Tirmidhi, chapter “‘Ilm,” 19; ibn Majah, chapter “Zuhd,” 15).

What is virtuous or vicious in pagan customs is easy to decide by reference to the injunctions and prohibitions expressly given in the Qur'an and the Hadith.

(c) Previous Revelations.-With regard to the earlier prophets the Qur'an has said: “They are those who received God's guidance; follow the guidance they received.”¹¹ But, unfortunately, most of the ancient Scriptures have been lost to us, e.g., that of the Prophet Abraham, of which there is repeated mention in the Qur'an. Some prophets seem never to have transcribed the divine messages they received. The accusation made by the Qur'an of the corruption of the previous Scriptures¹² considerably reduces the importance of this source.

F-Other Sources

(a) Private Expert Opinion.-Law in Islam has a divine origin, yet the exercise of judgment on its interpretation, application, and implications is human. The Qur'an and the Hadith have approved this source, and even encouraged it. Individual opinions are termed qiyas, and the collective ones ijma' (consensus). But the opinions of savants and researchers are not infallible; hence these same savants have approved that a qiyas by one could be rejected by another and a better one suggested. Similarly, an earlier collective opinion can be superseded by a later one.¹³

It goes without saying that a right given by the Qur'an and the Hadith cannot be taken away by any worldly authority.

These private opinions are, however, valid only in so far as they are not against the revealed Law, the principal source. In this connection the Holy Prophet has left a principle for the savants to observe. This principle enjoins that they should aim at facility for the public and not at difficulty. Once he

said: “The Islamic religion is easy. Whoever will render it hard, he will be defeated thereby.”¹⁴ The same principle was repeated in the instructions given to governors: “Provide facility, don't create hardship, and do not frighten people away from Islam.” Hence public weal (istislah) is an additional and valid source of Law.

(b) To the same category should be assigned the rules promulgated by the government-be they based on the ijthad of the ruler, or on expert opinion of the jurists consulted by him-and enforced mostly for administrative purposes. In theory, this may remain in force during the reign of a ruler, until it is abrogated by him or his successor. This kind of legislation is sometimes called al-ahkam al-sultaniyyah. The fundamental principle holds good, viz., that such official directions should not go against the revealed Law.

(c) An allied source is a Muslim ruler's confirmation and retention of pre-Islamic customs of a territory, mostly at the time of the accession of that territory to his State. A typical instance is reported by al-Mas'udi, who says that after the conquest of Iraq and Iran, the Caliph 'Umar retained the Sassanian law of land-revenue. He found it equitable and conforming to social justice. Not so was the case with the Byzantine laws in force in Syria and Egypt which countries were conquered at the same time. 'Umar thoroughly modified the Byzantine laws.¹⁵ The basic source of this attitude was the Qur'an and the Hadith. Such “good customs” of foreign origin may even touch private affairs, such as contractual relations in commerce, industry, etc.

(d) With a small difference, the same source is to be based on the principle of reciprocity. A classical example is the following. Once the governor of the frontier town Manbij (Hierapolis) asked the Caliph 'Umar what tariff should be imposed on traders coming from beyond the frontiers, and the Caliph replied, “Levy as much as their governments levy on Muslim subjects going there for similar purposes.”¹⁶

(e) Certain laws, particularly those concerning international relations, both in peace and war, are often regulated by bilateral or multilateral treaties which were regarded by the Holy Prophet as a valid source of Muslim Law. An example of such laws is the law of extradition based on the Treaty of al-Hudaibiyyah.¹⁷

(f) Even new customs may gradually take root and add to the body of Muslim Law. To express slight nuances they are called 'urf, addah, ta'amul. They are practices and customs limited to localities or classes of people. Needless to say that society is a living organism, and the interaction of circumstances, inventions, and progress made in the material domain profoundly affect our conceptions and, indeed, our practices. The general principle remains valid: such practices should not go against the revealed Law.

(g) One sole exception to this general principle is admitted by the jurists, and they call it “prevalent custom” ('umum al-balwa), which may abrogate even an existing law. Apparently, the theory of the ijma' (consensus) plays its role therein. In practice this touches only minor points of legal rules,

mostly the rules deduced by former jurists. It is unthinkable that such “prevalent customs” could abrogate a law enjoined by the Qur'an.

G - Particular Sections Of The Law

Theologians normally discuss four topics: (i) beliefs ('aqa'id), (ii) acts of worship ('ibadat), (iii) morals (akhlaq), and (iv) social affairs (mu'amalat). The jurists do not concern themselves with beliefs and morals and confine their views only to rules regarding acts of worship and laws regarding social affairs.

Before dealing with Muslim jurisprudence under these two heads, we would like to make it clear that in Islam acts of worship ('ibadat) do not mean acts indicating only the relation between the worshipper and God. In fact, beliefs, acts of worship, morals, and social affairs are all closely related to one another and, therefore, none of them can be considered in isolation. Acts of worship, apart from relating the worshipper to God, directly influence other human beings as well. For example, although zakat is an act of worship in relation to God, yet it is intimately connected with society. It is a State tax collected from and used for the welfare of its members. Similarly, social affairs are not merely matters of relations between man and man but have direct bearing on man's relation with God. In Islam there is no matter which can be considered to be isolated from spiritual values and divinely ordained laws. Every public affair is a means to the achievement of some spiritual value. Therefore, it can be safely said that there is no matter in Islam which is purely an act of worship or a public affair. Every act of worship is a public affair and every public affair is an act of worship.

Jurists generally divide jurisprudence into the laws dealing with (i) acts of worship ('ibadat), (ii) social affairs (mu'amalat), and (iii) crimes ('uqubat). Under the head “acts of worship” fall prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and zakat (the State tax). Under “social affairs” come socio-political, economic, and financial matters, e.g., sale and purchase, contract, gift, trust, surety, partnership, and matrimonial affairs. Penal laws deal with such crimes as murder, theft, adultery, drinking, etc. It is not possible to deal with every rule within the space at our disposal, not even with every set of rules. Therefore, we content our-selves with discussing some select topics and these too very briefly.

1. `Ibadat

Under this head we deal only with prayer. A prayer or service of worship in Islam is described by the Prophet as the “pillar of the faith” and “ascension” (mi`raj), i.e., a journeying unto the Almighty. In the words of Shah Wali Allah: “Worship consists essentially of three elements: (i) humility of heart (spirit) consequent on a feeling of the majesty and grandeur of God, (ii) confession of the superiority of God and lowliness of man by means of appropriate words, and (iii) adoption of bodily postures expressing reverence. As a man can reach the top of his spiritual evolution only gradually, it is evident that such an ascension must pass through all the three stages, and a perfect service of worship would have three postures, to wit, standing up, bowing down, and prostrating by laying the head on the ground in the presence of the Almighty-and all this for obtaining the

necessary evolution of the spirit so as truly to feel the sublimity of God and the humility of man.¹⁸ At the end, kneeling before the Lord, in the “invocation of the Divine Presence” (tashahhud), the faithful use the very words of the dialogue between the Holy Prophet and God during the mi`raj:

Prophet: “The blessed and purest of greetings to God!”

God: “Peace be with thee, O Prophet, and the mercy and blessings of God!”

Prophet: “Peace be with us and with all the pious servants of God!”

After this a Muslim affirms his submissiveness and attests the formula of the faith, then expresses his thankfulness to God for having sent such messengers as Abraham and Muhammad (both of blessed memory) to guide him. Thereafter, he asks for pardon and well-being in the two worlds. On his “return” from the visit of the threshold of God, he wishes peace to all believ-ers, and with that he terminates his service.

2. Mu`amalat

(a) Polity

Islam has not only united prayer and politics in a greater whole by assigning them both to the same Imam, but it has also dispensed with all prejudices of color, language, race, birth-place, etc., declaring all men equal, basing superiority solely on piety, and taking practical steps to reunify the descendants of Adam and Eve. Allah is not the God of this or that race, He is the Lord of the worlds, both known and unknown (Rabb al-`Alamin). Nationality as based on race, color, or language is fatal in the long run. It is to be based on the identity of outlook on life (religion) accessible to any and every individual, irrespective of race, caste, or color. The common code of Law (the Qur'an and the Hadith), the common focal point for prayer and hajj (Ka'bah), and the unity of the Faith-ful under a common Caliph are some of the means employed for the removal of all class and color distinctions.

In politics, sovereignty belongs to God, and man is the lieutenant and vicegerent of God. This notion works power-fully on man. Islam imposes no particular form of government; the Qur'an never speaks of kingship in connection with Muslim polity. There is not a single reference to republic or oligarchy. Yet the first Muslim Government after the Prophet was a “life-long republic.” The Head of the State did not come to power by inheritance, but was chosen for life. So the State was neither our modern republic, nor the hereditary despotic kingship. The oath of allegiance (bai'ah) was essential even for the recognition of the Prophet himself; and this automatically excluded hereditary monarchy, though the Shiites do not hold this view.

It is obligatory on a Muslim ruler to have consultations; right of veto seems to be a matter left to time and clime. His fundamental duties are four-fold: cultur-al (propagation of Islam), administrative-executive, judicial, and legislative. But legislation by government is the least important of its duties. In Islam, legisla-tion has always remained a privilege of private savants, beyond the control of the rulers with their ever-changing whims and fancies and exigencies of the day-to-day politics. And as we have described above,

legislation in Islam is only for secondary matters; the primary principles have already been laid down by the Qur'an and the Hadith.

(b) Fiscality

As already pointed out zakat is not at all almsgiving or charity, but the State tax, covering practically the entire fiscal system imposed on Muslim subjects. It is significant that the Qur'an prescribes no details as to the income, but gives very precise directions regarding the expenditure of the State. The implication seems to be that the government may have a free hand in increasing the revenues, but in matters of expenditure it should not deviate from the principles of a welfare State. The rates and items of the zakat are mentioned only in the Hadith. That they are not of a static character, is proved by the fact that in the time of the Prophet the import of victuals, effected by caravans of the Nabataeans, coming from beyond the frontiers of the Muslim State, were subjected to ten per cent of duties, but the Caliph 'Umar reduced them only to five per cent. To Ibn Hazm the rates current in the Holy Prophet's time are, for all later generations, the necessary minimum and can be increased only in the interest of the community. Other jurists have resorted to more reverential attitudes. They uphold the rates of the time of the Prophet as the norm, but allow under the name of *nawa'ib* (passing exigencies) enhanced or new taxes.

The expenditure of zakat is much more important. The Prophet of Islam ordained that the income of zakat is religiously forbidden (*haram*) to him, to his family, to his tribe, and to the allies of his tribe. If the Head of the State is so scrupulous and does not abuse public confidence in money matters entrusted to his care, subordinates would be the less tempted to corruption. Further, the Qur'an has ordered that taxes (*sadaqat*) should be spent under eight main heads of expenditure. They are to be levied only for the poor, the needy, the wayfarer, those who work for the State revenues, and those whose hearts are to be won; also for freeing the necks, and the heavily indebted, and for use in the path of God.¹⁹ According to such a high authority as the Caliph 'Umar, *fuqara'* (the poor) are those who belong to the Muslim community, and *masakin* (the needy) are from the non-Muslims. It is to be noted that the *sadaqat* do not come from the non-Muslims, yet the needy among them are the beneficiaries of these taxes paid only by the Muslims.

Those who work are the collectors, accountants, and controllers of expenditure, auditors, and others, embracing practically the entire administrative machinery of the State.

Those whose hearts are to be won may be of many kinds. The great jurist *abu Ya'la al-Farra'* observes: "Those whose hearts are to be won are of four kinds: (i) those whose hearts are to be reconciled for coming to the aid of the Muslims; (ii) those whose hearts are to be won in order that they abstain from doing harm to the Muslims; (iii) those who are attracted towards Islam; and (iv) those by whose means conversion to Islam of the members of their tribes becomes possible. It is lawful to benefit each and everyone of those whose hearts are to be won, be they Muslims or polytheists."²⁰

By the term "freeing the neck," jurists have always understood the emancipation of slaves (which is a duty of the State!) and ransoming the

prisoners of war, be they Muslim or non-Muslim subjects of the Muslim State.

Aid to those who have heavy debts or great burdens may be given in different ways. The Caliph 'Umar organized even a service of interest-free loans.

Expenditure “in the path of God” includes every charitable act, and the jurists from very early times have not hesitated to mention military equipment for the defense of Islam as the first item, since Islam struggles solely for the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth.

As for the wayfarers, one can help them not only by giving hospitality to them, but also by ensuring them physical well-being and comfort, providing means of communication, security of routes, and taking all other measures for their well-being, be they countrymen or strangers, Muslims or non-Muslims.

These items are wide enough to embrace practically all the requirements of a welfare State.

(c) Contracts

Contracts are of many kinds: matrimonial, commercial, agricultural, industrial, and so on. When differences arise as to the meaning of the terms during the execution of a contract, third parties are referred to, such as arbitrators, judges, and other State authorities. This entails questions of evidence and proof and capacity of the contracting parties including the minors, the insane, the absentees, etc. Again, contracts may be made of free accord or under coercion.

In Islam, contracts require the consent of the parties, or “mutual free-will” as the Qur'an puts it.²¹ This great principle, common to all systems of law, is a means to mitigating the rigor of another principle that men being equal to one another, nobody owes anything to anybody else. Contracts include among other things the give-and-take of labor. The give-and-take of labor entails division of labor which has several advantages: saving wastage of concurrent labour, specialization for the sake of better production, diminution of preoccupations with the consequent leisure which is essential for all pro-gress, intellectual as well as material. If everyone of us were to rely on his individual resources to procure even the barest necessities of life-food, dress, lodging, etc.-we should be worse off than most of the beasts.

Custom or usage has taught men the advantages of the exchange of com-modities. Prices are a technique used to equalize two different kinds of items. They are subject to variation according to the demand and supply of goods, and also to the whims of the sellers. Ordinarily, this latter aspect is a man's private affair; the organization of which he is a member need not meddle with it. But there is a limit even to this liberty. Once a merchant was selling his goods in the market of Medina at a price lower than the one prevalent. (We are not told whether it was a case of dumping or any other mis-chief.) The Caliph 'Umar ordered him to leave the public market, or else fix the price as charged by other merchants. Neither the inherent liberty of each nor the mutual consent of the parties could deter 'Umar from ordering what he judged to be right in the interest of social well-being.

Contracts may comprise conditions. There is a huge monographic literature on the subject, and it is related that abu Hanifah was the first to compile a special treatise on the conditions of contracts. Here too mutual consent is not the sole deciding factor; law steps in, and enjoins that no condition is to be tolerated which violates legal injunctions of all kinds.²² Lesser of the two evils justifies to interfere in and curtail the inherent liberty of the individual, since in the long run he too will suffer from the same liberty if left uncontrolled.

The same principle of public well-being (maslahat 'ammah) has led legis-lators to declare inadmissible the contracts made by minors or the insane. Guardians are appointed temporarily or permanently to look after the affairs of those suffering from legal incapacities.

(d) Family Law

Of all the contracts, those of matrimonial relations seem to be the oldest in human society. Here there is no question of exchange of commodities, but rather of usufruct. Muslim Law has relegated matrimony to the level of any other bilateral contract. In pre-Islamic days, people “sold” their daughters to their would-be husbands. In Islam, woman has an individuality of her own as independent and complete as that of man, and is not a chattel even of her progenitive father. For profound social reasons, and in view of the nature of the fair sex, the mutual benefit accruing from married life has been thought to be less favorable to the wife, who is, therefore, considered entitled to a compensation in the form of a monetary gift settled upon her before marriage (mater), dowry, and maintenance by the husband. The mater, which is a sine qua non of Muslim marriage, is the exclusive pro-erty of the wife, giving no right of share to anybody else, not even to her father; and she has full legal powers to dispose of her property-mahr or anything else-the way she likes it (a thing unknown even today in other systems of law).

The question of polygamy may be briefly treated here. According to the generally accepted interpretation of the injunctions of the Qur'an, it may be said that Islam permits polygamy, but which religion does not? Hindu, Jewish, and Parsi religions allow unlimited number of wives to a polygamous husband, and even Christianity is no exception! There is not a word against it in the Gospels and teachings of Jesus Christ; on the contrary, learned theologians (like Luther, Bucer, Melancthon, and others) have deduced that Christ accepted polygamy as a matter of course as is evident from the way in which he speaks of the marriage of a man with ten virgins, mentioned in the Gospel according to St. Matthew 25:1-12.

Further, it was practiced in early Christianity, and as late as the time of Charlemagne (third/ninth cen-tury); even priests could be polygamous.²³ The reference here is not to the mundane rules among Christians and even Muslims to “abolish” polygamy, but to their religious doctrines only. Islam is the first and only religion which has put a limit to the maximum number of wives, and has also provided legal means of prohibiting the practice of polygamy between couples desiring mono-gamy. Marriage being one of the ordinary contracts, conditions can be sti-pulated therein.

The lawful conditions are: (i) the husband would remain monogamous for the duration of the marriage with the stipulating wife, and (ii) the wife would have the right to divorce her husband at will. Christianity formally prohibited divorce, and so did the Dharma Sastra. Islam, on the other hand, permits the right to divorce to the husband under certain conditions, and to the wife under contract, and even without a contract, by an appeal to a law-court-khul'. It also allows judicial separation under orders of the court. And if a woman herself does not demand these rights, it is not for the law to oblige her to do so, since there may be occasions when poly-gamy may even become necessary. Who does not know that after the Thirty Years' War, the Kriegstag of Nuremberg (Germany), in view of the greatly reduced number of the male population due to war ravages, ordered that thenceforth every man should contract marriage with two women?²⁴

(e) Commercial Contracts

The most important point in this connection is perhaps the prohibition of interest. Other religions also had done that before, but with little results. They did not attack the root question, which is: How to supply interest-free loans to the needy? Islam characterizes the taking of interest as “a declaration of war against God and His messenger;”²⁵ in our own time Professor Keynes did not hesitate in his numerous writings to assert that interest more than anything else lies at the root of all social ills. Islam makes a clear distinction between commercial gain and interest on loans.²⁶

The difference between them is that one shares in the former (in various kinds of joint-stock companies) both profits and risks, whereas in the latter the debtor has to pay a fixed profit even if circumstances have not allowed him sufficiently to fructify the enterprise. The thesis of Islam is that one should undertake to participate in the eventual risks in order to participate in the profits (al-ghunum ma' al-ghunum). One should certainly take necessary precautions, even create reserve funds for lean years, but the parties to the contract should be ready to divide losses as well as gains.

As to non-commercial and unproductive loans, it goes without saying that private capitalists cannot offer interest-free loans unless they are most generous and pious. Therefore, it is only a welfare government that can and must do so. As a practical religion, Islam noticed this human weakness and, therefore, made it the duty of the government to provide for interest-free loans to the public in the annual budgets of the State, as we have mentioned above while speaking of zakat. The same could also be done on the basis of mutuality.

In fact, interest-free co-operative lending societies have been a great success, for instance, in Pakistan and Hyderabad-Deccan (India) where they have existed for over a century. The members participate in the working expenditure, and the circulation of the money gradually paid by the shareholders satisfies the needs of the members of the society.

The question of co-operative activity for loans naturally leads to the problem of insurance which has existed in Islam from the time of the Prophet himself. It was further developed in later times. Under the term ma`aqil, the constitution of the City-State of Medina, dating from the year 1/622, the Holy Prophet laid down that the individual shall not be required

to shoulder two kinds of responsibilities alone: (1) payment of blood-money in case of homicide, and (2) payment of ransom for prisoners of war. It was the treasury of the tribe that was to bear these two obligations.

Should the funds of the tribe, periodically contributed by its members, be not sufficient at a given moment, the parent tribe and in the last resort the Central Exchequer must come to aid. In the time of the Prophet insurance against fire had little importance. Incidents of fire occurred only in living quarters which were built by the inhabitants themselves at meagre expense. In later times, marine insurance was introduced among the Muslim merchant class. The Caliph 'Umar is reputed to have reorganized the insurance units, and according to al-Mabsut of al-Sarakhsi, employees of the same governmental department, members of the same cantonment, etc., began to function as units. In still later times, we see insurance practiced by guilds of the same profession in a given locality.

It may be pointed out that unused contributions to such units need not lie idle; they could be utilized for fruitful commerce to build up reserves, and eventually profits could be divided amongst the members of the units. There has been an attempt in recent times of this kind of insurance among the owners of automobiles of a big city, insuring against damages both to their cars and to their persons. Islam has not left this kind of self-help only to a group of capitalists but has proposed it for everyone as a measure against damages in addition to all that the government may do.

(f) Administration of Justice

As explained above, the administration of justice is a necessary concomitant of contractual relations in a society. In-expensive, prompt, and fool-proof-such is the ideal of justice in Islam. In pre-Islamic days, there was declaration of rights by arbiters, but no provision for enforcement. The Holy Prophet gave Medina a constitution which made the execution of judicial awards a central subject leaving it no longer to tribes, much less to the individuals winning their cases. Further, in pre-Islamic Arabia there was no law but only the common sense of the arbiters. There was also inequity in the administration of justice. Powerful tribes, for instance, paid half of the blood-money, and value of women was taken as half the value of men. The said constitution rectified these defects.

Islam established equality not only among Muslims and Muslims, but also among Muslims and non- Muslims, and cases are recorded of the classical period, in which Muslims were executed for having murdered non-Muslims. Evidence was also demanded from the parties concerned. In the very first year of the Hijrah, the Qur'an²⁷ made it obligatory to have written documents of contracts. During his audiences, the Prophet would inquire about the character of the witnesses before admitting their evidence. In later times, every locality established archives of the entire population, constantly revising remarks on personal character. Whenever a man presented himself as a witness, the archives were consulted to admit or reject his evidence. Further, near relatives were declared unfit to give evidence in favor of their kinsmen. In almost all cases, no less than two witnesses were required.

One more peculiarity of administration of justice was the autonomy con-ceded to non-Muslim inhabitants, the principle being, for instance,

Jewish parties, Jewish Law, Jewish courts, and Jewish judges. In case parties be-longed to different communities, a Jew versus a Christian or a Muslim, the conflict of laws necessitated special arrangements; in most cases parties agreed to go to the Muslim courts.

3. Penal Laws

The administration of justice described above applies mutatis mutandis to penal cases. It appears that ordinarily capital punishment was not enforced unless reference was made to the Caliph (Central Government).

In his celebrated farewell address during the last pilgrimage, the Prophet chartered human rights under a triple division: person-property-honor, and affirmed their sacrosanct character once for all.

Let us refer to two verses of the Qur'an regarding punishment:

(a) "Whoever transgresses against you, so transgress against him with the like of his transgression against you? ..." (2: 194).

(b) "The compensation of an evil is an evil like thereof. ..." (40: 40).

The wording of these verses implies that punishment is also regarded as transgression and evil. Although many verses exhort the victim to pardon the transgressor, yet retaliation, a time-honored institution in human society, is allowed as a necessary evil, though never beyond the measure of the original crime and this too perhaps only so long as a suitable cure for the ailment of criminality has not been found.

The penal law of Islam has certain peculiarities. First, it makes a distinction between crimes of fixed penalties (hudud), and those which allow a certain latitude to the judges. The crimes of hudud refer to person, property, and honor. According to the classical jurists, they are eight in number: (a) apos-tasy, (b) homicide, (c) illicit sexual intercourse, (d) false accusation against the chastity of a woman, (e) alcoholic drinks, (f) highway robbery and theft, (g) war, and (h) infliction of injuries.

(a) Apostasy

In all old and most new legal systems treason is awarded capital punishment. We have seen that Islam has rejected color, language, land, and similar other accidents and hazards of nature as the bases of "nationality," and adopted instead the "identity of outlook on life" as the foundation to build a world-wide community. Even with its zeal for religious propagation, Islam admits no compulsion in religion,²⁸ but intends to create a rigorous discipline among those who voluntarily enter its fold. Such seems to be the explanation of considering apostasy as a crime. At times one feels that Islam has needlessly provided for that, since apostasy among Muslims is practically non-existent.

(b) Homicide and Corporal Damages

In such cases lez talionis is not the only alternative: injured persons and the representatives of the murdered person have been given the right to blood-money and appropriate monetary compensation. The blood-money imposed by the Holy Prophet approximately amounts to the maintenance of a man for thirty years (expected life of the victim if he were not murdered!). One hundred camels is the traditional blood-money. During the battle of Badr, when the Prophet heard that the enemy slaughtered one day nine and

the next day ten camels for consumption, he concluded that they numbered between nine hundred and one thousand combatants. If one camel suffices for one hundred days, one hundred camels can do so for about thirty years.

(c) & (d) Sexual Transgression and False Accusations Affecting the Honor of Women

Consent of the parties of adults in sexual relations, even though unmarried, gives them no immunity from the operation of the Islamic penal code. This strictness in Islamic Law at least deters men from behaving like dogs and asses. Despite this rigor the Prophet of Islam has been more indulgent than Jesus Christ (as described by the Gospel according to St. John, 8:3ff.). The Qur'an requires four eye-witnesses for a sexual crime (as against the normal two), or confession on the part of the culprit. Islam also intends to purify society of scandalous talk; if anybody talks of the sexual immorality of a woman, he has to produce at least four eye-witnesses, otherwise he is himself to be given eighty stripes and he permanently forfeits his right to give evidence before a tribunal.²⁹

(e) Alcoholic Drinks

Though the Qur'an has strictly prohibited the use of intoxicants, it has prescribed no definite punishment. The Holy Prophet, however, used to administer forty strokes with his sandals to the intoxicated persons. The Caliph `Umar seeing the expansion of the evil in Muslim society said, "Since intoxication leads to obscene talk and false accusations against the honor of women, I shall henceforth give eighty strokes." (This is the Qur'anic punishment for speaking against the honor of women.) Non-Muslims including the non-Muslim wives of Muslims are, however, exempt from this penalty. But if the representatives of the non-Muslims in a parliament agree on total prohibition, it is to be enforced on them as well.

(f) Robbery and Theft

Crimes against property have been provided with severe penalties. As to the results, it may suffice to refer to a case from con-temporary history. Who does not know the pillaging of the pilgrims, during the time of Sharif Husain? When ibn Sa`ud got power in the Hijaz, he reinstated the Islamic sanctions against theft, with the result that people began to feel that they were given the security of the times of abu Bakr and 'Umar. In 1359/1939, part of the baggage of a lady pilgrim was found missing at an intermediary station between Mecca and Medina.

The police were alerted. Even after two weeks of investigation, the police were unable to trace the thief, but the Sa`udian Government ordered payment of the value of the stolen goods to the victim and the amount was immediately paid. The much maligned punishment of cutting the hands of a thief is waived in the case of theft committed by the needy and according to many jurists also in the case of children and the mentally diseased.

(g) War

As everybody knows, international law means the rules that govern relations of States in times of war, peace, and neutrality. If suppression of theft and robbery requires partial mobilization of the forces of order and

security, foreign invasion requires the same measures on a larger scale. Hence the inclusion of international law by Muslim jurists in the section on penal laws, and its treatment immediately after the section on highway robbery. Apart from its logic, the important point to note is that international law forms an integral part of the Islamic Law and is not left to discretion. In the international law the accused has the same rights of defending his conduct before a tribunal as, say, a robber who is captured and tried. An old author aptly says: “Among the happenings of a certain time a war is like sickness in contrast to peace and security which resemble health. It is necessary to take steps against warlike activities to preserve peace as it is necessary to fight against disease.”³⁰

(h) Infliction of Injuries (Mazalim)

Under this category fall the crimes other than those determined by the hudud. Judges are given wide latitude for inflicting appropriate punishment according to the circumstances of each case. Nevertheless, the ruler has to prescribe certain rules defining the discretionary powers of the judges.

H - Muslim Contribution To Law

1. However unbelievable it may look at first sight, it is a fact that the science of law, in its theoretical sense, did not exist in the world before Islam.

Law did indeed exist in Rome, Greece, China, India, Mesopotamia, Egypt, pre-Columbian America, and elsewhere, yet it was Imam Shafi'i (b. 150/767) who first thought of the science of law or jurisprudence as case-law. His book *al-Risalah fi Usul al-Filth* speaks of the origins and sources of Law, also of the methods of legislation, interpretation and application of law and many allied topics. Al-Shafi'i gave this science the expressive name *usul al-Filth* (the roots of Law) in contradistinction to the general laws of a land, which were named as “branches” (*uru'*) shooting out from these roots. Some generations afterwards, the Muslim jurists created a new science, called *khilafiyat*, i.e., “comparative Law,” restricted to the study of the different schools of Muslim Law and dealing with the grounds and consequences of differences amongst the various jurists.³¹

2. The principle of intention, in spite of much research, has not been found in earlier laws. This was first introduced by the celebrated saying of the Holy Prophet: “Actions are (to be judged) by intentions (*inns-ma al-a'mal bi al-niyyat*),” quoted by al-Bukhari, Muslim, and all the other authorities, the echo of which we hear in the celebrated address of the Prophet given during his last pilgrimage.

3. The idea of ethical value as the basis of legal injunctions is also unique in the legal history of the world. The credit of initiating it goes to the Qur'an.

4. International law has existed in the world since times immemorial, yet in antiquity it was neither international nor law. For, ordinarily, it was reserved only for resolving disputes of a country with certain other countries and nations only; Islam extended its scope to the entire world, without making any geo-graphical and political limitations. Again, in antiquity it was not considered to be law, but formed part of a country's political discretion; Islam made it a part of Law. This is testified by the fact that all

books of Fiqh from the very beginning have dealt with international law under the section named Siyar. Further, before Islam, the subject was treated in books of politics and manuals of statecraft like the Artha Sastra of Kautilya, or the Politics of Aristotle. The Muslims made it an independent branch of Law, and devoted special monographs to it, the earliest of which is attributed to abu Hanifah. The works of the pupils of this master, abu Yusuf and Muhammad al-Shai-bani, have come down to us and have partly been printed.³²

5. The first written constitution of a State in the world, as promulgated by a sovereign, came from the Holy Prophet of Islam. The text constituting the City-State of Medina in the first year of the Hijrah (622) has been pre-served in toto, and comprises fifty-two articles, dealing with such questions as independence vis-a-vis the rest of the world, war and peace, administration of justice, legislation, religious tolerance with regard to non-Muslim subjects, social insurance, asylum, naturalization, etc.³³

6. Lastly, it is interesting to note that the Muslims as a people always kept legislation (and so also judiciary) separate from the executive. The develop-ment of Muslim Law as deduced from the Qur'an and the Hadith has always been the work of private savants and jurists. Tradition has insisted that the State should not interfere with this work, much less monopolize it. It is the freedom of juristic judgment which creates conflicting opinions and alternative solutions, and these provide the coming generations with raw material for sound judgment. These conflicting opinions have given rise to different schools of jurisprudence; yet in one's comparative study of international law in Sunnite, Sh'i'ite, and Kharijite schools and their sub-schools one is agreeably surprised that, despite their water-tight divisions, there are practically no differences of vital significance.

I - Interactions

Ernest Nys (in his *Les Origins du droit international*, which has also an Urdu translation published by the Osmania University) shows the great in-fluence of Muslim international law, particularly on Spanish Christian writers, who first inaugurated the study of international law in modern Europe. Later on, the Dutch Hugo Grotius, who is considered to be the father of international law, also refers to Muslim practices. Many savants allude to the Muslim influence on the famous Code Napoleon, the basis of modern Western legislation. Many provisions of the Islamic law of inheritance, divorce, etc., are now being adopted by and necessary modifications made in Hindu Law by the modern Indian legislature.

Foreign elements in Muslim Law have already been shown in the section on "Sources." Far from being the chief determinant of the growth of Muslim Law, as it is sometimes claimed, Roman law in its influence on Muslim Law has been of the least significance.³⁴ No early Muslim jurists, except al-Auza'i hailed from an ex-Byzantine territory. All of them were either the Hijazian Arabs or belonged to Persian families which had lived as Muslims for at least two generations. Even al-Auza'i was not of Syrian origin for his father was among the captives brought from Sind.³⁵ And, therefore, he could not be suspected of having inherited any part of the Byzantine traditions.

J - Further Possibilities

A modest yet practical procedure to adapt Muslim Law to present conditions has been suggested in the colloquium recently published by the "Law Number" of the Karachi monthly Chiragh-i Rah. Muslims should not remain content with their past, however glorious that past. The *raison d'etre* of their existence is their constant struggle to become the very best community, a model for the whole of humanity-the community enjoining the good (ma'ruf, interdicting the evil (munkar), and believing in God.³⁶

"Influence of Roman Law on Muslim Law," Hyderabad Academy Journal, Vol. VI, 1943, and Imam Abu Hanifah ki Tadwin-i Qanun-i Islami (Urdu), Karachi.

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Notes

1. Al-Mustaf'a, I, 55-56 (ed. Bulaq, 1322 A.H.).
2. Al-Qur'an, iii, 104, 110, 114; vii, 157; ix, 67, 71, 112, etc.
3. Abu Dawud, Aqdiyyah, 6
4. Perhaps it will be useful to remind that Islam in the pre-Hijrah period had no temporal authority and the Prophet proceeded gradually from suggestion to recommendation before finally ordering and prescribing sanctions. In the Meccan period there was neither a fixed amount, nor a fixed time of the year, nor even an organization to collect and disburse the taxes; all these measures were taken during the Medinese period. The sense of the terms with regard to taxes underwent a profound change when "charity" became a State duty; the Qur'an and the Hadith retained the old terms, with the advantage that the people were persuaded to believe that to pay tax to the government was no less meritorious in the sight of God than charity and almsgiving, and that zakat was the best kind of charity. The Caliphs retained the same terms.
5. Al-Qur'an, vi, 90
6. 'Ibid. ii, 246ff.
7. "And there are some men who say: Our Lord, give us a good in this world and also a good in the next world, and deliver us from the torment of the fire. Such shall have a portion of that which they have gained" (al-Qur'an, ii, 201-02). "Seek the abode of the hereafter in that which God hath given thee and neglect not thy portion of this world ..." (ibid. xxviii, 77).
8. Al-Qur'an, xxxiii, 21; lix, 7, etc.
9. As to the references and details of this and the following statements of the paragraph, see Hamidullah, Sahilah Hammam Ibn Munabbih (both Arabic and Urdu editions), Introduction.
10. Al-Qur'an, iv, 24.
11. Ibid. vi, 90.
12. Ibid. ii, 75, 79; iv, 46; v, 13, 41.
13. Al-Bukhari, Kashf al-Asrar'ala Usid al-Bazdawi, III, 262.

14. Idem, Sahih, Chap. "iman," section 44.
15. Consult the very interesting book Poll Tax in Islam by Dorman.
16. Abu Yusuf, Kharaj (Bulaq edition), p. 78.
17. See for references and discussion on this point, Hamidullah, Muslim Conduct of State, Lahore, 1953, pp. 17-38.
18. Hujjat Allah al-Balighah, Vol. I, Chap. "Asrar al-Saleh," cited in Introduction to Islam, Centre Culturel Islamique, Paris
19. Al-Qur'an, ix, 60.
20. Al-Ahkam at-Sultaniyyah, Chap. "Zakat." (The author was a contemporary of al-Mawardi, and both composed their books with the same title.)
21. Al-Qur'an, IV, 29.
22. Based on a saying of the Prophet: "Muslims abide by the conditions they have contracted, except the condition which permits a Haram (forbidden thing)"; cf. al-Tirmidhi, Chap. "Ahkam," 17, etc.
23. Edward Westermarck, History of Human Marriage, French tr. Gennep, Paris, 1943, Vol. V, pp. 54-56; Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Polygamy."
24. Ibid.
25. Al-Qur'an, ii, 279
26. Ibid., ii, 275.
27. Ibid. ii, 282.
28. Ibid., ii, 256
29. Ibid. xxiv, 4.
30. Hasan ibn 'Abd Allah, Athar al-Uwal fi Tartib al-Duwal, compiled in 708 H., p. 167.
31. See Hamidullah, "Used al-figh'm tarihi," in the Islam Tetkikteri Enstiusu Dergisi, of Istanbul University, II, 1956-57, pp. 1-18. Also the French tr., Annates of the Faculty of Law of the same University, 1959.
32. Extensive literature has been published in European languages during the last few decades, references to which can be found in the bibliography given in Muslim Conduct of State by Hamidullah, Lahore, 1953.
33. It goes to the credit of Wellhausen to have made this constitution known to the Western world for the first time, under the title Gemeindeordnung von Medina (published in Vol. IV of his book Skizzen and Vorarbeiten). For English tr., see Hamidullah, "The First Written Constitution of the World," Islamic Review, Woking, 1941. For Urdu tr., see his 'Ahd Nabawi ka Nizam-i Hukmrdni. A more recent and detailed discussion and analysis is given in Le Prophete de l'Islam, 8a vie et son oeuvre, Paris, 1959. For the Arabic text, see al-Watha'iq al Siyasiyyah.
34. There is now considerable literature in favor of this thesis. For instance, Nallino's Italian article (English tr. "Impossibility of the Influence of Roam Law on Muslim Law" in the Voice of Islam, Karachi, Vol. I); Bousquet, "Le Mystere do la formation et des origins du Filth," published in Reveu Algerienne, Alger, July-September 1947, Urdu translation in Ma'ari f, Azamgarh; see also Hamidullah,
35. Al-Dhahabi, Tabagat al-Huffaz, s.v. "Auzh'i."
36. Al-Qur'hn, iii, 110.

Part 4: The Sciences

Chapter 62: Geography

Chapter 63: Mathematics and Astronomy

Chapter 64: Physics and Mineralogy

Chapter 65: Chemistry

Chapter 66: Natural History

Chapter 67: Medicine

Chapter 62: Geography

Philosophy in the past ages was not merely an academic subject studied by specialists; it was a living influence which guided men in their ideas about the universe and it included a variety of fields covering theology, law, society, and the sciences. To the Muslims during the Middle Ages philo-sophy and its various disciplines were all-embracing. Geographic ideas were inseparable from philosophic thinking as they were basic to a widening of horizons. Indeed, interest in geography is as old as recorded human history. This had its roots in ancient folklore, poetry, and travel. The geographical instinct in one form or another developed early among organized human communities, and the people of the ancient civilizations possessed a variety of geographic knowledge.

It is well known to historians that the culture of Greece was preceded by a continuous and composite culture in Western Asia and Egypt and that this culture in its turn was not the product of the genius of any one people, but was shaped by an ever-increasing human intercourse and was the fructi-fication of a long evolution. Thus, Greek geographical ideas too had a basis in the past and in the experience of other peoples. Philosophy and poetry formed the tap-roots of the geographic knowledge of the Greeks. Similarly, in Arab times both Greek ideas and Islamic philosophy and literature were potent factors in the evolution of geographic concepts.

Early Greek contributions to geography were as varied as they were bril-liant. Later on, Alexander's campaigns were of the nature of geographical exploration under arms. In the course of time the center of scientific activity shifted to Alexandria. Science and geography continued to flourish in the Greco-Roman age, though under somewhat different cultural atmosphere. In fact, the Greco-Roman culture was subjected to a terrible ordeal. It witnessed one of the greatest intellectual conflicts in history, the clash between Greek ideals and the various oriental religions, chiefly Judaism and Christianity.

But before Christianity could triumph, the great geographer Ptolemy (c. 150 A.D.) had accomplished his work of coordinating the sum total of geographic knowledge up to his time, though a little earlier Strabo (c. 19 A.D.) had contributed even more brilliantly in terms of geographic analysis. He had also indicated the extent of the knowledge of the Romans about the land and people of Arabia. Describing Gellus' expedition in 25 B. C. to Haura on the Red Sea coast to the borders of Hadramaut, Strabo says that the Emperor Augustus was also influenced by reports of the wealth of the Arabs and their trading activity in spices, aromatics, and precious stones, and that he desired either to befriend or subdue such opulent people.¹

By the third century A. D. distinct changes had taken place in the political, cultural, and religious spheres. The Roman Empire came near to utter break-down. The legions, never too many for the long frontiers and made increasingly heterogeneous by local recruiting, lost their sense of mutual cohesion and failed to check stronger outside attacks. Many emperors rose and fell like ninepins, un-mourning, unsung. Rome was sacked by Goths in 410 A.D. By the middle of the sixth century A. D., Justinian's final efforts at consolidation of the Roman power had failed.

The commencement of the middle Ages is important in the history of science in general and geography in particular. A general retrogression is witnessed and gradually the so-called “Dark Age” of geography set in. It is common to begin the middle Ages from Constantine, but Paganism was tolerated almost until the division of the Roman Empire in 395 A.D. The tradition of pagan literature and science, however, continued much longer, at least until Justinian closed the school of Athens.

The triumph of Christianity led its adherents to consider scientific research not only a useless occupation but also a pernicious one. Alexandria had lost its noble place as the center of scientific activity, and Egypt for the Christians had become a land of new wonders as the first home of hermits or desert men or monks; some visitors had no interest in anything else and dismissed the pyramids as mere “Granaries of the Kings.”² A sailor turned monk took a hand at geographical writing and produced the crankiest of books, the famous Christian Topography, in 547 A.D.

The main purpose of this erudition was to disprove the pagan notion that the earth is a globe. Cosmas hailed from Alexandria and had in his younger days traded in the Red Sea and even beyond. Cosmas' earth was flat, rectangular, and oblong, twice as long from east to west as from north to south, and was surrounded by ocean. A high mountain rose in the north behind which the tiny sun played hide and seek to bring forth days and nights. Beazley rightly called Cosmas' work a “systematic nonsense.” Saint Ambrose saw no profit in investigations about the earth. Science, geography, and all such pursuits were dubbed as magic art. The spherical shape of the earth and the existence of antipodes were favorite subjects of ridicule.

Thus, the geography of the early centuries of the Christian era was a fascinating mixture. Perhaps it seldom represented the full amount of contemporary knowledge and was largely made up of traditional elements, Christian and classical, blended in various proportions. The first came from a literal reading of the Scriptures and other-worldly attitude of the protagonists of the Church. It appears that Christianity spread first through the urban commercial population round the Mediterranean, whose lingua franca was Greek. It was only later on that it penetrated into the hinterland and overspread into the vast rural areas of outer provinces. Thus, Greek science received a frontal attack in its most important centers. In this refutation of earlier knowledge, interest in science and rational geographic concepts could be retained only by a handful of people in Christendom. Only the Nestorians, the Monophysites, and some of their adherents kept a semblance of Greek science preserved.

During the first/seventh century there arose an epoch-making movement from the depths of the Arabian Peninsula. It was Islam. It brought about the establishment of one of the greatest empires the world has seen. The Arabs conquered a large number of peoples who were superior to them in culture. Nevertheless, the conquerors did not lose their national characteristics and subjected Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and North Africa to their ethno-graphical influences.

As soon as early conquests were over and cultural contact was established with Greek and Indian knowledge, Muslims became imbued with tremendous curiosity and took up the cause of science with enthusiasm at different centers of their culture. Early Islamic attitude to science was one of tolerance, even enlightened interest. It is evidenced by the continuance of the academy at Jundi-Shaper as a scientific center in the Muslim Empire. Scientists from this center in Persia were welcomed at Damascus, the capital of the Umayyad Caliphate. These men were mostly Christians and Jews.³

Further, the Arabs were traders, travelers, and lawyers, and they had somewhat positive minds and, therefore, practical sciences appealed to them. Arabic was suitable for exact and precise sciences and lent itself more easily to the formation of technical terms. Geography especially appealed to them because of its utility to serve the needs of commerce, the division of land, travel through the deserts, knowledge of the plants and animals, and to find the azimuth of Mecca and the phases of the moon.

The Arabs had a traditional interest in matters concerning geographical knowledge. Even before the birth of Christ and after, they were among the foremost traders and navigators of the Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean, and Chinese waters. The Arabic language of that period abounds in words for ships, boats, condition of the sea surface, storms, heavenly bodies, and commodities of exchange and trade. These activities were greatly influenced by the geo-graphy of the Arabian Peninsula and its midway position between the East and the West and the littoral situation of all its fertile lands in Yamamah, Oman, Bahrain, the Yemen, etc. Even the Hijaz, though largely arid, lay along the trade-routes from the Arabian and Red Seas to the Mediterranean world.

Pre-Islamic poetry contains references to navigation and sailings, and the Holy Qur'an itself abounds in navigational terminology and descriptions of conditions of the sea and ships and boats used. There was a close relation-ship between land journeys as well as between sea voyages and the knowledge of stars and other heavenly bodies. The inland Arabs with scanty agriculture and nomadic economy were always face to face with such problems as sources and extent of grazing opportunities, distribution of desert plants and animals, and the nature of geomorphological features. Therefore, Arab interest in geo-graphical matters was a deep one. It needed various stimuli such as extension of territorial influence, expanded trading opportunities, greater cultural con-tacts, and a vigorous religious zeal to widen the frontiers of geographic knowledge.⁴

Within a century of the advent of Islam, the Arab victories brought them a rich reward in the conquest of prosperous lands and cultured com-munities, from the Mediterranean to India and Central Asia. On the one hand, the Arabs became the heirs to the Hellenistic culture for which a way was earlier opened by the conquest of Alexander. On the other, they reached the homeland of Indian culture and Buddhist and Indian thought. It is rightly assumed that the Arabs became the pupils of and successors to the Greeks in science and, through their own efforts and ingenuity perfected it for the future protagonists.

Indian influence in the first instance was the product of a continuing commercial contact via the sea-route from Ujjain, the town of Brahmagupta (c. 6/628), the famous writer of the astronomical manual *Brahma Siddhanta*. Muslim conquest of Central Asia brought them into touch with Buddhism and old Greek colonies in the regions of Bactria, Sogdiana, Farghanah, and Merv.

The establishment of the 'Abbaside Caliphate in 132/750A.D. ushered in an age of glory, power, pomp, splendor, culture, and prosperity for the peoples under Muslim rule. Scientific activity took its birth and in this process the inauguration of translation activity in Baghdad, systematically organized under a Translation Bureau (*Bait al-Hikmah*), was a tremendous step forward. The Bureau had a library and permanent personnel, and translators were commissioned from far and wide. Manuscripts were even paid for their weight in gold. The main aim was to make available in the Arabic language the wisdom and the science of the Greeks and others.

Translations also included works in many sciences by an array of able translators. Among the sciences which received special attention were physics, meteorology, mineralogy, botany, astronomy, and geography. The early phase of translations was concerned more with medical and philosophical works, but later on mathematical, astronomical, and geographical subjects received more attention. The Caliph al-Mamun took active interest in the work of his translators and scientists. Among his great achievements were the measurement of a degree of the earth's arc on the plains of Sinjar, west of Mosul, and the construction of a world map. Both the tasks were of great geographical significance and were accomplished by a team of scientists.

The period of early translations was of great importance to the developing intellectual and scientific life of Muslim society. The Greek writers, who influenced the Arab scholars most were not poets, historians, or orators, but largely the scientists in various fields such as mathematics, astronomy, medicine, philosophy, and geography. For instance, the scientific works of Aristotle received far greater attention than did the writings of Plato and Socrates.

Before the content of Muslim contributions to geography is examined, a few points must be clarified. The birth of scientific activity under Islam has indispensable relevance to Muslim geographic thinking. The passage of Greek science to the Arabs revealed to them Hellenistic geographic concepts which had received slashing denunciations from orthodox Christian writers. Therefore, the first task of Arab geographers was the revival of the older science.

Muslim geographers held Ptolemy in high regard and greatly valued his monumental work. But he did not escape their criticism, and numerous improvements in his concepts were suggested. Even Ptolemy was not able to combine the mathematical with the descriptive and statistical methods in geography. As regards the latter, Strabo was far more alive and was more critical in his writings than Ptolemy. These traditions were passed on to Arab writers and, therefore, quite a number of Muslim geographers can be categorized under them. But Arab geographers branched out into so many

new directions and were so prolific in their output that a somewhat broader classification of their contributions is called for. Muslim interest in geography was stimulated by a variety, of factors such as environmental, religious or spiri-tual, administrative, political, and commercial.

Muslim military campaigns were well planned and superbly executed and the generals and commanders collected much geographical data before conducting their operations. The organization of administration, collection of revenue, and appraisal of resources of the newly conquered territories required detailed geographical information. It is said that the great Caliph 'Umar, hearing of the conquest of new lands, asked a scholar to describe to him the lands of the earth, their climates and positions, and the influence which land and climate exert upon their inhabitants.⁵ Both scholars and religious leaders considered geography a laudable pursuit, as is borne out by the remark of Yaquit that as a science geography was pleasing in the eyes of God. Even the orthodox al-Ghazali believed that the votaries of science will find the road to paradise easy. Muslim religious interest in the determination of latitude and longitude of places and in the diurnal movement of the sun was indispensable both in connection with the time for daily prayers and the geographical co-ordinates of Mecca. With the expansion of the dominions of the Muslim Empire, commercial activity increased and geographical information of different types became vital for its growth and development.

Regional geography received early attention and contained an enormous wealth of details and information. It developed its own traditions, and the variety in approach to it and the ingenuity of the individual geographers make many contributions to it a fascinating reading. The writings of notable travelers, the specialist studies of the topographers, and the critical works of the socio-geographers lend an immense variety and color to Muslim geography. There-fore, it may be convenient to examine the Muslim contribution to geography under the following headings:

- (A) General and Regional Geography.
- (B) General Treatises and Scientific Geography.
- (C) Mathematical Geography.
- (D) Cartography and Map-making.

A - General And Regional Geography

Muslim interest in general geographical writing developed early. This class of geographical writing has a wide range and includes some of the earliest contributions in this field. General geographical descriptions of the Muslim world were a favorite theme and in view of the needs of administration and extension of the postal services many works were written as "Route Books." Diaries and travel accounts were yet another category of geographical writing. As a result of the unsatisfactory basis of descriptions in relation to hypothetical "Climatic Divisions" in parallel latitudinal strips (a Greek legacy) many Muslim geographers felt the necessity of describing the dominions of Islam on the basis of regions of which they possessed more specific know-ledge. It may be said to be the beginning of a regional consciousness.

Among the earliest known works dealing with geographical matters are those of 'Abd al-Malik ibn Quraib al-Asma'i and Hisham ibn Muhammad al-

Kalbi. Al-Asma`i of Basrah (123-216/740-831) wrote on plants, animals, and the evolution of human society. Al-Kalbi (d. 205/820) was an authority on the history of pre-Islamic Arabia and it is said that his work *Kitab al-Nawadir*⁶ contained observations on many geographical topics. Similarly, one of the early treatises on agriculture was ibn Wahshiyyah's (c.288/900) book on Nabataean agriculture. Abu Yusuf Ya`qub al-Kindi (c. 260/873-874), though primarily a philosopher and physicist, wrote a geographical work called *Rasm al-Ma`mar min al-Ard* (Description of the Inhabited Part of the Earth).

But the work of Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi (d. 236/850) laid the foundation of Arab geographical science. By writing *Kitdab surat al-Ard* (Treatise on the Face of the Earth) he syncretized Greek and Hindu knowledge. He was a mathematician of great repute and is said to have collaborated in the degree measurements ordered by Caliph al-Mamun. He improved Ptolemy's geo-graphy, both as regards the text and the maps. His scientific attainments are universally acknowledged by the Orientalists. Another early geographical work which was concerned with Arabia was that of Arram ibn al-Asbj al--Sulami (c. 231/845) who wrote *Kitab Asma' Jibal Tihamah wa Makaniha* dealing with the mountains of Tihamah in Arabia. This work was mentioned by al-Sirafi, and another book by the same author bearing the title *Jazirat al-'Arab* was mentioned by Yaqut in his "Dictionary of Learned Men" (*Mu`jam at-Udabu'*)⁷

1. The Route Books

After the early geographical writings mentioned above had appeared and the initial phase of translations had come to an end, an interesting class of geographical literature was produced which is contained in the so-called "Route Books" (*Kutub al-Masalik w-al-Mamalik*). Quite a tradition developed in the writing of these route books and many later authors copied the technique of the earlier masters. In this respect, ibn Khurdadhbih (c. 300/912) blazed a new trail with his famous *Kitdab al-Masalik wa-al-Mamalik* (A Book on Routes and Kingdoms). He provided an excellent summary of the main trade- routes of the Arab world and also wrote descriptions of China, Korea, and Japan. The work served almost as a source for later writers. Unfortunately, only an abridged version of the book is extant.

Al-Marwazi (d. 274/887) also wrote a route book which was mentioned by ibn al-Nadim and Ya'qub. Sarakhsi (d.286/899), who was a pupil of al-Kindi, gave the same title to his geographical work and abu al-Faraj al-Baghdadi (d. 310/922) compiled *Kitab al-Kharaj* (Revenue Book) dealing with land tax and postal services in the context of the geography of the Arab Empire. Al-Jaihani (fl. c. 280-295/893-907), the learned minister at the Samanid Court, wrote another revenue book replete with geographical explanations, and it is surmised⁸ that it was one of the source materials for al-Idrisi. Abu Zaid al-Balkhi (d. 322/933) produced another route book along the traditional lines, but his real fame as a geographer rests on his somewhat more scientific contribution, namely, *Kitab al-Ashkal or Suwar al-Aqalim* (Figures of the Climates).

Al-Istakhri (fl. c. 339/950) followed in the footsteps of his senior contemporary al-Balkhi by writing a similar book and using the technique of explaining maps by the accompanying text. Ibn Haugal revised and rewrote Istakhri's book with considerable additional information in 367/977. These three geographers form an important group who combined their writings of descriptive geography with carto-graphic work and scientific analysis and, therefore, this category of their work will receive mention later on.

In Spain, al-Bakri (d. 487/1094) of Cordova used the same technique and method to write his route book and geographical dictionary notable for their useful information about Europe and North Africa.

2. Books of Countries and Dictionaries

The route books were written from an administrative angle but they in-variably developed into geographical treatises. They were generally concrete, accurate, and detailed.⁹ Closely related to the route books, yet enlarging on their scope and subject-matter, were the large number of "Books of Countries" and geographical dictionaries and gazetteers. Among the early writers of such tracts and a notable Arab geographer and historian was al-Ya'qubi who wrote *Kitab al-Buldan* (Book of Countries) in 278/891, giving a wide range of topographical and economic details and occasionally bringing out the relationship between physical factors and human activity.

Topographical details about the cities of Kifah, Baghdad, Samarra, and Basrah and regional descriptions of many areas in Arabia, Syria, Egypt, Nubia, and North Africa, are some of the outstanding features of this book. His pioneer work as a geographer deserves high praise, and it is not surprising that modern European writers often call him the father of Muslim geography. Shortly before Ya'qubi an outstanding historical work with many geographical observations had been written by al-Baladhuri (in 256/869) under the title *Futuh al-Buldan* (Conquests of Countries). This work typifies Muslim interest in the history and geography of the newly acquired territories. Al-Hamadani's "Book of Countries" written in 290/902 was utilized by notable geographers like Mas'udi and Yaqut; unfortunately, it is lost. A contemporary of al-Hamadani was Ibn Rustah (fl. c. 291/903); his encyclopedia *al-A'laq al-Nafisah* dealt with geographical matters in its seventh volume. He discussed a variety of topics including the extent of the earth, seas, rivers, climate, founding of Mecca and Medina, and the regional geography of Iran.

Ibn Rustah's account of the road system of the empire and particularly of the great Khurasan road remains outstanding for its clear details and geographic implications. A few years later Ibn al-Ha'ik (d. 334/945) presented his regional geography of Arabia in *Kitab Jazirat al-'Arab* dealing with physical features, minerals, races, tribes, and settlements. He also contributed a semi-geographical work *al-Ikhlil* on the archaeological aspects of the Yemen. Muhallabi (375/985) was the author of an outstanding geographical work dealing with the Sudan. It was the first work of its kind for this remote region and formed Yaqut's main source for the geography of the Sudan.

An interesting geographical work of the fourth/tenth century written in Persian was entitled *Hudud al-'Alam* (c. 372/982) by an unknown author. It

is meant to be a world geography on a regional basis and was probably written as a preface to a map. Minorsky has produced an excellently edited and annotated version of this notable work.¹⁰

The western wing of Islam in Spain also produced many contemporary geographers who wrote route books, books of countries, and works of regional descriptions. Al-Tariqi (d. 363/973) wrote on North Africa. Al-Bakri of Cordova (d.487/1094) was a celebrated geographer who compiled a geographical dictionary, *Mu'jam ma Ista'jam* as well as a route book. These works incorporate fresh material on Central and Eastern Europe and North Africa. Al-Zuhri of Granada (c.532/1137) was the writer of a notable work, *Kitab al-Jahrafia* (Book of Geography). It appears that al-Zuhri was able to utilize the work of the team of geographers of the reign of Caliph al-Mamun. Al-Munajjim (d. 456/1068) was the compiler of a geographical dictionary which both al-Idrisi and ibn Khaldun mention as one of their source materials. And there were many lesser lights who followed these masters in compilation.

But the art of depicting geographical and associated information in the form of a dictionary attained its highest form from the pen of Ya'qub Hamawi. His work was done almost at the crossroads of history, shortly before the Tartar invasion engulfed the eastern lands of Islam. After considerable travel in his younger days and study in several libraries, he produced his monumental geographical dictionary known as *Mu'jam al-Buldun* in 621/1224. This great work contains a geographical gazetteer, a regional world geography, and much topographical, historical, and archaeological information. It deals with geography in the broadest manner. His other well-known work *Mu'jam al-Udaba'*, dealing with lives of learned men, is also replete with geographical information. Yaqut utilized a variety of sources including many of those which are now extinct. His dictionary 'contains a treatise dealing with geo-graphy in general from many points of view.

3. Diaries and Travel Accounts

Travel has always been the easiest and the most natural means of acquiring and propagating geographic knowledge. In the medieval period of Islam travel was promoted in many ways. Religio-cultural affiliations with far-flung parts of the world, curiosity, commercial enterprise, and above all the urge for pilgrimage excited widespread interest in travel. Thus, Muslim travel literature in the shape of diaries and descriptions and experiences of journeys contains a treasure-house of geographical information.

For Muslims, the pilgrimage to Mecca was not a matter of choice; it was their positive duty within the limits of possibility to undertake it. Mecca was the ever-present magnet to attract their thoughts and thus there ran into Arabia a constant stream of visitors from all parts of the Islamic world. The *hajj* every year was a unique international assemblage by which people from distant lands, diverse environments, and varied experiences exchanged ideas and acquired knowledge of countries and inhabitants of the world. It was a tremendous incentive to the spread of geographical knowledge.

With the spread of Islam and the extension of its political influence, trade and commerce greatly expanded resulting in the knowledge of new lands. In

the Euro-Asian continent these regions were the Volga-Caspian, Northern Europe, and Siberia on the one hand and Central and South-East Asia on the other. The African continent received far more attention from the Muslims than from their predecessors. The East African coast up to Madagascar, Egypt, Nubia, Abyssinia, the Sudan, Equatorial Africa, the Sahara, land of the Niger, and West Africa, all came within the range of their commercial, cultural, and religious activities.

Travel and commerce walked hand in hand. Each geographical discovery created new commercial opportunities, and these, with attendant competition and inherent ambitions, led to more travel and discoveries. At a later period the Crusades, besides their sordid side, provided for generations a great and prolonged avenue for contact between the East and the West for exchange of ideas and cultural assimilation. Trade, commerce, and travel were promoted and helped the circulation of geographical information.

Ibn Fadlan went as an envoy of Caliph al-Muqtadir to the Court of the Volga Bulghar in 309/921 and is credited with the first reliable account of Russia. He may, in fact, be regarded as one of the earliest Muslim traveler-geographers. His Risalah or diary is of great geographic significance. His description is the earliest reliable account of Russia and was incorporated into the works of many later geographers including Yaqut.¹¹ Another experienced early traveler was abu Dulaf who hailed from Yanbu' near Medina. He combined poetic talents with a wander-lust. After a stay at the Samanid Court at Bukhara, he went to South India across Tibet with a returning Indian embassy and the journey back was made via Kashmir, Afghanistan, and Sijistan (c. 331/942). His narrative of journeys was entitled `Aja'ib al-Buldun (Marvels of Countries). Abu Dulaf's geographical impressions of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent and the adjoining areas were utilized by Yaqut and Qazwini. Among early Muslim travelers, al-Idrisi mentioned Sallam who visited the region north of the Caspian Sea, Armenia, Georgia, land of the Khazars, and the Ural and Altai areas in the middle of the third/ninth century at the command of Caliph al-Wathiq.¹²

With increasing Muslim influence in Indian littoral areas and expanding commerce in South-East Asian waters and on the Chinese mainland, more detailed and somewhat accurate geographical information was in demand. The busiest and flourishing ports on the Arabian coast and Persian Gulf were Aden, Oman, Suhar, Jeddah, Siraf, and Basrah. Their commerce and overseas relations were mainly with East Africa, Indian coasts, South-East Asia, and China. Siraf especially occupied a pre-eminent position and grew into a port-city of merchants, princes, and experienced sailors.

One of the early writings on trade and commerce and navigational matters in these regions was that on the journeys of Sulaiman the Merchant by an anonymous author (237/851) with the additional comments on it by abu Zaid al-Sirafi. The work gives us information with regard to duration of the journey, its various stages, ports of call, nature of commodity exchange, wind and weather, and conditions of the seas. The descriptions display an excellent geographical sense and an understanding of physical and human aspects. Sulaiman's description of the Chinese mainland, its products and economic resources is realistic. He also mentions the Chinese use of tea.

Interest in the Indian Ocean and its bordering lands continued for generations and Muslim sailors and travelers wrote on many topics which encompass geography.

Abu Zaid al-Hasan of Siraf edited accounts of Muslim travelers and sailors in c. 308/920 in order to supplement Sulaiman's narratives. According to him, ibn Wahb travelled to China in 257/870 and there were other voyages in that direction. Abu Zaid's compilation was probably entitled *Akhbar al-Sin w-al-Hind* (Information about China and India). It may be said to be the most important work of its kind before that of Marco Polo or of ibn Battutah. Besides the Far East, it deals with the Arabian and the East African coasts. From such voyages and confirming somewhat earlier traditions also, gradually developed the stories and fascinating fables around the name of "Sindbad the Sailor" found in the *All Lailah wa-Lailah*. Another writer about the trade, commerce, navigation, peoples, and products of the Indian Ocean area from Arabia to Ceylon and beyond was Buzurg ibn Shahryar who compiled the interesting book *'Aja'ib al-Hind*¹³ (Wonders of India) in about 342/953-954.

The famous "sea lions" (expert writers on nautical instructions), mentioned by Ahmad ibn Majid in the second half of the ninth/fifteenth century, were not mere expert navigators, but also writers on sea voyages and route books. Muhammad ibn Shadhan and Sahl ibn Aban belonged to the fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth centuries. Perhaps there were many more such writers; at any rate, later on, their successors were Ahmad ibn Majid (895/1489), Sulaiman al-Mahri (early tenth/sixteenth century), Piri Rais, Sidi 'Ali, and al-Sifaqsi (959/1551) who displayed a remarkable knowledge of the geography of the Indian Ocean.

The scene in the Mediterranean was somewhat different to that in the Indian Ocean. In the latter, trade, commerce, and adventure were the impelling factors in Muslim enterprise, but in the former prolonged political struggle, religious wars, commerce, and pilgrimages were motivating features behind sailings and voyages. There is record,¹⁴ however, of the close co-operation between Muslims and Christians in the formation of joint partnerships and of commercial treaties, carriage of passengers in ships irrespective of their religion, and the transport of products of skilled industry and luxury goods from the Islamic world to Europe.¹⁵

Before mention is made of the well-known traveler-geographers in the western lands of Islam, those in the east deserve attention. Among these intelligent globe-trotters and geographers, al-'Mas`udi (d. 346/957) deserves pride of place. He was born in Baghdad towards the end of the third/ninth century. Mas`udi acquired his knowledge through painstaking study of the existing sources as well as through extensive travels. His travels carried him to many parts of Arabia, Levantine coast, Caspian shores, Asia Minor, Iran, Iraq, India, South-East Asia, East African coasts, and Egypt. He met common men possessing practical knowledge and scholars of repute. Mas'udi's acute observations and views depicting a keen geographical sense are contained in his famous book, *Muruj al-Dhahab wa Ma'ddin al-Jawahir* (Meadows of Gold and Mines of Precious Stones), a historic-geographical encyclopedia written in about 336/947 and revised ten years later.

It seems to be an age of great travelers, as not many years later ibn Hauqal (fl. c. 332-367/943-977) completed a travel of thirty years which excited his interest in geography. His meeting with the celebrated geographer al-Istakhri was significant, as at the latter's request he re-wrote his geography and revised the accompanying maps. Ibn Hauqal called this improved version, *Kitab al-Masulik w-al-Mamalik* (Book of Roads and Provinces), and added maps of each country to this remarkable treatise. .

Yet another outstanding geographer and traveler was al-Maqdisi or al-Muqaddisi, a native of Jerusalem. He travelled through many Islamic lands except perhaps Spain, Sijistan, and Sind. By all standards he was a careful observer and had an inborn geographical sense. On the culmination of his travels he wrote his famous geography *Ahsan al-Taqasim fi Ma'rifat al-Aqulim* (Best of Divisions as Regards Climates) at Shiraz in Fars in 375-376/985-986. His writings reveal much original information and are an attempt at analysis of physical and human factors. His sources include several earlier geographers like Khurdadbeh, Jaihani, Balkhi, Hamadani, and Jabiz. But he subjects his authorities to considerable criticism.

The tradition of travel and that as a medium for geographical work continued. One of the junior contemporaries of al-Biruni was Nasir Khusrau from Balkh, where he was born in 394/1003. Starting his travels from Egypt, he visited a large part of the Middle East including the Hijaz, Palestine, Syria, and Iran. Earlier, he had travelled in India¹⁶ and lived at the Court of Sultan Mahmud. His travel diary, the famous *Safar-Nameh*, was written in Persian. He gives the best account of Jerusalem before the Crusades, and his description of Egypt is of high geographic value. Shaikh 'Ali al-Harawi (d. 611/1214) wrote a travel book dealing not only with the frequented places of pilgrimage in the eastern part of the Islamic world, but also of Byzantine Empire, North Africa, and Abyssinia. He was in Jerusalem in 569/1173 when it was in Christian hands. He visited the Christian parts of the world on several occasions.

The western world of Islam produced several traveler-geographers who also made journeys to the east to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca. Al-Mazini al-Andalusi (d. 565/1169) was an intrepid traveler who came from Granada and journeyed through Spain, North Africa, Egypt, Iraq, Khurasan, and Russia. He travelled in the Volga region and in Hungary and gave information unobtainable elsewhere, such as the Russian trade in fossil bones or ivory.¹⁷ He was the writer of at least four important geographical works.¹⁸

Another celebrated geographer ibn Jubair of Valencia (d. 625/1217) wrote a valuable account of his journey to the east. His accounts throw an interesting light on the geography as well as the commercial activity and culture of the Muslim communities of the Mediterranean lands. Ibn Jubair's writings were a source book for many later Muslim geographers and historians. His *Rihkah* (Travel Account) remains one of the best works of its kind in Arabic literature.¹⁹ Ibn Jubair's fellow townsman al-'Abdari (fl. c. 688/1289) commenced a memorable journey to accomplish the pilgrimage.

Starting from Mogadore on the West African coast of Morocco he made the journey both ways by land and thus crossed North Africa twice. His

travel geography al-Rihlah al-Maghribiyah contains valuable topographical information.²⁰ Al-Mausili wrote 'Uyun al-Akhbar (a book of travels) at Ceuta after his travels through Syria, Pales-tine, and Egypt during 537-585/1142-1189.

Though al-Idrisi was an all-round geographer and his proper place is among the writers of scientific geography, his travels were an indispensable part of his geographic experience. He was born at Ceuta in 493/1099 and educated at Cordova. His travels covered a vast compass stretching from Muslim Spain and North Africa to Christian Europe as well as other parts of the Islamic world. Rich in experience and mature in his outlook, al-Idrisi settled down at Palermo in Sicily at the Court of his worthy patron King Roger II. He died in 562/1166. His famous geography *Nuzhat al-Mushtaq fi Ikhtraq al-Afaq* (known as *al-Kitab al-Rujari*), written shortly before 549/1154 is the most elaborate description of the world of medieval times. According to Sarton²¹, al-Idrisi was the author of another geographical work entitled *Raud al-Uns wa Nuzhat al-Nafs* (Pleasure of Men and Delight of Soul), a kind of a route book which the author compiled for William I, King of Sicily, in 557/1161. This geographical work was said to be larger than the *Kitab al-Rujari* but unfortunately it has been entirely lost.

Abu al-'Abbas al-Nabati of Seville and his pupil ibn al-Baitar of Malaga were biographers and they travelled in Spain, North Africa, and along the shores of Red Sea with the purpose of scientific exploration in connection with their work.

Ibn Said al-Maghribi was another indefatigable traveler, profoundly interested in geography. He was born near Granada in 611/1214 and died in Damascus in 674/1275. His *Kitab al-Jaghrafiya* embodies the experience of his extensive travels in the Muslim world, and the geographical information and views in it added to al-Idrisi's knowledge. He also gives an account of parts of northern Europe including Iceland. Ibn Said visited Armenia also and was at the Court of Hulagu from 654/1256 to 664/1265.

Half a century later, in 704/1304, was born ibn Battutah, one of the out-standing travelers of all times. Starting from his home town, Tangier, in 726/1325, when he was barely twenty-two years old, he travelled in Africa, Asia, and Europe for thirty years. His journeys included several pilgrimages to Mecca and travel to and residence in many parts of the Middle East, India, Ceylon, Maldives, Bengal, China, North Africa, Spain, and the lands of the Niger. The extent of his wanderings is estimated at about 75,000 miles²² without allowing for deviations, a figure which surpasses Marco Polo's travels. Ibn Battutah's dictated accounts of his experience to ibn Juzaiy at the Court of Sultan abu 'Inan at Fez constitute his *Rihlah* (Travels). The book contains references to the economic and human geography of the areas visited, trade, commerce, ports, navigation, and numerous physical facts with occasional analysis of causes and effects. His memory was astounding and geographical sense remarkable. Ibn Battutah died in Fez in 779/1377. In the western world of Islam, the tradition of travel leading to geographic writings was handed down to ibn Khaldun who was born in Tunis in 733/1332 and died in 809/1406. Much of his well-known writings as a geographer, historian, and sociolo-gist was based on his travels in Spain

and North Africa. The scientific significance of his “Introduction to Universal History” (Kitab al-'Ibar) will be discussed later.

In the East, Muslim travel-cum-geographical accounts from the eighth/fourteenth century to the tenth/sixteenth century are represented by Hafiz Abru, 'Abd al-Razzaq Samarqandi, abu al-Fadl'Allami, and Amin Ahmad Razi of Rayy. Hafiz Abru wrote his regional geography in Persian, entitled *Zubdat al-Tawarikh*, which was modelled on the earlier Arabic classical style. Barthold²³ has a high opinion of the material in it relating to the author's time. 'Abd al--Razzaq was born in Herat in 816/1413 and died there in 887/1482. He travelled to India and enjoyed a diplomatic career; on his return he wrote an excellent diary *Mafia' al-Sa'dain wa Majma' al-Bahrain* in Persian. In the generations that followed the advent of the Europeans into the Indian Ocean, Muslim interest in geography and travel was not dimmed. Abu al-Fadl, born at Agra in 958/1551, was a leading light at the Court of Akbar the Great. His *A'in-i Akbari* written in Persian remains an outstanding geographic contribution of his age, a parallel to which is hard to find in the contemporary West.²⁴ Amin Akimad Razi of Rayy visited India in Akbar's time and later in 1002/ 1593 produced his *Halt Iqlim* (Seven Climates), an exhaustive geographical dictionary in Persian. Another contemporary author who wrote at Damascus in 1007/1598 on the basis of personal travels was al-'Ashiq, the writer of *Manazir al-'Alan* (Description of the World).

B - General Treatises And Scientific Geography

The climax of Muslim geographical contribution is represented by the formulation of geographical theories and the compilation of treatises in which attempts were often made to assemble facts and put forward theories. Indeed, their level and scientific value are unequal; none the less, the attempts as such are interesting and praiseworthy. The later half of the fourth/tenth century was productive of many such efforts and it would not be too much to assert that such abundant activity in science and geography had never occurred before, not even in the best days of Alexandria. The “Keys of the Sciences” (*Mafatih al-'Ulum*) of al-Khwarizmi, the “Encyclopedia” (*Fihrist*) of ibn al-Nadim and the “Tracts of the Brethren of Purity” (*Rasa'il Ikhwan al-,safa*) remain the monumental examples of these efforts.

Throughout the ages arm-chair geographers have made mistakes which have been easily recognized by practical men. Ptolemy was no exception and so were many Arab literary geographers, but, on the other hand, many Muslim geographers, rich in their personal experience and deep in learning, pointed out flaws in the works of their predecessors. Mas'udi,²⁵ for example, is well known for such criticism as sprang from his universal outlook, and al-Biruni, Maqdisi, abu al-Fida', and others expressed opinions contrary to established notions.

In their geographical writings, new methods were evolved and new shape was given to traditional treatment. The arbitrary division of the then known world on the basis of “climates” originated by the Greeks was quite often copied by Muslim geographers. But the careful and discerning ones like al-Istakhri, al-Balkhi, Maqdisi, and several others found this method

unsatisfactory and somewhat confusing and felt that these divisions in geo-metrical strips, more or less along the latitudes, were without consideration of the geographical factors. The need of some other method of treatment was realized.

Al-Istakhri initiated a regional approach to his descriptive geo-graphy by selecting either geographical units or political divisions closely corresponding them. His own words explain his technique.²⁶ “I do not take the 'seven climates' as a basis for the division of the earth because the geometrical shapes, even though correct intrinsically, lead to great con-fusion; so I have resorted to the study of the earth country wise.” In fact, most of the leading Muslim geographers of the fourth/tenth century on the basis of their writings would have done credit to any period.

Arab regional geography developed a tradition of its own by describing the physical environment of an area as well as its people and their cultural and social activities, though sometimes the treatment of cultural matters led to rather deterministic generalizations, reflecting on people's characters and peculiarities. Surprisingly enough, many modern geographers, historians, and sociologists are not immune from this weakness; they often build their cultural theories on foundations of sand. The method and technique of geographic descriptions of diverse lands evolved by al-Istakhri, ibn Hauqal, al-Maqdisi, al-Mas'udi, and others was later adopted by al-Qazwini, abu al-Fida', and ibn Khaldun, especially the last named who, by his analysis and interpretation, anticipated modern sociology and human geography.

A few examples of scientific geographical writing deserve mention. The tracts produced by the Ikhwan al-Safa (Brethren of Purity) had considerable geographical information and views. Theirs was a rationalist approach to many problems. Their secret association was founded at Basrah in about 373/983. This encyclopedic effort by several anonymous writers, many of whom were interested in scientific geography, is noteworthy. Their treatises include numerous references to the then current geographical concep-tions and attempt to explain them for popular understanding. Among their physical treatises meteorology receives much attention, and explanations are offered for the occurrence of rain, the march of seasons, and layers of the atmosphere²⁷ Geological processes are explained and attention is devoted to weathering and denudation. Plant-geography, distribution of animals, and a general consideration of ecological conditions does not escape their notice.²⁸

The influence of physical environment on human activity and animal behavior and their relationship with health and material well-being were subjected to somewhat critical analysis by several fourth/tenth-century writers on geography. Al-Jahiz (d. 254/868) of Basrah had a real interest in the natural and anthropological sciences. In his “Book of Animals” (Kitab al-hayawan), besides writing on a variety of subjects, he interestingly tackled questions of evolution, struggle for existence, and adaptation. Abu Zaid al- Balkhi writing in 309/921 was a maker as well as an interpreter of maps. His remarkable work Suwar al-Aqalim (Figures of Climates) was a critical study based on maps. A few years later Mas'udi (d. 345/956) used his vast experience and critical abilities remarkably well in dealing with geographical matters. Mas'udi has often been designated²⁹ as the Muslim

Pliny, but he displayed far greater critical ability and scientific curiosity³⁰ than Pliny in his description of earthquakes, waters of the Dead Sea, geological phenomena, navi-gational problems, and ebb and flow of tides.

He also made the first mention of wind power and windmills in Sijistan. Another work of al-Mas'udi's, *Kitab al--Tanbih w-al-Ishraf* (Book of Indication and Revision), sets forth his views on evolution. *Akhbar al-Zaman* contains discussion on the origin of seas, cycle of river erosion, etc. Al-Maqdisi (375/985) was yet another scientifically minded geographer who derided the arm-chair conceptions of some of his great predecessors³¹ and took upon himself the task of writing a geography of the Islamic world based on travel and observation. The result was one of the finest geographical treatments of regions and provinces of the Muslim domains in medieval Arabic literature.³² He stressed the point that geography was a subject of great usefulness and was, therefore, of interest to people in all walks of life. "The Model City" (*al-Madinal al-Fadikah*) of al-Farabi (d. 339/950) is a fine sociological study of urban conditions of his time in which he envisages better future town-planning.

Ibn Sina (370-428/980-1037) expressed views and expounded ideas on almost all subjects with equal clarity. He made a profound study of various physical questions. His views on the origin of mountains and valleys have a flare of modern concepts and his treatise on minerals remained one of the chief sources of geological knowledge in Western Europe until the Renaissance. Ibn Sina's *al-Urjuzat al-Sina'iyyah* (*Cantica*) displayed an excellent under-standing of human and environmental factors. But Ibn Sina's contemporary Abu Raihan al-Biruni (363-440/973-1048) who has his place among world scientists of all times was a traveler, philosopher, mathematician, astronomer, geographer, and encyclopedist.

Sarton rightly remarks³³ that his critical spirit, toleration, love of truth, and intellectual courage were almost without parallel in medieval times. His works were written in Arabic, partly in Khwarizm, the town of his birth, and largely in Ghazni and India where he spent the rest of his life. Through the patronage of Sultan Mahmud and his two successors Mas'ud and Maudud he was able to visit India, learn Sanskrit, and acquire knowledge of Indian sciences. His *Kitab al-hind* (*Book of India*), written in 421-22/1030, provides numerous instances of his geographical concepts covering such matters as the origin of the plains of Northern India, nature of rainfall, commercial activity, roads, frontiers, and boundaries.³⁴

Among his many other writings the "Chronology of Ancient Nations" (*al-Athar al-Baqiyah*) was written at Khwarizm in 391/1000, "Canon Masudicus" (*al-Qdnun al-Mas'iidi*) at Ghazni in 421/1030, and the "Book on Mathematics" (*Kitab al-Talhim*) like the one on stones³⁵ (*Kitab al-Jamahir fi al-Ma'rifat al-Jawahir*) towards the later years of his life, during the reign of Sultan Maudud. Al-Biruni was truly a scientific geographer and discussed all matters from a critical point of view.³⁶

Yet another contemporary was Ibn Sa'id al-Qartabi al-Andalusi (420-463/-1070) who lived and worked in Toledo. Though he was a leading astronomer and historian, he tackled geographical problems scientifically. His *Tabaqat al-Umam* paid special attention to the history of science. The

ethno-geographical and sociological views expressed by him in this work were based on environmental considerations. A few generations later, al-Idrisi, with a background of Andalusian education, extensive travels, and cultural contact with Christendom, produced his elaborate geographical works. His work can be said to be the most notable example of the fusion of ancient, Arab, and medieval geography. He was critical of Ptolemy's ideas. Ibn Jami described Alexandria and discussed its climate.

'Abd al-Latif's book on Egypt may be considered to be one of the most important topographical works of the Middle Ages. In this work attempts at analysis on the basis of known facts and theories are discernible though they are not necessarily geographical. Al-Zamakhshari's (d. 539/1144) *Kitab al-Amkinah w-al-Jibal w-al-Miyah* was a worthy geographical dictionary. Ibn Sa'id al-Maghribi's main work was a geographical treatise entitled *Kitab al-Jahrafiya*. Though it was based upon Ptolemy and al-Idrisi, it contained many facts which had been discovered since then and included the geographical co-ordinates of every important place. His extensive travels and long residence in the east and later the patronage of Hulagu gave him the opportunity to become a connecting link between his predecessors and the mathematical geographers led by Nasir al-Din al-Tusi at Maragha. Some of his ideas were derived from al-Hasan al-Marrakushi (627/1229).

A notable writer of scientific geography was Zakariya al-Qazwini (600-682/ 1203-1283). He is noted for his two works,³⁷ namely, *'Aja'ib al-Makhlūqat wa Ghara'ib al-Mawjudat* (Cosmography, or Marvels of Created Things) and *'Aja'ib al-Buldan* (Marvels of Countries). A later enlarged edition of his geography was called *Athar al-Bilad*. Qazwini's works exerted a deep influence upon the Arabic-speaking people as well as on those reading Persian and Turkish. Muhammad ibn Mahmud al-Tusi also wrote a cosmography in Persian. A notable treatise on commercial geography was written by 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Nasr under the title *Nihayat al-Rutbat al-Zarifah*.

In the seventh/thirteenth century, Abu al-Fida' al-Ayyubi (b. 672/1273) was an outstanding geographer who had thoroughly assimilated the earlier geo-geographical contributions, especially those of Ptolemy, al-Idrisi, and Ibn Sa'id. His main geographical work *Taqwim al-Buldan* displays extensive knowledge and balance in the selection of information. Abu al-Fida's geographical work has earned high recognition among modern European geographers.³⁸ The geographical work of Hamd Allah Mustaufi, *Nuzhat al-Qulub*, written in 741/ 1340 in Persian is a comprehensive geography of the Islamic world. Iran and Central Asia receive special treatment, changes in the course of the Oxus are mentioned, and descriptions are given of the hot springs and oil-wells of Baku and the islands of South-East Asia.³⁹ His historical work, *Tarikh-i Guzideh* (Select History) also contains useful geographical interpretations. A contemporary of Mustaufi was al-Dimashqi (d. 728/1327). His cosmographical work, *Nukhat al-Dahr fi 'Aja'ib al-Barr w-al-Bahr*, was in the traditional style, but is remarkable for its knowledge about the Coromandel Coast of South India.⁴⁰

Ibn Khaldun's "Universal History" (*Kitab al-Ibar*) with its masterly Prolegomena raised the art of geographic interpretation to new heights and

made him the forerunner of modern human geography and sociology. He not only wrote a critical history but combined ethnography and geography with it.⁴¹ Ibn Khaldun recognized different types of habitats and explained the influence of environment on human development. He marked the rise and growth of cities and noted examples of bad siting leading to rapid decay.⁴² He also gave a critical appraisal of the industrial and agricultural resources of Anda-lusia.

Though the ninth/fifteenth and the tenth/sixteenth centuries witnessed epoch-making geographical discoveries and the frontiers of knowledge of the European people were rapidly widened, yet the scientific traditions of Muslim geography did not cease abruptly. The Turkish school of geography achieved much by way of prolific writing as well as scientific treatment. Some of these works are al-'Ashiq's *Manazir al-'Alam* (Descriptions of the World) written at Damascus in 1007/1598, Haji Khalifah's encyclopedia, *Kashf al-Zunun*, and Auliya Chelebi's travel book, *Tarikh-i Saiyah*. Before an evaluation of Muslim geographical conceptions is made and its influence on European mind and thought briefly indicated, two other aspects of their work may be briefly outlined, namely, mathematical geography, and map-making and cartography.

C - Mathematical Geography

Muslim astronomical and mathematical work extends over several centuries and is enormous in its content and commendable in quality. Here only a brief outline is presented in so far as it concerns geographical matters, i.e., latitudes, longitudes, eclipses, and tides; shape, size, and the movements of the earth; and the general mathematical implications in geodetic work.

Historically, Muslims devoted early attention to astronomy and mathematics; the first period of translations led to contributions in these fields. Eventually certain centers and areas developed strong traditions of their own. For example, Baghdad in particular and Iraq in general got an early start in this respect. But later on, with the decline in the influence and prestige of Baghdad, many other parts of the eastern world of Islam became centers of mathematical work and its application in associated fields. The Ghaznawids, Buwaihids, and Mongol princes patronized these sciences. Similarly, works and traditions in North Africa from Egypt to Maghrib and in Andalusia achieved their own characteristics.

The Indian, Iranian, and Greek influences played their part in stimulating early attempts. Al-Fazari's *Kitab al-Zij* (Tables) reflects strong Indian influence. The first series of regular observations with accurate instruments were conducted at Jundi-Shahpar during the first half of the third/ninth century and were utilized by Ahmad al-Nahawandi and others. Ya'qub al-Kindi's works and those of others such as Yahya ibn Mansur, Sanad ibn 'Ali, and al-Marwarzuri were concerned with the preparation of astronomical tables. Earlier, Ptolemy's *Almagest* had also been translated by al-Nairizi.

But the outstanding event in the field of mathematical geography was the measurement of a degree, under the orders of Caliph al-Mamun, to determine the size of the earth, in latitude 36° north.⁴³ An observatory was built on the plain of Tadmur (Palmyra) for geodetic as well as astronomical

work. On the Caliph's instructions two degree measurements were made near Tadmur and Raqqah under the supervision of the sons of Musa ibn Shakir. The result of these two measurements was the calculation of the earth's circumference as 20,400 miles and the diameter 6,500 miles⁴⁴ respectively.

A large map of the world was also drawn. The three sons of Musa ibn Shakir, besides being men of means, were practical scientists. One of their books was concerned with the measurement of the sphere and the trisection of the angle. Besides al-Khwarizmi and al-Kindi, the great astronomer abu Ma'shar of Balkh (d. c. 272/836) was especially interested in celestial phenomena. Al--Mahani (fl. 240-254/854-868) studied the eclipses of the sun and the moon and also the conjunction of the planets.

In later generations, particularly under the patronage of the Buwaihid Court, a great deal of astronomical and mathematical work was done and the making of observations with better designed and perfected instruments became common. A glorious period in this respect was the time of 'Adud al-Daulah and Sharaf al-Daulah, when measurements and observations relating to equinoxes, solstices, eclipses, and the form of the earth were undertaken. Ibn al-'Alam, al-Razi, al-Kuhi, and abu al-Waft' were among the leading lights of this wonderful age.

In the course of time, Cairo also developed into an important center for work in mathematical geography. The Caliph al-'Aziz (365-386/975-996) founded an observatory near Cairo and al-Hakim continued to patronize it. Ibn Yunus (d. 399/1009) was a great mathematician and astronomer and ibn al-Haitham a notable physicist. In point of time, al-Biruni's work again needs a mention here, for his monumental work "Canon Masudicus" was written in 421/1030. He was a great mathematical geographer and devoted himself to many problems, including the accurate determination of latitudes and longitudes, geodetic measurements, simple method of stereographic projections, earth's shape, axis and rotation, and laws of hydrostatics. Al-Biruni's contemporary, ibn Sina, the celebrated philosopher, produced treatises on astronomical instruments, earth's position in the universe, and heavenly bodies.

In North Africa, Tangier, Ceuta, Fez, and Morocco became centers of scientific work relating to mathematics. An outstanding scholar and practical geographer was al-Marrakushi, the writer of Jumi' al-Mabadi w-al-Ghayah (The Uniter of the Beginning and the End) which is considered to be one of the greatest scientific contributions of the seventh/thirteenth century. It includes terrestrial co-ordinates of 135 places of which thirty-four were conducted by the author himself. Al-Marrakushi was fully conversant with scientific methods and made use of many instruments. In Spain, mathematical geography flourished like the other sciences.

Among outstanding votaries was Maslamah al-Majriti (d. 398/1007) of Madrid who made a synopsis of al-Battani's tables. His works were translated into Latin under Alfonso. Al-Zarqali (420/1029-481/1088), besides being well up in theoretical ideas, was a maker and designer of many instruments and astrolabes. He also became well known in Europe through profuse Latin translations of his treatises. The philosophers and

rationalists Jabir (Geber), ibn Aflah (d. 535/1140), ibn Rushd (Averroes) (d. 595/1198), and ibn Bajjah (Avempace) (d. 533/1138) were all interested in the mathematical side of geography.

In the eastern Islamic lands, in later generations, the Saljuq period was productive of much scientific work in mathematical geography, particularly the reign of Jalal al-Din Malik Shah (r. 465-485/1072-1092). The Mongol princes turned out to be great patrons of scientific activity. Hulagu Khan (d. 664/1265) had many mathematicians at his Court and a great observatory was set up at Maraghah on the shores of Lake Uruniyeh, fifty miles from Tabriz. Nasir al-Din Tusi was the leading light. The Maraghah astronomers were greatly interested in geography. For example, al-Tusi's *Tadkirah* (History) in its third chapter deals with geodetic matters and seas and winds. Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi s (634-711/1236-1311) *Nihayat al-Idrak* is devoted to astro-nomical, meteorological, and geographical questions. Al-Qazwini and al-Watwat also wrote on cosmogeographical and geographical matters.

1. Instruments and Their Use

The work in the field of mathematical geography would not have been possible without instruments and observatories. Therefore, it is not surprising to find the mathematicians and geographers working in observatories and using self-made as well as standard instruments and devices. Some of the common needs and requirements included measurement of distance between two points, determination of latitude and longitude, levelling and measure-ment of heights, geodetic measurements, and co-ordinates of Mecca. An account of the instruments devised, developed, and used will be given in the next chapter on “Mathematics and Astronomy” of this work.

2. Determination of Latitudes and Longitudes

Muslim efforts in the measurement and determination of latitudes and longitudes were considerable. They contrived methods as original as the results which were often accurate. The view that the work of Muslim geographers and astronomers in no way surpassed the *Almagest* of Ptolemy, is undoubtedly without any basis.⁴⁵

The early Arab astronomers, al-Khwarizmi, al-Farghani, Habash al-Hasib, and al-Battani, made use of Indian and Greek methods of finding latitude. But better techniques soon began to be employed. The sons of Musa ibn Shakir at Baghdad determined the city's latitude, accurate within a minute, and ibn Yunus at Fustat (near Cairo) did remarkably accurate work. He drew attention to the fact that while reckoning latitude from the shadow of the gnomon, errors up to 15 minutes crept in as the shadows were cast from the upper edge of the sun and not from the central point.

Ibn al-Haitham (355-430/965-1038), known in Europe as Alhazen, wrote a notable work on the calculation of latitudes. He recommended the method of taking a fixed star for the precise determination of the altitude of the pole, and he was fully aware of the errors due to refraction. Al-Biruni suggested the method of determining latitude by reference to the relation of the circumpolar stars to the sun. But in the measurement of longitude, he advocated as well as demon-strated the use of the terrestrial calculation. By

this method he presented a correction in the distance in longitude between Alexandria and Ghazni.

The difference in longitude between Baghdad and Ghazni found by al-Biruni by the terrestrial method was remarkably accurate. Qanun al-Mas'udi, Kitab al-Hind, and Kitab al-Tafhim are the repositories of calculations. Other almost exact calculations were those of the three sons of Masa ibn Shakir at their observatory in Baghdad, of al-Mahani at Surra Man-Ra'a, of ibn Yunus at al-Muqattam, and of Ulugh Beg at Samarqand. An outstanding correction as a result of Muslim calculation was the elimination of the Ptolemaic exaggeration of about 17 degrees in the length of the Mediterranean.

3. The Earth's Shape, Size, and Movements

Opinion on the sphericity of the earth was divided in the early Middle Ages. Cosmas' fantasies were opposed to it, while St. Augustine reluctantly conceded the globular shape, but vehemently rejected the concept of people inhabiting the antipodes. Muslim geographers and other scientists had a firmer belief in the sphericity of the earth as they continued to support, in general, the Eratosthenian theory of climate. Probably, the majority held the idea of an earth globe floating in space. Outstanding examples of Muslim experiments based on belief in the sphericity of the earth and the measurement of a degree were those conducted by the geodetists of al-Mamun in the plains of Sinjar, and al-Biruni's measurement of 56 miles 0' 50" 6" for a degree conducted in India was remarkable for its accuracy.⁴⁶ Early Muslim opinions on the question of the earth's shape are summarized by the geographer ibn Rustah in his famous treatise "Work of Costly Treasures" (c. 291/903).

As regards the movements of the earth, the position was somewhat different. The question whether the earth was at rest or not, was not discussed in Europe either in the early or later Middle Ages. Generally, the earth was assumed to be at rest in the center of space. Al-Biruni, assuming the vague Babylonian and Indian conceptions, believed in the turning of the earth on its own axis. He also believed in the movement of the sun round the earth, though he did not reject the suggestion of abu Said Sinjari regarding the possible movement of the earth round the sun.

In the second half of the seventh/thirteenth century the question of rotation was taken up by 'Umar al-Katibi al-Qazwini (d. 676/1277), who was connected with the Maraghah observatory and prepared an edition of the Almagest. His work Hikmat al-'Ain contains argument for the heliocentric theory. Unfortunately, he finally rejected the idea of the circular motion of the earth and, therefore, failed to anticipate Kepler and Galileo. Among others, who took up this question, was Qutb al-Din, a pupil of Nasir al-Din Tusi. His semi-geographical work, Nihayet al-Idrak, contains a discussion of these questions. Thus, Muslim mathematical geographers often expressed doubts on Greek and Ptolemaic concepts about the earth. Sarton⁴⁷ rightly emphasizes that the doubts expressed in Arabic writings were not sterile as they eventually paved the way for the Copernican reform in 1543.

D-Cartography And Map-Making

Muslims inherited the Greek and Babylonian traditions in map-making. In the past, there had existed a close relationship between extension of maritime activity and navigation and the development of cartographic skill.

The Arab and Muslim knowledge of the seas far surpassed that of their predecessors. It encompassed familiar areas from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic and from the Red Sea, Arabian Sea, and Persian Gulf to the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. Their extensive sailings on these waters were not merely naval expeditions, but were made in pursuit of an extensive commercial and maritime activity in which the crossings of the Mediterranean formed but a small part. This necessitated the use of sea charts, coastal information, and knowledge of wind and weather. Therefore, one class of Muslim map-making was devoted to these objectives, while geographers and others made many maps to depict land information and the political and regional composition of the Islamic world as well as of the then known inhabited areas.

On the whole, Muslim map-making and cartography generally advanced the older knowledge and techniques. The traditions of Roman cartography were poor. Even Ptolemy had made a fundamental error in underestimating the earth's size. He had accepted the figures of Posidonius (1 degree = 500 stadia) on the basis of which Europe and Asia were supposed to extend over one-half of the surface of the globe, while their extension covered only 130 degrees. He had also estimated the length of the Mediterranean to be 62 degrees instead of 42 degrees. The Muslim geographers had corrected this error, but European cartography persisted with this mistake up to the end of the tenth/sixteenth century.⁴⁸

Muslim geographers constructed celestial and terrestrial globes and studied the problem of projections. Their maps were superior to those of Ptolemy, and it became a somewhat general practice to draft maps to accompany the geographical treatises. This is borne out by many examples. Al-Khwarizmi's *Kitab Surat al -Ard* was written in explanation of maps which might have been based on Syriac versions of Ptolemy. The world map, prepared at the behest of Caliph al-Mamun and embodying the collaboration of no less than seventy experts, can be considered to be a notable example of scientific map-making. Unfortunately, this map is not extant. It has also been suggested⁴⁹ that there was a collection of maps of Iran including a pre-'Abbasid world map, which may very well be called "Iran Atlas." In order to indicate the possibility of such a series of maps, it may be pointed out that ibn al-Faqih mentions a map of Dailam which was made for Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, and al-Baladhuri notes in his *Futuh al-Buldan* that a petition to Caliph al-Mansur was supported by a map of the canals of the Basrah area.

In the evolution of Muslim cartography, the Balkhi School represents a distinct advance. Al-Balkhi's atlas included, besides a map of the world, maps of Arabia, the Indian Ocean (Baler Fars), Maghrib, Egypt, Syria, the Mediter-ranean Sea, and several other parts of the Islamic world. This atlas was devoted to the geographic description of the areas covered by the maps and also presented a division of the world into the so-called "Climatic

Zones.” Konrad Miller in his *Mappae Arabicae* fittingly calls it “An Islam Atlas.” It is most unfortunate that the fruits of Balkhi's effort have been lost and only the copied material by al-Istakhri and ibn Hauqal has been handed down to posterity. A follower of these traditions was al-Maqdisi who explained the basis of the drawings of al-Istakhri and then made his own regional maps of the world, using symbols and a color scheme for physical features which made his maps almost similar to modern maps.⁵⁰

Al-Biruni made a round map of the world in *Kitab al-Tafhim* to illustrate the position of seas, and in *al-Athar al-Baqiyah* (*Chronology of Ancient Nations*) he discussed methods of celestial and terrestrial projections. Al-Idrisi's fame as a map-maker has found universal recognition. He is said to have made seventy maps of climatic divisions, a celestial sphere, a globe of silver, and a world map on a silver plate with great cartographic skill. His maps give a better representation of the western world of Islam than that of the eastern. His cartographic effort influenced his European contemporaries and successors in many ways. In later generations, al-Qazwini and al-Wardi made maps based on the lingering traditions of the Balkhi School. Two celestial globes were made by 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sufi in Cairo in about 432/1040; a bronze globe was made by ibn Hula of Mausil in 674/1275. Mahmud Kashghari, in his *Diwan Lughat al-Turk*, made a world map in 734/1333.

Finally, a brief mention of the Arab sea charts, navigation manuals, and the early development of the portolani (European sea charts) is relevant to the subject. The most extensive Arab navigational activity was from the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf to the various parts of the Indian Ocean along East Africa and South-East Asia. Sailing ships were exposed to the hazards of wind and weather and were directly influenced by the sub-tropical and equatorial changes in meteorological conditions. The monsoons were a great factor in these sailings. Therefore, it is not only a fair guess but has a basis in fact that safe sailings were conducted with the accumulated experience of generations of seamanship as well as sea charts and instruments. As regards instruments, the compass may be considered fairly certain, and the greatly perfected astrolabe was also put to use. In the East, the peak of Muslim navigational achievement was reached on the eve of the Portuguese incursion into these waters. In the West, the Mediterranean sailings were most common. There are also on record some attempts to probe into the mysteries of the Atlantic.

The dream to reach the riches of India and China by sailing round Africa was an ancient one, but the Muslims' mastery of North Africa, their dominion in the Iberian Peninsula, and the urge to spread Islam and commerce to yet newer lands, revived a new interest in the venture. The sailors and navi-gators of Muslim Spain were the first in the field, the Genoese sailors came after them. The Portuguese maritime activity took a still later place in history. Among Muslim writers, al-Mas'udi and al-Idrisi have mentioned the attempts of their co-religionists. Al-Mas'udi mentions in his *Muruj al-Dhahab* the venture into the Atlantic before 346/957 by Khashkhaf of Cordova, and al-Idrisi relates the story of the Maghrurin (the deceived ones). These sailors were eight cousins who set out from Lisbon

(before 439/1147) and sailed westward for about eleven days, then in a southerly direction for twelve days when they reached the inhabited Isle of Sheep (Jazirat al-Ghanam); after further navigation of twelve days they landed on another island where they were made prisoners. It may be a fair surmise that the first island was the Madeira and the second the Canaries.

To turn once again to the East, there were successive generations of pro-fessional Muslim pilots and writers of nautical instructions throughout the fourth/tenth to the sixth/twelfth century. The pilots (mu'allim or musta'mil al-markab) and "Lions of the Sea" acquired great fame from the first half of the sixth/twelfth century onward. To this period belong Sahl ibn Aban, Mubammad ibn Shadhan, and Laith ibn Kablan. Later, Ahmad ibn Majid wrote *Kitab al-Fawa'id fi Usul al-Bahr* in 895-896/1489-1490 and Sulaiman al-Mahri produced his ' *Ulum al-Bahriyyah* in the early tenth/sixteenth century. Shihab al-Din Ahmad ibn Majid was an expert sailor as well as a writer of nautical instructions and his role in guiding Vasco da Gama's ship across the Arabian Sea in 904/1498 is well recognized. According to Barros, ibn Majid showed the Portuguese admiral a map of the whole coast of India indicating meridians and parallels. He also expressed no surprise or sense of admiration on seeing the Portuguese navigational instruments and is said to have commented that Muslim sailors in the Indian Ocean possessed more efficient devices and instruments. In fact, ibn Majid and al-Mahri may be regarded among the early modern writers on nautical matters. Their know-ledge of the geography and meteorology of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean was extensive.

Between 867/1462 and 896/1490, ibn Majid wrote thirty nautical texts. Of these, the most important work was *Kitab al-Fawa'id*. The book is a com-pendium of knowledge relating to the principles of navigation both theoretical and practical. It deals with matters connected with the origin of navigation, use of magnetic needle, routes across the Indian Ocean, latitudes of harbors in that ocean, the China Sea, regional description of large islands, monsoons and their dates, and banks and reefs of the Red Sea. This work was of great use to those engaged in navigation and preceded the European navigation in Eastern waters.⁵¹

Sulaiman al-Mahri was a younger contemporary of ibn Majid. He wrote five treatises on sailing instructions. Of these the third was entitled *al-Umdat al-Mahriyyah fi Dabt al-'Ulum al-Bahriyyah*. This work deals with nautical astronomy, sea-routes in the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean, monsoons, and some outstanding voyages.

One of the main cartographical achievements of the Middle Ages was the preparation of sea charts which were extensively used by seamen and sailors in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, from the end of the seventh/thirteenth century onward. These are known as "portolani" and were largely produced by the Genoese, Pisans, and Italians. The languages used in these early Western maps are Latin, Catalan, Italian, or a sort of Mediterranean lingua franca composed of various Romance elements.⁵² Their origin appears to be debatable, though many Western scholars stick to a single source theory, namely, European Christian. Perhaps the Western portolani owed their development to sailors and cartographers in their own

area. But it is almost certain that the Arab pilots, guiding ships across the Indian Ocean and South-East Asian waters, must have very keenly felt the need of such maps. In the form in which Western portolani have been handed down, it is not possible to say which ones were earlier.

But as related above, Muslims had been actively engaged in navigating the extensive and dangerous Eastern seas up to China and across the mesh of islands in South-East Asia since the third/ninth century onward; they had sea charts as mentioned by al-Maqdisi in the later part of the fourth/tenth century. While writing about his extensive sea journey over the Indian Ocean, he says⁵³ that he was often in the company of ship-masters and pilots and other experts who had long experience of sailings in these areas and possessed a detailed knowledge of wind and weather and the physical and commercial geography of these seas and their adjoining lands. He adds that he had seen in their possession sailing charts, directories, and nautical instructions, many of which he himself utilized to compile his own work.

Marco Polo also refers to the Arabs' use of sea charts and maps. It is said that Qutb al-Din Shirazi, the geographer of the Itkhans of Persia, used one such map to mark the progress of the Mongol envoy to Christendom. Indeed, it is quite conceivable that the early portolani were made after centuries of experience before their Mediterranean and Atlantic samples came to be drafted. It is, however, true that the number of Muslim portolani is small as compared with the Western ones.

As a criticism of the quality of Muslim cartography it may be admitted that often it overemphasized decoration at the expense of accuracy. But it will be well to remember that contemporary Western cartography was most rudimentary by comparison and the latter mappae mundi were a mixture of fact and fancy. Much has been written in recent years to throw light on the achievement of Muslim map-makers. The labors of Konrad Miller, Prince Youssouf Kamal, and Kramers have been very rewarding and have presented Muslim cartography in a new light.⁵⁴

E - Influence Of Muslim Geography

The question of the extent of the influence of Muslim geography on the European mind is an interesting one. Usually it is claimed that the develop-ment of medieval European as well as that of early modern geography was somewhat independent. This view appears to be untenable and is rather out of date, as its basis is emotional and it disregards the inevitable links of history. Moreover, a brilliant galaxy of European scholars including many Orientalists, through their painstaking researches into the sources of modern science, have produced indisputable evidence of the transmission of Muslim science to European communities. Here it is possible to present only the main points of the transmission of Muslim geographical knowledge and concepts to the West.

Even during the first half of the fifth/eleventh century, necessary conditions for scientific work did not exist in the Latin West, or for that matter in the whole of Christendom, as they did in the Islamic world. It was only Jewish thought which was moving forward due to direct contact with Muslim culture and under the stimulus of its progressive impulses. No doubt, some Christians in the Muslim world did contribute to these efforts.

There were two important sources of the transmission of Muslim science and geography to Latin Europe and other areas in the West. The points of cultural and physical contact in Spain, Italy, Sicily, and the Aegean Islands were strengthened by intermixing of people during the prolonged period of the Crusades. Secondly, as an earlier translation activity at Baghdad had paved the way for a fruitful synthesis, so the numerous translations of Arabic works in Spain, Italy, and Sicily proved to be harbingers of scientific advance.

Latin geography before the early sixth/twelfth century was on a much lower level than the Muslim. It was too simple and childish. This remark applies especially to those writers who were not influenced by Arab ideas and continued to follow the Roman and early medieval traditions, e.g., Henry of Mayence, Guido, and Lambert of Saint Omer. On the other hand, those who showed a somewhat better geographical sense like Herman the Dalmatian, Bernard Sylvester, and William of Conches had been influenced by Arab ideas.

The major proportion of European geographical writings of sixth/twelfth century in the West consisted of Latin and other Christian pilgrim literature, though there were also a few other contributions. John of Wurzburg was a German pilgrim in the late sixth/twelfth century, Joannes Phocas was a soldier turned monk who wrote of castles and cities from Antioch to Jerusalem, and Richard the Lion-hearted was a crusader king. Sigurd, King of Norway and a crusader, made a remarkable journey to Palestine and back between 501/1107 and 505/1111. The outward journey was a fighting cruise through the North Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Aegean waters. He fought the Muslims around Spain and visited the cultured Court of Roger II of Sicily before his return home by an overland route through Europe. His saga is somewhat geographical in its content and bears traces of contact with the Orient.

Pedro Alfonso made a sketch-map of the world clearly derived from Muslim models, copying the seven climates and putting south on the top. Henry of Mayence compiled a treatise in 504/1110 which included a map. A geographic encyclopedia was prepared in 513/1119 by Guido who was probably an Italian geographer. Lambert of Saint Omer compiled another encyclopedia with maps; in this work he propounded his belief in the sphericity of the earth. Herman the Dalmatian in 538/1143 prepared his cosmographical compilation, which included astronomical and geographical information, and Bernard Sylvester produced his *De Mundi*.

Nearly all the above-named writers and their contemporaries who dealt with geographical matters were steeped in patristic and Latin traditions. But by the middle of the seventh/thirteenth century, a distinct change was perceptible, as by that time the full impact of the translations was evident in the more readily available Arab knowledge in Europe. Scholars were not only aware of it, but were beginning to feel the need of it. The new knowledge, of which Muslim geographical information and notions were an indispensable part, began to work as a great stimulus to new ideas in the Latin world.

Henceforward, the level of geographic thinking and writings was definitely raised. Vincent of Beauvais, Albert the Great, Roger Bacon, and others were all sufficiently influenced by Arab knowledge of geography and its associated fields.⁵⁵ Joannes Sacrobosco (John of Hollywood), the English astronomer and mathematician, wrote his *Sphaera Mundi* in about 631/1233. This work was slavishly based upon al-Farghani and al-Battani; it became immensely popular in the West, was translated several times, and remained in use in schools up to the eleventh/seventeenth century. William the Englishman in 629/1231 mainly interpreted al-Zarqali and al-Bittani. Vincent of Beauvais, the French Dominican scholar who died in 663/1264, compiled an encyclopedia. It was a monumental work and much of its geographical and geological information was derived from Arab sources.

Albert the Great (d. 679/1280) was another outstanding Dominican intellectual and prolific writer. He knew neither Greek nor Arabic, but acquired vast knowledge through Latin translations, seriously studied Muslim thought, and was considerably influenced by their geographical ideas. Roger Bacon's *Opus Majus* is replete with geographical references⁵⁶ to Arab sources. Gossuin of Metz or Walters' *L'image du monde*, written in about 644/1246, was derived from existing sources largely based on Muslim knowledge.

Konungs Skuggsja is an outstanding geographical and encyclopedic treatise in Old Norwegian written by an unknown author between 614/1217 and 659/1260 or about 647/1247. The author was either a priest or a Court chaplain and a good deal of his material was based upon the accounts of returned crusaders and pilgrims. It displays good geographical sense, particularly in physical geography. He believed in the sphericity of the earth. The work is not entirely without Arab influence. The travel accounts of the Englishman Sir John Mandeville, though verging on the fantastic, are a rehashing of common Arab knowledge in geography.

The fact remains that gradually most of the basic and current geographical ideas of the Muslims were passed on to the West. These were with regard to the size of the earth and its sphericity, oceans, geological processes, climate, vegetational and zoological distributions, knowledge of new lands in Africa, Far East, and Central Asia, techniques of cartography, and uses of instruments.⁵⁷ All this knowledge in various degrees of assimilation is depicted in the leading geographical works and forms the background of the so-called *mappae mundi*, and also in some of the maps of later generations preceding the Columbian era, viz., the Psalter map (c. 597/1200), Hereford map (c. 679/1280), the world map of Marino Sanuto (721/1321), the Borgia world map (c. 854/1450), Este world map⁵⁸ (c. 854/1450), Fra Mauro's Africa (864/1459), and the diagrams of *L'image du Monde* (885/1480). Though these maps were far from being real maps and mirrored more the shadows of patristic and traditional notions, yet acquaintance with Arab cartography and geographic information is revealed in them.⁵⁹

On the whole, the period from the sixth/twelfth to the ninth/fifteenth century was a period of transition and compromise, a time of absorption and fusion, because it was during this period that the conflicting Muslim and

Christian cultures were brought most closely together. The result was the creation of the core of new Europe. This was essentially Graeco-Arabic-Latin. After the invention of the art of printing in the second half of the ninth/ fifteenth century, many Graeco-Arabic scientific works were eagerly and repeatedly printed. In fact, the influence of Arab science remained paramount in Europe, till, towards the middle of the tenth/sixteenth century, Copernicus published his revolutionary concepts, and experimental science emerged. But Arab science as a factor in European thinking lingered on much longer, almost up to the eve of the Industrial Revolution.

The lesson of history is clear. In the ages following the voyages of Columbus and the intellectual ferment at the end of the Middle Ages, Europe surged forward to penetrate through the barriers of ignorance and acquired a cultural and material leadership. But Europe learnt its lessons from those who were at one time masters of the world. The Muslims were its cultural ancestors in the domain of science, geographical knowledge, discovery, and world commerce.

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Chapter 63: Mathematics and Astronomy

A - Introduction

It is generally recognized that human knowledge took its organized and systematic form with the Greeks. It is equally well known that the Greeks inherited a considerable body of knowledge from their Eastern predecessors, especially the Egyptians, Babylonians, Chinese, and Indians.

The histories of science and culture, written by some Western writers, however, show a gap between the period of the Greeks and the Renaissance. They give the impression that the history of science was blank for nearly one thousand years, and scientific knowledge made a sudden leap, taking a millennium in its stride. These histories ignore the fact that the intervening ages from the first/seventh to the eighth/fourteenth century constituted the era of the Arab and other Muslim peoples.

The latest researches of Muslim and non-Muslim scholars are bringing to light the work of the Muslims in the various branches of knowledge throughout the Middle Ages. These researches are, however, scattered in various journals and books which are not easily accessible to the average educated person. Two good works of reference published are the Encyclopedia of Islam and George Sarton's Introduction to the History of Science. On a thorough study of the information available on the subject, one is struck by the magnitude as well as importance of the contributions made by the Muslims to the various branches of science, especially to mathematics and astronomy.

The magnitude of these achievements is so vast that it is giving rise to another tendency among the historians of science. It is incomprehensible to them that the Arabs who were so backward and ignorant in the centuries preceding the advent of Islam could have become so enlightened and scholarly in such a short time after adopting the new faith. One of the great exponents of this line of thought is Moritz Cantor who has written an encyclopedic history of mathematics in the German language. The chapter on the Arabs in Cantor's book begins as follows:

“That a people who for centuries together were closed to all the cultural influences from their neighbors, who themselves did not influence others during all this time, who then all of a sudden imposed their faith, their laws, and their language on other nations to an extent which has no parallel in history—all this is such an extraordinary phenomenon that it is worthwhile to investigate its causes. At the same time we can be sure that this sudden outburst of intellectual maturity could not have originated of itself.”

Laboring under this fixed idea, Cantor proceeds to attribute almost every-thing done by the Muslim scholars to the Greeks and other nations. We must confess that this kind of argument introduces an extremely dangerous principle in historical research, and can be employed only by one who is predisposed to demolish an exalted and established reputation. If Cantor had really investigat-ed the cause of the “sudden outburst of intellectual maturity” of the Arabs, he would have realized that it was primarily due to the revolution caused by Islam in the whole outlook of the people. We have elsewhere described the attitude of Islam towards knowledge.¹ By making it incumbent upon the believer to acquire

knowledge and by enjoining upon him to observe and to think for himself, Islam created an unbounded enthusiasm for acquiring knowledge amongst its followers. The result of this revolution can be best described in the words of Florian Cajori, who says in his *History of Mathematical Notation*: “The Arabs present an extraordinary spectacle in the history of civilization. Unknown, ignorant, and disunited tribes of the Arabian Peninsula, untrained in government and war, are, in the course of ten years, fused by the furnace-blast of religious enthusiasm into a powerful nation, which in one century extends its dominion from India across northern Africa to Spain. A hundred years after this grand march of conquest, we see them assume the leadership of intellectual pursuits; the Muslims become the great scholars of their time.”

It is under this stimulus of the Islamic injunction for acquiring more and more knowledge that the Arabs and other Muslim peoples turned to the learn-ing of the various branches of knowledge, preserving and improving upon the heritage left by preceding civilizations and enriching every subject to which they turned their attention. In the following pages we give an account of their contribution in the domain of mathematics and astronomy. It may be pointed out that this is only a brief chapter in the general history of Muslim philosophy. The account will, therefore, be of a descriptive nature, shorn of all technicalities and confined to some of the fundamental ideas put forward by the Muslim peoples in the fields of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, trigo-nometry, and astronomy. It is neither possible nor desirable to give here an exhaustive account of the work done by each and every Muslim scholar. We have restricted ourselves to important contributions of the prominent Muslim mathematicians and astronomers.

B - Arithmetic

The Arabs started work on arithmetic in the second/eighth century. Their first task in this field was to systematize the use of the Hindu numerals which are now permanently associated with their names. Obviously, this was an immense advance on the method of depicting numbers by the letters of the alphabet which was universal up to that time and which prevailed in Europe even during the Middle Ages. The rapid development in mathematics in the subsequent ages could not have taken place without the use of numerals, particularly zero without which all but the simplest calculations become too cumbersome and unmanageable. The zero was mentioned for the first time in the arithmetical work of al-Khwarizmi written early in the third/ninth century. The Arabs did not confine their arithmetic to integers only, but also contributed a great deal to the rational numbers consisting of fractions. This was the first extension of the domain of numbers, which, in its logical develop-ment, led to the real, complex, and hyper-complex numbers constituting a great part of modern analysis and algebra. They also developed the principle of error which is employed in solving algebraic problems arithmetically. Al-Biruni (363-432/973-1040), ibn Sina (370-428/980-1037), ibn al-Sam\$ (d. 427/1035), Muhammad ibn Husain al-Karkhi (d. 410/1019 or 420/1029), abu Said al-Sijzi (c. 340-c. 415/c. 951-c. 1024) are some of the arithmeticians who worked on the

higher theory of numbers and developed the various types of numbers, such as:

Tamm (perfect numbers), i.e., those which are equal to the sum of their divisors, e.g., $6 = 1 + 2 + 3$.

Muta`ddilan (equivalents), i.e., two numbers, the sum of the divisors of which is the same, e.g., 39 and 55: $1 + 3 + 13 = 1 + 5 + 11$.

Mutahdbban (amicable numbers), i, e., two such numbers in which the sum of the divisors of one equal the other, e.g., 220 and 284:

$$1+2+4+71+142=220$$

$$1+2+4+5+10+11+20+22+44+55+110=284.$$

(iv) Muthallathat (triangular numbers), e.g., the numbers 1, 3, 6, 10, 15, 21, 28, 36, 45, which are the sum of the first one, first two, first three, first four and so on, natural numbers.²

The Arabs also solved the famous problem of finding a square which, on the addition and subtraction of a given number, yields other squares.³

The extent of their knowledge of arithmetic can be gauged from the fact that al-Biruni was able to give the correct value of $1616-1$.⁴

C - Algebra

The ancient mathematicians, including the Greeks, considered the number to be a pure magnitude. It was only when al-Khwarizmi (d. 236/850) conceived of the number as a pure relation in the modern sense that the science of algebra could take its origin. The development of algebra is one of the greatest achievements of the Muslims, and it was cultivated so much that within two centuries of its creation it had reached considerable proportions. The symbolical process which it idealizes is still called "Algorithm" in modern mathematics. Al-Khwarizmi himself formulated and solved the algebraic equations of the first and second degree, and discovered his elegant geometrical method of finding the solution of such equations. He also recognized that the quadratic equation has two roots. Ibrahim ibn Sinn (296-335/908-946) worked on geometry, especially on conic sections. His quadrature of the parabola was much simpler than that of Archimedes, in fact the simplest ever made before the invention of the integral calculus in the eleventh/seventeenth century.⁵ Abu Kamil huja' al-Misri developed the algebra of al-Khwarizmi, and determined the real roots of quadratic equations and their interpretations. Al-Khazin (d. c. 350/961) solved the cubic equation by employing the conic sections.⁶ Abu al-Wafa' (al-Bizjani) (329-388/940-998) investigated and solved algebraic equations of the fourth degree of the type $x^4 = a$, and that of $x^4 + ax^3 = b$. Al-Kuhi (fl. c. 378/988) investigated the solvability of algebraic equations. Abu Mahmud al-Khujandi (fl. 382/992) proved that the so-called Fermat's problem for cubic powers, i.e., $x^3 + y^3 = z^3$, cannot be solved by rational numbers. Ibn al-Laith, who was a contemporary of al-Biruni, solved the problem which leads to the equation: $x^3 + 13.5x + 5 = 10x^8$, and founded geometrical methods for solving cubic equations. Al-Biruni introduced the idea of "function," which, since the time of Leibniz (eleventh/seventeenth century), has become the most important concept in modern mathematics. Abu Bakr al-Karkhi, who is considered one of the greatest Arab mathe-maticians, wrote a book on algebra, called al-Faihri, in which he developed

approximate methods of finding square-roots; the theory of indices; the theory of surds; summation of series; equation of degree $2n$; the theory of mathematical induction; and the theory of indeterminate quadratic equations.

The next important figure is ibn al-Haitham (c. 354-431/c. 965-1039), who is recognized as the greatest physicist and expert on optics of the Middle Ages, and who solved the algebraic equation of the fourth degree by the method of intersection of the hyperbola and the circle.

Then came 'Umar al-Khayyam (c. 430-517/c. 1038-1123), who has recently become the most glamorous figure of the fifth/eleventh century on account of his poetry, but who, according to Moritz Cantor, has better claim to immortality as a very great mathematician. He made what was for his time an uncommonly great progress by dealing systematically with equations of the cubic and higher orders and by classifying them into various groups according to their terms.⁷ He described thirteen different classes of cubic equations. He investigated the binomial expression for positive integral indices, i.e., in modern terminology, the expansion of $(1 + x)^n$, when n is an integer. The next significant advance on this problem was made by Newton (eleventh/seventeenth century) when he proved the binomial theorem for any rational number. As stated by Cantor, Khayyam has a very exalted place in the history of algebra.⁸

At about this time, Muslim scholars founded, developed, and perfected geometrical algebra, and could solve equations of the second, third, and fourth degree before the year 494/1100.

Moritz Cantor, who is by no means partial to the Muslims, remarks that "the Arabs of the year 494/1100 were uncommonly superior to the most learned Europeans of that time in the mathematical sciences."⁹ He goes on to relate the story that in the seventh/thirteenth century, Frederick II Hohenstaufen sent a special deputation to Mosul to ask Kamal al-Din ibn Yunus (d. 640/1242), the mathematician of a college later on called after him the Kamalic College, to solve some mathematical problems. Kamal al-Din solved these problems for the Emperor.¹⁰ One of the questions solved by him was how to construct a square equivalent to a circular segment.

D -Geometry

In the subject of geometry, the Arabs began by translating the Elements of Euclid and the Conics of Apollonius, thus preserving the work of these Greek masters for posterity. This task was satisfactorily accomplished in the early third/ninth century. Soon after this they launched on making fresh discoveries for themselves. The three brothers, Muhaammad, Ahmad and Hasan, sons of Musa bin Shakir, may be regarded as pioneers in this field. They discovered a method of trisecting an angle by the geometry of motion, thus connecting geometry with mechanics. That this problem is not solvable by means of the ruler and compass alone, has been well known from the time of the Greek mathematicians. The brothers also worked on the mensuration of the sphere and on the ellipse.

In the fourth/tenth century, abu al-Wafa', al-Kuhi, and others founded and successfully developed a branch of geometry which consists of problems leading to algebraic equations of a degree higher than the second.

Al-Kuhi solved the problems of Archimedes and Apollonius by employing this new method. Abu Kamil Shuja' al-Hasib al-Misri investigated geometrical figures of five and ten sides (pentagon and decagon) by algebraic methods. This co-ordination of geometry with algebra and the geometrical method of solving algebraic equations, like the application of geometry to algebra by Thabit bin Qurrah, a Sabian astronomer of the court of the Caliph Mu'tadid, was the anticipation of Descartes' great discovery of analytical geometry in the eleventh/seven-teenth century. Abu Said al-Sijzi "made a special study of the intersections of conic sections and circles. He replaced the old kinematical trisection of an angle by a purely geometrical solution (intersection of a circle and an equilateral hyperbola)".¹¹

Abu al-Wafa developed the method of solving geometrical problems with one opening of the compass, and of constructing a square equivalent to other squares. He made many valuable contributions to the theory of poly-hedra, which is even now considered to be a very difficult subject.¹²

Ibn al-Haitham, known in Europe as Alhazen, also made many discoveries in geometry. His famous book on optics contains the following problem, known as Alhazen's problem: from two points in the plane of a circle to draw lines meeting at a point of the circumference and making equal angles with the normal at that point. This problem leads to an equation of the fourth degree, and ibn al-Haitham solved it by the aid of a hyperbola inter-secting a circle.¹³

The later Muslim mathematicians developed the geometry of the conic sections to some extent, but their great contribution was connected with the appraisal of Euclid's postulates. It is well known that in each science or logical system (such as the Euclidean geometry), the beginning is made with some fundamental concepts (like points and lines) and a few assertions or statements, called "postulates," which are accepted without demonstration or proof, and on the basis of which further statements (called theorems) are established. Now it is recognized that some of Euclid's postulates are quite self-evident. For instance, no one questions the validity of the statement that the whole is greater than a part or that equals added to equals result in equals. But the same cannot be said about Euclid's parallel postulate. Fakhr al-Din Razi (d. 606/1209) made a preliminary critique of Euclid's postulate, but it was Nasir al-Din Tusi (d. 673/1274), who, in the latter half of the seventh/thirteenth century, recognized the weakness in Euclid's theory of the parallels. In his efforts to improve the postulate, he realized the necessity of abandoning perceptual space. It was in the thirteenth/nineteenth century that such studies, continued by Gauss, Bolyai, Lobachevsky, and Riemann, resulted in the discovery and development of the various non-Euclidean geometries, culminating in the Theory of Relativity in our own time.

E - Trigonometry

Trigonometry, both plane and spherical, was developed to a great extent by the Arabs. Al-Khwarizmi himself compiled trigonometric tables, which contained not only the sine function, as done by his predecessors, but also that of the tangent, for the first time. These tables were translated into Latin by Adelard of Bath in 520/1126.¹⁴

Al-Battani (d. 317/929), known in Europe as Albategnius, devoted a whole chapter of his book on astronomy to the subject of trigonometry. He used sines regularly “with a clear consciousness of their superiority over the Greek chords.”¹⁵ “The previous works contained only the full arc, but Al-Battani remarked that it was more advantageous to use the half arc. Cantor considers this “an advance in mathematics which cannot be appreciated highly enough.”¹⁶ Al-Battani completed the introduction of tangents and cotangents in trigono-metry, and gave a table of cotangents by degrees. He knew the relation between the sides and angles of a spherical triangle which we express by the formula:¹⁷

$$\cos a = \cos b \cos c + \sin b \sin c \cos a.$$

Abu al-Wafa's contribution to the development of trigonometry is well known. Most likely he was the first to show the generality of the sine theorem relative to the triangles. He introduced quite a new method of constructing sine tables, the value of $\sin 30'$ being correct to the eight decimal places. He knew relations equivalent to the present ones for $\sin (a \pm b)$, and to

$$2 \sin' 2 = 1 - \cos a,$$

$$\sin a = 2 \sin \cos 2.$$

He specially studied the tangent; drew up a table of tangents, introduced the secant and the cosecant in trigonometry, and knew those relations between the six trigonometric lines which are now often used to define them.¹⁸

Al-Khujandi is considered to be the discoverer of the sine theorem relative to spherical triangles. This sine theorem displaced the theorem of Menelaos¹⁹

Ibn Yunus (d. 400/1009) made considerable contributions to trigonometry, and solved many problems of spherical astronomy by means of orthogonal projections. He discovered the first of those addition-subtraction formulae which were indispensable before the invention of logarithms, namely, the equivalent of

$$\cos a \cos b = 1/2 (\cos (a - b) + \cos (a + b))$$

He also gave a formula for the approximate value of $\sin 1'$.²⁰

Kushyar ibn Labban (fl. c. 361-420/971-1029) took an important part in the elaboration of trigonometry. For example, he continued the investigations on the tangent, and compiled comprehensive tables.²¹

Al-Zarqali (fi.c.420-480/1029-1087) explained the construction of the trigonometric tables, and compiled the Toledan Tables, which were translated into Latin by Gerard of Cremona and enjoyed much popularity.²²

Al-Hasan al-Marrakushi (fl. c. 661/1262) introduced in 627/1229 the graphic method in trigonometry and prepared the tables of trigonometric functions.

Nasir al-Din Tusi wrote on plane and spherical trigonometry as a subject independent of astronomy.

Baba' al-Din (954-1032/1547-1622) gave in his book trigonometric methods for calculating heights and distances as well as for the determination of the breadth of a river.

F - Astronomy

The Arabs claimed astronomy to be their own special subject. Indeed even at the beginning of Islam, they possessed sufficient astronomical knowledge to be able to use the position of stars in their wanderings and agriculture. But it was only in the second/eighth century that the scientific study of astro-nomy was begun.²³ From this time up to the eighth-ninth/fourteenth-fifteenth century the contributions of Muslims to astronomy were so numerous that they can be dealt with adequately only in a separate volume. Here we sum-marize only some of the most important facts.

First of all let us take the observatories. Western historians have pointed out that before the advent of Islam, only one more or less well-known obser-vatory existed in Alexandria, and even that was not doing much work. In the course of a few centuries, the Muslims erected innumerable well-equipped observatories all over their vast empire. Some of these observatories are as follows:

- (i) The solar observatory built by al-Mamun in Iraq in 214/829.
- (ii) The Ispahan observatory built by abu Hanifah al-Dinawari (d. 282/895).
- (iii) The Khwarizm observatory built by al-Biruni.
- (iv) The Baghdad observatory of Thabit ibn Qurrah.
- (v) The Baghdad observatory built by Caliph al-Mustarshid, where the well-known astronomer Badi' made his observations.
- (vi) The observatory erected by ibn Sina.
- (vii) The al-Raqqah and Antakiyah (Antioch) observatories where al-Battani made observations from 264/877 to 306/918.
- (viii) The banu Musa observatory at Baghdad.
- (ix) The Sharaf al-Daulah observatory where al-Saghani and al-Kuhi made their observations.
- (x) The Tabitala observatory where abu Isbaq worked and made ob-servations.
- (xi) The Buzjan observatory associated with the name of abu al-Wafa'.
- (xii) The ibn A'lam observatory built at Baghdad in 351-352/962-963.
- (xiii) The Egyptian observatory where ibn Yunus produced his famous almanac.
- (xiv) The Mamni observatory, associated Bataihi (d. 519/1125).
- (xv) The Maraghah observatory erected by Nasir al-Din Tusi in 658/1259. It is said that several kinds of instruments were installed in this observatory, and that a library containing four hundred thousand volumes was attached to it.
- (xvi) The observatory of Taqi al-Din.
- (xvii) The Kashmir observatory.
- (xviii) The Firuzshahi observatory.
- (xix) The Samarqand observatory erected by Sultan Ulugh Beg Mirza in 823/1420.

An account of these observatories lies scattered in various books, such as: Khuldsah Tarik al-'Arab; Tamaddun-i 'Arab; Kitab al-Kitaf w-al-Athar; Sharh Chaghmani; Jami' Bahadur Khani; Mu'jam al-Buldan; Iktifa' al-

-Qunu'; Fuwat al-Wajnat; Raudat al-safa; Wafayat al-A'yan; Kashf al-Zunun.

Next to the observatories come the astronomical instruments; and the books on history record a large number of instruments constructed by the Arabs and other Muslim peoples. Work on astronomy of such magnitude could not be carried out with the rough instruments existing at the time. They had, therefore, to concentrate all their practical skill on devising elaborate instruments for making various observations. These have also been described in the books mentioned above. We shall confine ourselves to the enumeration and description of some important instruments.

(i) Libnah, built on a square base, served to measure the declination, latitude, and distances of the stars.

(ii) Halqah I'tidal (Meridian Circle), fixed in the plane of the meridian, and devised to determine the distances of the heavenly bodies.

(iii) Dhat al-Autar, constructed by Taqi al-Din, served as an alternative for the Meridian Circle which was useful during night as well as day.

(iv) Dhat al-'Alq (the Astrolabe) was one of the most important instruments. It consisted of two circles, one of which represented the ecliptic and other the celestial meridian.

(v) Dhat al-Samt w-al-Irtifa' (Alt-azimuth) consisted of a semi-circle and had the diameter of an equi-surfaced cylinder. Taqi al-Din has mentioned it in his work, to have been constructed by Muslim astronomers.

(vi) Dhat al-Shu'batain.' It had three faces on one base and served to determine the altitude of the heavenly bodies.

(vii) Dhat at-Jaib consisted of two faces and was used for the determination of the altitude.

(viii) Al-Mushabbah bi al-Natiq constructed by Taqi al-Din and used for determining the distance between two stars.

(ix) Tabaq al-Manatiq constructed by Ghiyath al-Din Jamshid and used for determining the position of the stars, their latitudes, distance from the earth, and movement. It was also useful for obtaining data relating to lunar and solar eclipses.

(x) Zarqalah constructed by Shaikh Isbaq ibn Yabya, generally known as al-Naqqash al-Andalusi (the Spanish painter). It was a very useful instrument for observing the movement of the heavenly bodies.

(xi) Dhat al-Kursi constructed by Badi' of the Astrolabe (Badi' al-Asturlabi), as described by 'Abd al-Rabman al-Sufi.

(xii) Al-Alat al-Shamilah constructed by al-Khujandi and used for determining the latitudes.

(xiii) The several types of quadrants as described in Kashf al-Zunun.

(xiv) Asturlab Sartani Mijnah, the transit instrument described by Muhammad ibn Nasr and Mansur ibn 'Ali.

(xv) Al-Jaib al-Gha'ib consisting of a semi-circle the circumference being divided equally.

(xvi) Suds-i Fakhri, a sextant associated with the name of Fakhr al-Daulah Dailami.

Now we shall describe briefly the investigations carried out by the Muslim astronomers. Although the work of regular observations and

construction of astronomical instruments was started as early as the second/eighth century by Ibrahim al-Fazari (d. c. 180/796), the most brilliant period of Muslim astronomy commenced in the early part of the third/ninth century in the observatories constructed by the Caliph al-Mamiin (198-218/813-833). The observatory of Baghdad under Yahya bin abi Mansur (d. c. 216/831) made systematic observations of the heavenly bodies and found remarkably precise results for all the fundamental elements mentioned in Ptolemy's *Almagest*, such as the obliquity of the ecliptic, the precession of the equinoxes, the length of the solar year. After recording these observations, Yahya compiled the celebrated "Tested Tables."²⁴ He was also the author of several works on astronomy.

Under the orders of al-Mamun, the Muslim astronomers carried out one of the most delicate and difficult geodetic operations, the measuring of the arc of the meridian. The mean result gave $56\frac{2}{3}$ Arab miles as the length of a degree of meridian, which is a remarkably accurate value, for the Arabic mile is 6,473 ft. This value is equal to 366,842 ft., exceeding the real length of the degree between 38° and 36° latitudes by 2,877 ft.

Habash al-Hasib was an astronomer under al-Mamun and al-Mu'tasim; he compiled three astronomical tables, including the famous "Verified Tables." Apropos of the solar eclipse of 214/829, Habash gave the first instance of a determination of time by an altitude which was generally adopted by the astronomers.²⁵

'Ali bin 'Isa al-Asturlabi was a famous maker of astronomical instruments. He took part in the degree measurement ordered by al-Mamun, and wrote one of the earliest Arabic treatises on the astrolabe.²⁶

Al-Marwarrudhi was one of those who took part in the solar observations made at Damascus in 217-218/832-833.²⁷

The three sons of Musa bin Shakir made regular observations in the observatories in Baghdad between 236/850 and 257/870.²⁸

Al-Farghani was one of the most distinguished astronomers in the service of al-Miman and his successors. His famous work, *Kitab fi Harakat al-Sama-wiyyah wa Jawani* 'Ilm al-Nujum (Book on Celestial Motions and the Complete Science of the Stars), was translated into Latin in the sixth/twelfth century. It exerted marked influence on European astronomy. He accepted Ptolemy's theory and value of the precession but was of the view that it affected not only the stars but also the planets. He determined the diameter of the earth to be 6,500 miles, and found the greatest distances and also the diameters of the planets.²⁹

Al-Mahani (d. between 261/874 and 271/884) made a series of observations of lunar and solar eclipses and planetary conjunctions during the years 239-252/ 853-866; these were later used by ibn Yunus.³⁰

Al-Nairizi (d. c. 310/922) compiled astronomical tables, made systematic observations, and wrote a book on atmospheric phenomena. He wrote a treatise on the spherical astrolabe which is very elaborate and is supposed to be the best Arabic work on the subject.³¹

Thabit ibn Qurrah published solar observations, explaining his methods. He revised the theory of the movement of the sun.³² To the eight Ptolemaic spheres, he made the addition of a ninth one (*primum mobile*) to account for

the imaginary trepidation of the equinoxes, which was, however, later found to be an erroneous theory.³³

Al-Battani was one of the greatest astronomers of the Middle Ages. He wrote many books but his main work, the famous *De Numeris stellarum et motibus*, exerted great influence in Europe up to the time of the Renaissance. From 264/877 onwards he made astronomical observations of remarkable range and accuracy. His tables contain a catalogue of fixed stars for the year 267-68/880-81. He investigated the motion of the sun's apogee and found that its longitude had increased by $16^{\circ} 47'$ since the time of Ptolemy. This implied the discovery of the motion of the solar apsides, and of the slow variation in the equation of time. He determined many astronomical coefficients with remarkable accuracy, and corrected the previous values of the precession of equinoxes and the obliquity of the ecliptic. He proved the possibility of the annular eclipses of the sun. He did not believe in the trepidation of the equinoxes, although the followers of Copernicus at a much later date did believe in it. Modern astronomy has shown that the Copernicans were wrong.³⁴ He determined the moon's nodes and discovered the wobbling motion of the earth's orbit.³⁵

Ibn Amajur (abu Qasim 'Abd Allah) together with his son abu al-Hasan 'Ali made many observations between 272/885 and 321/933 which were recorded by ibn Yunus. They produced many astronomical tables, including the table of Mars according to Persian chronology.³⁶ Abu al-Hasan discovered that the moon's distance from the sun is not constant as assumed by Ptolemy.³⁷

Al-Kuhi was the leading astronomer working in 378/988 at the Sharaf al-Daulah observatory.³⁸

'Abd al-Rahman al-Sufi (291-376/903-986) was one of the most eminent Muslim astronomers. His chief work, *Kitab al-Kawdkib al-Thabitah al-Musawwar* (Book of the Fixed Stars Illustrated), is regarded as one of the three master-pieces of Muslim observational astronomy, the other two being one by ibn Yunus and a work prepared for Ulugh Beg.³⁹

Ibn al-A'lam (d. 375/985) has been praised for the accuracy of his observations; his tables continued to be very popular for at least two centuries.⁴⁰ He determined the stellar motion by observing that the stars traverse one degree in seventy solar years.⁴¹ He also determined the latitude and longitude of many stars,⁴² and measured the greatest declination of the planet Mercury.⁴³ He found that the earth is spherical and may, therefore, be supposed to be inhabited everywhere.⁴⁴ He discovered the satellites of Jupiter, discussed the motion of the sun-spots, and determined the eccentric orbit of the comets.⁴⁵

Abu al-Wafa' al-Buzjani determined accurately the obliquity of the ecliptic in 344/955, and calculated the variation in the moon's motion. There is a difference of opinion about his discovery of the third libration in the moon's motion. Some of the older writers believed that he discovered the third libration and that Tycho Brahe rediscovered it in the tenth/sixteenth century.⁴⁶ But Sarton remarks that abu al-Wafa' did not discover this variation, but simply spoke of the second part of the evection, which is essentially different from the variation discovered by Tycho Brahe.⁴⁷

Al-Khujandi made astronomical observations, including a determination of the obliquity of ecliptic, in Rayy, in 384/994.⁴⁸

Maslamah ibn Ahmad al-Majriti (d. c. 398/1007) edited and corrected the astronomical tables of al-Khwarizmi replacing the Persian by the Arabic chronology. He wrote a treatise on the astrolabe and a commentary on Ptolemy's Planisphaerium both of which were later translated into Latin.⁴⁹

Ibn Yunus has been described by Sarton as the greatest Muslim astronomer. A well-equipped observatory in Cairo enabled him to prepare improved astronomical tables, called al-Zij al-Kabir al-Hakimi, completed in 398/1007. They describe observations of eclipses and conjunctions, old and new, and improved value of astronomical constants (obliquity of the ecliptic $23^{\circ} 35'$; longitude of the sun's apogee $86^{\circ} 10'$; solar parallax reduced from $3'$ to $2'$; precession of the equinoxes $51.2''$ per annum), and give an account of the geodetic measurements made under al-Mamun's orders.⁵⁰ He is specially noted for his method of longitude determination. As time difference is equivalent to longitude difference, the determination of local time at the same instant at two stations widely separated in longitude is sufficient. But there were no telegraphs or radio signals to give simultaneity. Ibn Yunus proposed and used a signal from the moon—the first contact of a lunar eclipse. In this way he corrected many errors in longitudes in Ptolemy's geography.⁵¹

Al-Biruni is regarded by Western historians of science as “one of the greatest scientists of all times whose critical spirit, toleration, love of truth, and intellectual courage were almost without parallel in medieval times.”⁵² He made accurate determination of latitudes and longitudes and also other geodetic measurements. He discussed in his book Qanun al-Mas'udi for the first time the question that the earth rotates around its axis. The translation of the relevant Arabic passages is as follows: “When a thing falls from a height, it does not coincide with the perpendicular line of its descent, but inclines a little, and falls making different angles. When a piece of earth separates from it and falls, it has two kinds of motions: one is the circular motion which it receives from the rotation of the earth, and the other is straight which it acquires in falling directly to the centre of the earth. If it had only the straight motion, it would have fallen to the west of its perpendicular position. But since both of them exist at one and the same time, it falls neither to the west nor in the perpendicular direction, but a little to the east.” This book of al-Biruni, viz., al-Qanun al-Mas'udi, was written in 422/1030, and gave the true explanation of the rising and setting of the heavenly bodies as being due to the rotation of the earth, thus pointing to the error in the geocentric conception of the solar system. The heliocentric doctrine was not entirely unknown to the Arabs, who knew that the earth revolved round the sun and that the orbits of the planets were elliptic.⁵³ It should be noted that Copernicus gave the scientific formulation and detailed working out of the heliocentric theory some three centuries later.

Al-Zarqali was “the best observer of his time. He invented an improved astrolabe called safihah; his description of it was translated into Latin, Hebrew, and many vernaculars. He was the first to prove explicitly the motion of the solar apogee with reference to the stars; according to his

measure-ments it amounted to 12.04” per year (the real value being 11.8”).” He edited the planetary tables called the “Toledan Tables.”⁵⁴

'Umar Khayyam was called to the new observatory of Rayy in 467/1074 by Sultan Malik Shah Jalal al-Din Saljuqi to reform the old calendar. Moritz Cantor remarks that the calendar prepared by 'Umar Khayyam, called al-Tarikh al-Jalali, was more accurate than any other proposed before or after his time. Its date was 10th Ramadan 471, i.e., 16th March 1079. The modern interpretation of Khayyam's calendar is that eight intercalary days should be introduced in thirty-three years, resulting in an error of one day in about 5,000 years. The Gregorian calendar leads to an error of one day in 3,330 years.⁵⁵

Chingiz Khan erected a magnificent observatory at Maraghah near Tabriz far surpassing any built by his predecessors. Nasir al-Din Tusi was the greatest genius of this institution. He was quite original and independent, and criticized Ptolemy quite severely, “paving the way for the overthrow of the geocentric system.”⁵⁶

Ulugh Beg, grandson of Timur, established an observatory at Samarqand, Turkestan, in 823/1420, which was best equipped. A great work produced at this observatory was an independent star catalogue, known as the “Ulugh Beg Tables,” based entirely upon new observations, the first in about sixteen hundred years, i.e., since the time of Hipparchus, second century B.C. The positions were given to the nearest minute of arc, and attained a high degree of precision for that period. Instruments used in this observatory are considered the best made up to that time.⁵⁷ It is said that his quadrant was so large that its diameter was equal to the height of the St. Sophia Church in Constantinople. This work on astronomy is regarded as one of the best books of the Muslim astronomers. It was written in 841/1437, and from it one can have a fair account of the knowledge possessed by the Muslims in the ninth/fifteenth century. The first part deals with the general principles of astronomy. The latter part contains the practical methods of calculating the lunar and solar eclipses and the construction of the tables and their applications; a list of the stars; the motion of the sun, the moon, and the planets; and the terrestrial latitudes and longitudes of the big cities of the world.⁵⁸

The Mughuls inherited their fondness for astronomy from Ulugh Beg. Farishtah remarks that Humayun was a keen astronomer and spent a good deal of time in its pursuit.⁵⁹ An observatory was founded in Delhi under the orders of Muhammad Shah in 1137/1724, which was in the charge of the well-known mathematician Mirza Khair Allah. By this time the West had made great progress in astronomy as in other branches of knowledge, and therefore a commission consisting of the ablest men of the time was sent to Europe to study the new methods followed there and new results obtained through the then latest researches. The commission brought back with it some telescopes and other instruments and a few books prepared in Europe. The King of Portugal also deputed a European astronomer to go to Delhi with the commission. But when his data were checked at the Delhi observatory, local people detected errors and made corrections in his tables and calculations of the lunar and solar eclipses. This is ascribed to the fact

that the instruments made in Europe at the time were of a smaller size than those available in the Delhi observatory.⁶⁰

The Nizamiyyah observatory was erected at Hyderabad Deccan in the thirteenth/nineteenth century, and was the biggest institution of its kind in the East. It contained a sixteen-inch refracting telescope, a transit instrument, a Meridian circle, and a good deal of other equipment essential for a modern observatory. Its unique position was recognized by international organizations, and it had an important share in the preparation of the International Catalogue of Stars. After the establishment of the Osmania University, it became a constituent unit of that University.

The influence of the Muslims in this field is traceable from the many Arabic names and words that have become an integral part of the astronomical sciences. A long list of such words can be compiled, but it would be sufficient to mention a few: almanac (al-munakh), almacantar (al-muqantarrah), nadir (nadir), zenith (samt al-ras), algol (al-ghul), altair (al-ta'ir), aldebaran (al-dabaran), fomalhaut (jam al-hut), denab (dhanab), vega (waqi'), and the various names of Muslim astronomers given to the craters of the moon.⁶¹

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Chapter 64: Physics and Mineralogy

The Muslims contributed enormously to exact sciences such as mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, botany, and zoology since they had succeeded in acquiring the knowledge of the sciences which had developed before the advent of Islam.

Abu Yusuf Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kindi¹ was the first Muslim scientist-philosopher. His pure Arabian descent earned him the title "The Philosopher of the Arabs." Indeed, he was the first and last example of an Aristotelian student in the Eastern Caliphate who sprang from the Arabian stock. His principal work on geometrical and physiological optics based on the optics of Euclid in Theon's recension was widely used both in the East and the West until it was superseded by the greater work of ibn al-Haitham. He was the first Muslim to write in Arabic a book on music in which he designed a notation for the pitch of notes. Al-Kindi's three or four treatises on the theory of music are the earliest extant works in Arabic showing the influence of Greek writings on that subject. Of al-Kindi's writings more have survived in Latin translations than in the Arabic original.²

An observatory was opened by the three sons of Musa ibn Shakir (236-257/850-870) in their house at Baghdad. The Buwaihid Sultan Sharaf al-Daulah (372-379/982-989) instituted another in his palace at Baghdad where 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sufi (d. 376/986), Ahmad al-Saqhmani (d. 380/990), and abu al-Wafa' (d. 387/997) carried out their astronomical observations. At the Court of another Buwaihid, Rukn al-Daulah (320-366/932-976) of al-Rayy, flourished abu Ja'far al-Khazin of Khurasan who ascertained the obliquity of the ecliptic and solved a problem in Archimedes which led to the discovery of a cubic equation. Other astronomers made a systematic study of the heavens in Shiraz, Nishapur, and Samarqand.³ Banu Musa published a work on the balance.

'Utarid ibn Mubammad al-Hasib wrote a book on lapidary which is reckoned among the oldest Arabic works on this subject; abu Zakariya al-Razi quoted from 'Utarid in his famous book al-Hdwi. Al-Razi the Iranian was one of the greatest medical men of the Middle Ages. He was an expert chemist and physicist.

Al-Hakim the Fatimid was personally interested in astronomical calculations. He built on the Muqattam an observatory to which he used to ride before dawn. The intellectual lights of his Court were 'Ali ibn Ydnus (d. 400/ 1009), the greatest astronomer Egypt has ever produced, and abu 'Ali al-Haitham (Latin Alhazen), the principal Muslim physicist and student of optics. The latter was undoubtedly the foremost physicist of the Middle Ages. His researches into geometrical and physiological optics were considered to be the most important and useful up to the time of Renaissance. His explanation of the vision and functions of the eye was far in advance of the ideas of the ancients. The chief work for which he is noted is one on optics, Kitab al-Manazir, of which the original is lost but which was translated into Latin in the sixth/twelfth century. Almost all the medieval writers on optics in the West based their works on ibn Haitham's Opticae Thesaurus. In this work he opposed the theory of Euclid and Ptolemy that the eye sends out visual rays to the object of vision, and

presented experiments for testing the angles of incidence and reflection. In certain experiments he approached the theoretical discovery of magnifying lenses which were manu-factured in Italy centuries later.⁴

Ibn al-Haitham was the greatest Muslim physicist and one of the foremost opticians of the world. He found out the law of refraction in transparent bodies; laws of reflection of light; spherical and parabolic aberrations; and the law of refraction which later came to be known as Snell's Law. He discussed the magnifying power of a lens, refraction of light in the earth's atmosphere, and beginning or termination of twilight when the sun is 19° vertically below the horizon. He tried by these means to estimate the height of the homo-geneous atmosphere. He gave a better explanation of vision, though he erroneously assumed the lens of the eye to be the organ of sight. Later on ibn Rushd corrected this error and showed that sight is the function of the retina. Ibn al-Haitham explained the vision of a body by the aid of two eyes and the more magnified appearance of heavenly bodies when near the horizon than when vertically higher.

Muslim scientists evinced much interest in the determination of specific gravity of bodies. At Ghaznah in eastern Afghanistan lived abu al-Raiban Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Biruni (363-440/973-1048), considered one of the most original and profound scientists that the medieval world produced in the domains of physical and mathematical sciences. Al-Biruni found accurately the specific gravity of eighteen different precious substances and metals. He realized that the velocity of light was enormously greater than that of sound. Al-Biruni developed the mathematical part of geography, improved mensuration, and determined quite accurately the latitude and longitude of a number of places; he devised easy methods of stereographic projection. He showed how water flows in natural springs and how it comes out in artificial wells, and explained these facts in accordance with the laws of hydrostatics. His observations led him to the conclusion that the Indus Valley was at one time a part of the sea which became solid by the deposit of alluvial soil.

The most illustrious name in Arabic medical annals after al-Razi is that of ibn Sina (Latin Avicenna) (370-428/980-1037). Al-Razi was more of a physician than ibn Sina, but ibn Sina was more of a philosopher. In this physician, philosopher, philologist, and poet, medieval Arab science culminates and is, one might say, incarnated. Ibn Sina wrote on the theory of numbers. For accurate measurement of distances he invented an apparatus involving the same principle as our modern Vernier. He made a masterly study of a number of physical subjects like motion, contact, force, vacuum, infinity, light, and heat. Ibn Sina expressed his views on all the information that could be gathered in physics philosophically. He showed that however great the velocity of light may be, it must be limited. He did valuable research in music also, but his principal subject was medicine for which he earned the title of Shaikh al-Ra'is.

Jalal al-Din Malik Shah patronized astronomical studies. He established in 467/1074 at Rayyan observatory where there was introduced into the civil calendar an important reform based on an accurate determination of the length of the tropical year. To this task of reforming the Persian calendar he

called to his new observatory the celebrated 'Umar al-khayyam. Umar al-Khayyam was born between 430/1038 and 440/1048 at Nishapur where he died in 517/1123. He is known to the world primarily as a Persian poet. Very few people realize that he was a first-class mathematician and astronomer as well. The researches of al-Khayyam and his collaborators resulted in the production of the calendar named, after his patron, al-Tarikh al-Jalali, which is even more accurate than the Gregorian calendar. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, the latter leads to an error of one day in 3,330 years whereas al-Khayyam's leads to an error of one day in about 5,000 years. 'Umar al-Khayyam performed experiments to find the specific gravity of various substances.

The attraction of iron by natural magnet was known to the Greeks; magnet's acquiring a definite direction when suspended freely was known to the Chinese. But it appears that this property was first utilized by Muslims in their marine navigation. Muhammad al-'Aufi was the first to mention it in his *Jawami'*. The directive position of the magnetic needle was known to the Chinese from a very long time, but they used it only for geomantic purposes. Most probably Muslim sailors were the first to employ it in navi-gating their ships as is evident from Chu Yu's account of sailing vessels using it between Canton and Sumatra.

Nasir al-Din Tusi's most brilliant pupil Qutb al-Din Shirazi (634-711/1236-1311) wrote *Nihayat al-Idrak fi Dirayat al-Aflak* which is largely a development of the former's *Tadhkirah*, a work on astronomical topics; it also contains valuable discussions on geometrical optics like those on the nature of vision and the formation of the rainbow. He was the first scientist to give a correct and clear explanation of the formation of a rainbow. The primary bow was explained by him to be due to two refractions and one internal reflection, and the secondary to two refractions and two internal reflections of solar rays in minute spherical drops of water suspended in the air; essentially the same explanation was given by Descartes in the eleventh/seventeenth century. The colours of the rainbow for their correct interpretation had to wait Newton's experiments on the dispersion of light.

Kamal al-Din Farisi (d. 720/1320) was a famous pupil of Qutb al-Din and under his inspiration wrote *Tangih al-Mandzir* (a commentary on ibn al-Haitham's classical work on optics, *Kitab al-Mandzir*), which was published with notes by the *Da'irat al-Ma'arif*, Hyderabad, in 1928-30.

Muslim scientists were deeply interested in Archimedes' works on mechanics and hydrostatics. In these subjects they determined the density of a number of substances. Sanad ibn 'Ali, al-Biriini, 'Umar al-Khayyam, Muzaffar al-Asfuziri⁵ and several others did some work on these branches of physics, but the most important work was done by 'Abd al-Rahman al-Khazini in his *Mizan al-Hikmah*, written in 618/1221 and considered among the master-pieces of the Middle Ages. In this work al-Khazini discussed mechanics, hydrostatics, and physics in a masterly way. He gave tables of specific gravities of liquid substances (on the lines adopted by al-Biruni) and detailed studies of the theory of gravitation (universal force directed towards the then considered centre of the universe, i.e., the centre of the earth); weight and buoyancy of air; rise of water in capillary tubes;

aerometric measurement of densities and the temperature of liquids; theory of the lever; levelling by balance; and measurement of time.

The Muslims took keen interest in clocks to find out the correct times for prayers. Their artisans acquired great mastery in this work, as may be judged from Harun al-Ras'id's presenting Charlemagne with a water-clock in 192/807.

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Notes

1. See Chapter XXI.
2. P. K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, 1958, passim, pp. 370f.
3. Ibid. p. 376.
4. Ibid., p. 629
5. G. Sarton, Introduction to the History of Science, Vol. 11, p. 216.

Chapter 65: Chemistry

Alexandrian Alchemy.-With the advent of Islam, the Arab tribes, many of them still nomadic, were united into one nation. Their conflicts with the neighbouring peoples which used to end as skirmishes bringing immediate defeat on the scattered tribes, now changed into regular wars often crowning them with success. What that meant can be realized from the fact that within a hundred years of the Prophet's death, which occurred in 11/632, Islam had spread from Spain in the West to Sind in the East. As an advancing nation the Arabs came in contact with different races, and when Egypt was conquered, during the regime of the Caliph 'Umar, in 21/641, they came to know the Hellenized Egyptian culture as it then existed. Its centre was Alexandria, founded by Alexander in 332B.C.

Very soon it became an emporium of international trade attracting merchants from all over the world. Above all, the Greeks had migrated there in numbers, giving rise to a mixed culture of Egyptian and Greek origin. The Egyptians used idols in their temples and chapels, preferring those of bronze, particularly when they were gilded. The artisans of Alexandria excelled in this craft, and the manufacture of gilded bronze statues apparently became a lucrative industry.

From gilding bronze some of the artisans began to dream of making gold itself and devoted their main attention to achieve this end. Thus arose alchemy, not found before either in Egypt or in Greece. It was existing when the Arabs acquired Egypt and was one of the elements of Alexandrian culture which diffused into Arabian civilization.

There are several treatises and even books which suggest that Greek science, which flourished between 300 B. C. and 200 A. D., subsequently passed on to the Arabs who functioned as its intermediate preservers delivering it to Europeans during the Middle Ages. Such is the accepted origin of alchemy.

It now becomes necessary to offer a brief sketch of alchemy as it was founded at Alexandria. The oldest existing manuscript on alchemy is not prior to about 391/1000. But it is supposed to be a copy of a work originally written in about 100 A. D. During this early period alchemy was a semi-secret science pursued by a few obscure persons. As Taylor¹ says, "although the earlier alchemists wrote in Greek, they were not Greeks, but in all probability Egyptians or Jews. They were not Christians." And what did they call their art? This knotty problem is conspicuous by its absence in Taylor's book. When Wilson² came to review it, he supplied the missing information on "the derivation of the Greek name of the art." "The word unmistakably goes back to the craft of the foundryman and metal-worker.

First, there is the Greek verb cheo (xiw), to melt and pour, as in the casting of a bronze statue, then its derivative chump, an ingot of cast metal, and finally from this another derivative chumeia, the art of preparing metal ingots. This in time became a technical term for the artificial preparation of the precious metals, but at first, as in Zosimus, about 300 A.D., it acquired a qualifying phrase, the chumeia of silver or gold. Before the Arabic period, however, chumeia could stand alone to denote the art of transmutation.

Also before Arabic times, about 81/700 or earlier, it seems to have been confused with chemia, apparently a Greek derivative of the Egyptian word chem, meaning black. The reasons are obscure but the fact of the confusion is hardly to be questioned. Later, the Arabs took over both spellings, chumeia and chemia, prefixed their own definite article al, and handed the word on to the Europeans in about the sixth/twelfth century.” Thus kimiya is the Arabicized form of the dual word chumeia/chemia.

The Greek and Arabic Terms Compared.-Now it is even more important to know what the Arabs received under the name kimiya from the Greek-speaking alchemists-to know what the word chemeia signifies and how the Arabic word kimiya compares with it in meaning. Gildemeister³ explains that “kimiya with the Arabs primarily is not an abstraction (or the science of alchemy) but the name of a substance, of an agent, by which transmutation of metals is brought about, thus of the Philosophers' Stone, or rather of preparations made out of it. It is thus a synonym of ilcsir which likewise signifies a transforming agent. By contrast chumeia is never used by the Greeks in any other sense than transmutation of metals.”⁴

There are two synonyms in Greek, chemeia and chumeia. Gildemeister refers to the use only of the latter, apparently taking it as identical with the former. In Arabic there are two terms kimiya and iksir, the latter not being represented in Greek literature. In fact, iksir occurs far more in Arabic than the word kimiya. Iksir or al-iksir has been Europeanized into elixir which has come to mean as an agent for prolong-ing life. According to Taylor,⁵ “the alchemy of China was primarily concerned with the prolonging of life”; he adds⁶ in this connection that “it is very probable that the Arab alchemists received some information about it. It is certainly notable that the idea of the elixir as a medicine prolonging life was present amongst the Arabs and not known to their Greek-speaking predeces-sors.”

P. Kraus⁷ published a voluminous work on Jabir. Its reviewer⁸ correctly noticed that “as to the origin of all those theories, Kraus maintains that not much of Jabir's alchemy can be traced to the extant fragments of Greek alchemistic literature, and that there are certain features in his alchemistic knowledge which are definitely unknown in classical antiquity.” There has prevailed so much prejudice in favour of Greek that even the word “elixir,” absent in Greek and therefore inconceivable as a loan-word in Arabic, has been given a Greek root. Iksir has accordingly been said to have come from the Greek word ksiron, meaning dry, and has been made to connote dry powder, while elixir means essence, spirit, or fluid. How the Arabs coined their word from Greek cannot be explained. All this tends to show that the primary source of Arab alchemy lies somewhere away from Alex-andria.

The Urge to Pursue Alchemy.-There were two types of seekers after lon-gevity. First, the ascetic who was his own grocer, cook, and doctor and to whom infirmity of old age meant lingering death. The second was represented by a prince who had wealth and power and desired long life, only to enjoy his possessions fully. Though for different reasons, the Sufis, the nearest to ascetics, also indulged in alchemy. In fact, Wiedemann⁹ remarks that “the study of alchemy has had one undesirable result inasmuch

as the representatives of the mystic movement in Islam studied alchemy, e.g., ibn al-'Arabi.”

This, however, was expected, and the converse is also true, for about the master of alchemy, Jurji¹⁰ states that “later tradition makes Jabir ibn Hayyan the first Sufi.” Kraus¹¹ explains how Jabir, the alchemist, became interested in Sufism. He writes, “Alchemy is never practised by Jabir for the object of accumulating wealth and acquiring the power of gold. Its real mission is to bring about salvation.” And how was this possible? He continues to say that “Salvation in the Manichaeian sense means to oppose in all spheres of life the fatal mixture of light and darkness and to free the light from dark particles. The Manichaeian natural history, especially alchemy, aims at the great work of salvation.”

Let us now turn to the wealthy and the worldly class. According to Martin,¹² “Emperor Ts'in-She-Hwang (B. C. 220), the builder of the great wall of China, is the earliest historical sovereign who became a votary of alchemy.” There are a few more Chinese emperors who believed in alchemy; a couple of them had to pay with their lives for trying alchemical drugs. In the life of Chingiz Khan it is stated that he sent for a Taoist priest all the way from China to Central Asia, where he was encamped, to discuss if life could be prolonged for ever.

Khalid, the Umayyad Prince (40-85/660-704).-There is a sub-class among the well-to-do who would like to enjoy as sport the transmutation of a base metal into gold. Such a motive on the part of a young prince can be easily imagined and one such prince appears to have been Khalid, son of the Caliph Yazid I and grandson of Mu'awiyah. In the Arabic literature on alchemy, compiled about 377/987 by the famous bookseller al-Nadim, it is stated, as translated by Fuck,¹³ that “Khalid was the first Muslim for whom medical, astronomical, and (al)chemical writings were translated into Arabic. ...” He wrote a number of treatises and books. Al-Nadim also saw the following four of his books: (1) The Book of Amulets, (2) The Great Book of the Scroll, (3) The Small Book of the Scroll, and (4) The Book of the Testament to His Son on the Art.

Introduction of Alexandrian Alchemy.-When Khalid wanted to learn alchemy at Damascus, his capital, he sent for a teacher from Alexandria, a Christian monk named Marianos, a pupil of another alchemist, also of Alexandria, named Stephanos, who lived in the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Herkleios I (610-641 A.D.). That the best available teacher of alchemy at the time was a monk is in full harmony with what has been said of alchemy and of Sufis here. A monograph of over fifty pages has been devoted to Khalid by Professor Ruska,¹⁴ the famous German historian of alchemy.

The Oldest Alchemy and How it Reached the Muslim World.-A series of authors have established that alchemy is indigenous to China. Among the older writers may be mentioned Martin,¹⁵ while the best historical evidence has been offered by Dubs.¹⁶ From China alchemy reached Alexandria by the sea-route. In South China, the name of the dynasty that built the Great Wall is pronounced Ts'in, which became Tseen, the Arabic name for China. Likewise, the South Chinese term, kim-ya, Gold-making Juice, became the

loan-word *lcimiya*, upon which Schneider¹⁷ has published the most recent communication. It is probable that the word *kimiya*, instead of having been borrowed direct from the Chinese, was taken over from Arabic into Greek, being Hellenized there as *chemeia*. This is how it was written, but very probably its pronunciation was similar to that of *kimiya*. The pre-Islamic Arabs, bring-ing silk from South China, all along the sea-route, also imported Taoism and alchemy as the cults of immortality. To the pagan mind alchemy made a special appeal and this explains how it came to be imported. Some of the Arab alchemists of the type of what we call fakirs must have settled at Alexandria where it gradually spread mainly among monks and other ascetics. We have just seen that even centuries afterwards this character did not change for it was the monks who brought Alexandrian alchemy to Damascus.

Another way in which Chinese alchemy reached the Islamic world was via land-route. In Christianity one church tried to suppress another; and a community, speaking Syriac and calling themselves Nestorians, sought protection from outside and established an academy at Jundi-Sbapiir, in South-West Persia. The Nestorians migrated even up to China so that there must have been contact between the Nestorians of China and those of Persia. As an impact of Christianity upon Zoroastrianism there resulted the religion of Mani. The Manichaeans with their philosophy of dualism were close to the alchemists as they also believed in a similar doctrine. Briefly, Nestorian and Manichaean Persia was in intimate contact with China and was responsible for a fresh influx of Chinese alchemy. The Jundi-Shapur academy was by no means dead during the reign of Harun al-Rashid to which period Jabir also belonged. When Kraus and others notice that there was much in Jabir that was not found in Greek alchemy we have to turn to Chinese influence in Persia at that time.

The Beginning of Classical Islamic Alchemy.-The Umayyads ruling from Damascus had become very unpopular. There were plots to replace them by the 'Abbasid dynasty. Such agents were active as far east as the province of Khurasan in Persia. One such emissary was Jabir's father, Hayyan, a druggist by profession. Jabir was born at Tds, in Khurasan, about 104/722, during the family's sojourn in Persia. When Jabir was a mere boy, Hayyan was arrested for his activity and had to pay with his life. Khurasan being the border province was a centre of foreign cultures like Mahayana Buddhism and other schools of mysticism. It may be pointed out in this connection that it was again at Tus, in Khurasan, where Imam Ghazali, one of the great Muslim mystics, was born. Above all, we find in Jabir one of the first persons to be formally called a Sufi and the first among Muslims to be recognized as the master of alchemy. Both alchemy and Sufism appear to come from the same source and to have long remained together. Some of those who have written upon the history of Sufism have noticed that in its early stages it flourished only where Neo-Platonism was found. Likewise, writers on the history of alchemy have also observed its earlier co-existence with Neo-Platonism.

While Sufism and Neo-Platonism can be directly and easily connected with each other, as pertaining to the same system of thought, it requires

inquiring into what alchemy originally was in order to admit that alchemy did not develop from one craft to another, from gilding to gold-making, but was a kind of applied mysticism. The Sufis wanted immortality in the next world by spiritual exercises; the alchemists wanted it by virtue of drugs in this world. This motive at once becomes evident by a study of Chinese alchemy which represents its earliest phase. Instead of associating Islamic alchemy with Alexandrian Neo-Platonism it is more fruitful to connect it with Manichaeism and with schools of mysticism influenced by Chinese mysticism.

Khurasan, rather than Egypt, was the centre from where Islamic alchemy got its real initiation. Between Khalid ibn Yazid and Jabir bin Hayyan was a period of seventy-five years. Historically, the political power shifted from Damascus to Baghdad. At this latter centre the so-called Persian influence, but really Chinese-Manichaean doctrines, rapidly promoted Islamic alchemy. Those who compare Greek alchemy with that of Jabir notice an obvious difference between the two. If comparison is made between the doctrines and achievements of Muslim alchemists with those of China, the difference is very much less. In so far as even the alchemy of Alexandria is Chinese, though a degenerated form of it, it still has features enough for it to stand comparison with that of China.

With Jabir begins a school of alchemy much nearer to its original source, with its centre at Tus, instead of at Alexandria. The first feature to be noticed here is that the ideal seems to be not to make gold but to prepare panacean drugs. Jabir's reputation as a physician grew after the services he had rendered at the Court of Harun al-Rashid. His alchemical writings on the contrary were misunderstood even by a savant like ibn Khal-dun¹⁸ who remarked that they read like puzzles.

The effect of the chemical mysticism, which was alchemy, was demonstrated in the form of life-saving iksirs; the theory of applied mysticism was obtained from other systems of mysticism, such as Sufism and Manichaeism. The existing literature shows that alchemy proposed to make gold only and this seems to be true of Greek alchemy. The Arab alchemists, like the original Chinese masters, worked upon their preparations for making everything everlasting. When the omnipotent substance, iksir or kimiya, was applied to a base metal it became rust-proof and fire-proof, which meant it changed into gold. The same agent could also convert an ordinary stone into a permanent diamond. These features are not revealed in treatises on the history of alchemy and must be clearly pointed out.

Imam Ja'far al-Sddiq (81-148/700-765).-It will now be apparent how Jabir would venerate a master of mysticism like Imam Ja`far al-Sadiq, the sixth Imam, who lived like an internee at Baghdad. Of all the Imams he was the greatest mystic. He was deeply interested in alchemy and even composed treatises on the subject. Importance is attached to him here mainly because Jabir speaks of him as a Master and also because of the fact that alchemy and Sufism both aim at immortality. Since Jabir was both a Sufi and an alchemist, he could have received initiation from the Imam at least as a mystic. Ruska¹⁹ has edited a treatise attributed to the Imam and

discussed his position in the history of alchemy, devoting an introduction of sixty pages to the problem.

Jabir ibn Hayyan (104-200/722-815).-Our knowledge of Jabir's life is very sketchy. He was born at Tus, in Khurasan, about 104/722. He became an orphan while yet a boy and was brought up in the tribe of his father, Azd, which lived in South Arabia. Then we suddenly find him as a man of middle age active as a physician at the Court of Harun al-Rashid and as a companion of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq. His special patrons were Harun's viziers, the Barmakids, who really introduced him to the Court. When the Barmakids fell into disfavour in 188/803, Jabir, then over eighty years old, returned to Kufah where he used to live before coming to Baghdad.

The early life of the man, say from twenty to thirty-five, must have been spent in the pursuit of alchemy probably at Tus. If he had merely been born there he would have hardly been called al-Tusi. Another designation of his, al-Sufi, also sets us inquiring as to where he acquired proficiency in this field. With Tus as a common centre for both Sufism and alchemy, the search is reduced to the minimum. When he left Baghdad immediately for Kufah, as an old bachelor, he could have hardly found people with whom he was familiar. Without relatives and surviving friends his life must have been that of a stranger and he must have migrated from Kufah to Tao where Sufism and alchemy were very much at home. According to one source, he died at Tus, in 200/815, which appears most probable, at the ripe age of ninety-three.

Two centuries after his death some houses in a part of Kufah where Jabir used to live were demolished. The house which he used to occupy was found to contain a mortar of solid gold weighing two pounds and a half which went to the royal treasury of the time. This archaeological finding gives much reality to the personality of Jabir with his many-sided features. Those who have been prejudiced in favour of Greek culture have nourished myths such as given by Thompson,²⁰ who writes that "Jabir is said to have been either a native of Mesopotamia or a Greek who afterwards embraced Muhammadanism." The fact that this theory originated from Suidas, who lived in the fifth/eleventh century, and continued to appear as late as 1351/1932, when Thompson published his book, indicates the persistence of pre-judice in favour of the Greek origin of alchemy.

The existing literature on the history of alchemy seems to be devoted mainly to textual criticism rather than to the subject proper. Hence, as late as 1353/1934 Hopkins²¹ recorded that "the fundamental work of fact-finding has been so difficult and time-consuming that no real history of alchemy has yet appeared." The same judgment continued to be repeated, when Taylor²² wrote in 1371/1951 that "it may at once be said that alchemy still remains an unsolved problem." And both these remarks apply even more forcibly to Muslim alchemy. We have not been told as yet what the Muslim alchemists were after and particularly what was meant by kimiya and iksir; whether they were identical or whether there was a subtle difference between them.

What the Europeans of the Medieval Ages got as alchemy was the system developed by the Arabs immediately before them so that observations upon the alchemy of any of these two apply to either.

“Paracelsus taught,” as worded by Thompson,²³ “that the object of alchemy was not to make gold, but to prepare medicines.” He is the founder in Europe of iatro-chemistry, but it is being maintained here that this has always been the character of alchemy and is best illustrated by the popularity Jabir enjoyed among his contemporaries. The fact that Jabir could indulge in the use of a golden mortar and yet live the life of a vegetarian, bachelor, and a Sufi-ascetic shows how he was not concerned with the making of gold as a source of wealth. The other observation is from Liebig. Chickashige²⁴ writes, in this connection, that “the long history of alchemy clearly shows, as Liebig remarked, that alchemy was never anything else than chemistry proper to its own genera-tion.” If instead of “chemistry” and “iatro-chemistry” as above we use the more familiar and precise term, pharmaceutical chemistry, then both Liebig and Paracelsus would be expressing the same idea. Here again, Jabir's career fully confirms the remarks of Parcelsus and Liebig.

Among those who spared no energy to study the writings of Jabir may be mentioned the late Dr. Holmyard. He observes that “Jabir ibn Hayyan has many claims to be considered the first to whom the title of chemist may legitimately be applied.”²⁵ Hopkins²⁶ is even more eloquent in his tribute when he states that “... if all that has been deduced from the writings of Geber (the Europeanized name of Jabir) is true, he was one of the greatest single constructive influences in science, particularly in the science of metals, that the world has ever seen. Perhaps he should be ranked with Lavoisier for instituting a great revolution in the attitude of the educated people of his time towards the study of chemistry, especially in their attitude towards experi-ments.

Whereas, since the days of Aristotle, to soil one's hands with labour has been considered, except in Egypt, despicable and proper only for slaves, it is related that Geber had some success in teaching his friends at Court that laboratory methods are necessary and the only foundation for exact and reasonable science.” Respect to practical work which Jabir must have preached is confirmed by the converse having continued to exist even after-wards. Fuck²⁷ explains that “al-Nadim had no high opinion of Alchemy or of its adepts.

Of a contemporary alchemist who was credited with having been successful, he tells us that he never found him otherwise than in straitened circumstances and dirty by reason of the chemical work he was in the habit of doing.” We can now appreciate the wealth of praise due to Jabir. Hopkins rightly showers praises upon Jabir, the Master, who infused into his people a spirit for experimentation which raised the status of Muslim alchemists so much above others that later historians, like Schneider,²⁸ could admit that “it is certain that no other people have pursued alchemy with so much per-sistent zeal as the Arabs.” The special urge on the part of the Arabs to devote to alchemy would be apparent from what follows.

Kimiya.-Man's earlier medicines came from the plant world; herbalism was then the system of medicine. From this developed the notion that herbs could even make man immortal. The Aryans idealized the soma plant, the Iranians called it homa; the Chinese believed in the mushroom chip; and the

Hebrews in the tree of life. Late in this period must be reckoned the belief in a gold-making-plant juice or kim-ya in the Hakka dialect of South China, the original of the Arabic term ki-miya.²⁹

How Kimiya worked.-The ancient religion of man was animism. Every substance, including trees and stones, was believed to have a body and a soul, and to be alive potentially. The soul was a highly refined matter, like a perfume, and it came from the sun. It was more of energy than matter, like light, which, according to some physicists, has a corpuscular nature. The soul in turn was an emanation of the cosmic positive energy, called yang, in Chinese, meaning light, while in the universe there was also negative energy, called yin, meaning darkness. Matter was frozen yin energy, and it was difficult to convert matter into energy.

Matter and spirit could form only a temporary union or mixture. But if matter received the impact of an energizing principle it was changed into reactive negative energy which would then unite with the positive energy, and the result would be a real compound or a permanent union. Even a drop of the gold-making juice was taken to be bubbling with yang energy so that if a coin of copper was heated with it its ineffective soul was expelled and the material body or copper was transformed into negative energy, and it combined with the soul or positive energy from the plant juice to make the resultant gold. Here the donor is exceptionally rich in yang energy and the ultimate transmutation of metal is due to it.

Further, the donor belongs to the plant world. In countries like China and India, with their rich flora, alchemists did depend upon fresh herbs for the transformations they wished to bring about. This being denied to an alchemist like Jabir, he exploited mainly, if not entirely, minerals and metals instead; hence the importance given to inorganic raw materials and metals in the works of Arabian alchemists. Instead of kimiya, inorganic pre-parations called iksirs were used.

Ruh.-It is necessary to describe how the minds of the alchemists worked in preparing a simple substance such as rich (soul, spirit, or essence). Every substance, they must have felt, has a soul which remains like a tenant temporarily in the substance, the container of the soul. On heating the soul can be made to leave the body; on distilling the soul can be recovered more or less concentrated in the distillate. Thus a rose gives out its soul or ruh. The flower is now a dead body and the soul is its perfume or essence. When such an essence or rult is taken as a drug it temporarily strengthens the body of the user, like blood-transfusion or an injection of glucose. The donor here gives only one of the two elements; the material body, the flower, is discarded. When the soul of the flower is introduced into the body of an-other receiver it is like the temporary transmigration of the soul which must repeat at every stage if the soul is not to disappear in space.

Iksir.-Transmigration implies that the soul and the body do not come from the same source, the two are not permanently united, the balance between the positive energy contained in the foreign soul and the potentially negative energy existing in its present container is not ideal. All that is re-quired is to convert the body into negative energy and reunite with it the soul previously separated from it. This is a regular art. For example,

take common salt. It does not sublime. Now, if re-crystallized and mixed with alcohol, just as roses were mixed with water, and the mixture distilled, the essence of common salt evaporates along with the volatile vehicle, alcohol. The distillate is added again to the residual salt in the distilling vessel and the process of rectification is continued. A stage comes when all the salt becomes fluid, leaving no solid residue. This is the iksir of common salt.

The body, the material vehicle, has by now been converted into reactive energy, negative in character, and its soul, as the positive energy, has combined with it into an inseparable whole. Salt is a mixture of a material body, or of potential negative energy, and a soul, the positive energy. Its iksir contains a permanent union or compound of positive energy coming from the soul and reactive negative energy or the transformed material body.

Technically, two processes were most necessary: distillation in the first instance, to isolate the soul, the essence, or the positive element, and calcination, to purify the material vehicle, in order to convert the potential energy into the reactive negative element. Melting of metals is a very minor operation. In the case of an active gold-making plant juice, calcining of copper is limited to gentle heating. In the case of iksir of common salt no separate calcining is necessary, repeated distillation incorporates it. It is clear by now that rids or spirit contains one element only, the positive. Iksir contains two, the positive element and the negative one. Each of them belongs to the same substance and as such must necessarily contain enough quanta of both to balance like exact opposites or rather like exact supplements.

When iksir results, the substance becomes a spirituous preparation, sublimable, volatile, atomized, or potentized. Now being all energy, it represents a permanent union, inseparable for ever. When taken as a drug it makes the patient like itself, tending to become permanent. Naturally, according to the original substance, the total energy content in different cases differs and iksirs also vary in their pharmacological properties. In any case an iksir is stronger than the spirit or rich. Whereas kimiya is a natural substance, iksir is an artificial one. To meddle with the gold-making juice in any way would be to destroy its virtues, whereas iksirs can be produced only by chemical processes, above all by distillation and calcination.

Because substances like common salt are made to distil along with alcohol, such heterogeneous mixtures as contained alcohol were probably called "elixirs" by European alchemists of the Middle Ages. It will be apparent why Jabir talked mostly, if not solely, of iksir and not of kintiya, its synonym. How iksir has been made to come from the Greek word, kseron, merely meaning dry, cannot be explained. By constitution iksir was taken to be the purified body with its soul returned to it. It was a revived body and a returned soul, where the two, on becoming identical, represented a third substance.

The picture was essentially the same as that of man after resurrection. The soul would return to the dead body which would revive and henceforward remain immortal. But the revived person would be a regular mutation, his body feeling neither thirst nor hunger. He would be like a

spirit or ghost with a body no longer composed of matter. Iksir represents such a substance, material to look at but in fact become energy, and, what is important, also a donor of energy.

Whatever the substance iksir may have been, its uses mainly decide its virtues. Jabir prepared iksirs from one substance after another and as an indefatigable worker could not avoid studying the properties of inorganic acids into which he tried to dissolve his metals to purify them, instead of melting them alone or along with other metals. In India the metals were never purified by the use of inorganic acids but mainly by calcining them with boiled extracts of herbs. In order to have substitute a plant extracts or organic acids Jabir prepared inorganic acids not for their own sake but for making iksirs. His experiments spread over a wide range of substances. The preparations resulting from them must have maintained Jabir's enthusiasm and made him a master. Holmyard,³⁰ a chemist and an author of standard text-books on chemistry, after a careful study of Jabir, rightly states that "like painting which reached its highest pitch of perfection while still in its infancy, Islamic alchemy never surpassed the level it attained with one of its exponents, Jabir ibn Hayyan." We can represent him as a noble soul, seeing diseases all over, finding no herbs to treat them with, and so taking with a vengeance to minerals as the only source of supplying remedies. Enthusiasm born under such circumstances, incorporating the personality of the worker and the poverty of the country reacting upon it, resulted in the achievement with which the world today remembers the name of Jabir.

Those who do not know what iksirs mean, certainly not mere powders, cannot imagine the deep urge for or high aim in making them. At every stage we have to remember that Jabir was an ascetic-bachelor and a mystic-Sufi; acquisition of wealth or making of bullion gold could never have been his motive. In the absence of the right perspective much energy has been wasted in trying to separate historical data from Jabirian legends. What is still required is to isolate alchemy proper from Jabir's writings. Writers on alchemy, rather on Alexandrian alchemy, have rightly attached full importance to the early record of the word *chemeia*.

Likewise, in dealing with the history of Muslim contribution to alchemy we feel that the introduction of the word iksir played an even more significant role. Jabir apparently used it for the first time and demonstrated its claims. Paracelsus is credited with having founded iatro-chemistry or having taught that the real aim of alchemy was to prepare medicines and not to make gold. Jabir would have been surprised to hear that alchemy was anything but that, and his iksirs anything but highly potent, we may say, omnipotent and multipurpose drugs. Kraus³¹ has translated from Arabic into German a text revealing what iksir can prove to be; an extract from it has also been rendered into English by Holmyard.³² Harun al-Rashid's ministers belonged to the Barmakid family.

One of them, Yahya, was much devoted to a lady in his harem. She fell ill. The case ultimately became so hopeless that Jabir was sent for. The report" as coming from Jabir himself maintains: "I had a certain elixir with me, so I gave her a draught of two grains of it in three ounces of vinegar and honey and in less than half an hour she was as well as ever. And Yahya fell

at my feet and kissed them, but I said, 'Do not do so, O my brother!' And he asked about the uses of the elixir and I gave him the remainder of it and explained how it was employed, whereupon he applied himself to the study of science and persevered in it until he knew many things." Having demonstrated such a dramatic achievement it is impossible for any sane person to have found interest in making gold instead. Jibir's alchemy consisted only in preparing iksirs or wonder-drugs which were more precious than gold.

The Philosophers' Stone (Hajr Mukarram).-The preparation which marks the zenith of alchemical achievement is the Benevolent Stone (hair mukar. rang). The alchemists called themselves philosophers or Ilakima as opposed to physicians or, tabibs. The Alchemists' Stone was correctly paraphrased as the Philosophers' Stone. This is the genesis of the term. In the historical survey of the chemical arts of China by Li,³³ we read that "Chin-tan, an alchemical term in Chinese, first appearing in Pao-p'u tzu (a work composed about 317-332 A. D.), comes to refer to a drug or elixir which was prepared by the alchemists for prolonging life and transmuting metals. It reminds us of the Philosophers' Stone because this was considered to have the same effect as Chin-tan.... The language of the ancient alchemists is very hard to understand [a confession recalling the judgment of ibn Khaldun upon Jabir]. It is supposed that Chin-tan may have consisted of mercury, sulphur, lead, etc., a compound or mixture prepared in accordance with a theory not unlike that of Jabir, who supposed that every metal contained mercury and sulphur." The admission seems to be to the effect that the theory, that metals are composed of mercury and sulphur, did exist in China but in a vague form.

Taking the simpler notion first, with Jabir all metals including gold were composed of mercury and sulphur. Davis³⁴ states that, "for the Chinese alchemists, positive yang was lead instead of sulphur; negative yin was mercury." Jabir died in about 184/800. The Chinese alchemist, Chang Potuan,³⁵ living later in 373-475/983-1082, still maintained the ancient Chinese theory that "our fellow workers must be able to recognize true lead and mercury." It is, therefore, clear that Jabir borrowed a theory as known to the Chinese but improved upon it, keeping mercury as the one element and changing the other from lead to sulphur.

The surprising feature of the Sulphur/Mercury theory about the origin of metals is that it has not been challenged by experimenters who have melted metals, calcined them, and even sublimated at least arsenic and mercury compounds. That they should have believed that iron consisted of sulphur and mercury, and that even gold consisted of the same elements, has received no explanation so far. The primitive man accepted blood as the life-giving principle and further believed that its red pigment was the real agent. Thus redness was taken to be the active principle so that any red substance could generate blood. Of all red substances cinnabar was the nearest approach to blood in colour.

When it was established by actual synthesis that cinnabar consists of mercury and sulphur, its elements came to be considered to be the elements of all metals. Animism assumed that even metals were living things, having

a soul as well as a body. When negative energy freezes it becomes matter and the body of the metal consists of it. The soul is represented by the positive element, one which is sublimable so that it can permeate the material body. Lead is not volatile, sulphur is; hence the Lead/Mercury theory was essentially defective and the justification of the Sulphur/Mercury modification.

Further, lead and mercury do not produce a red compound, while sulphur and mercury do. But if Jabir's theory is a modification of a previous Chinese theory, how is it that in its original form it accepted lead and mercury as the elements of metals? What was required as the end-product was redness, and theorizing depended upon this result. Lead heated by itself oxidizes in the air to red lead or minium. Likewise, mercuric oxide is obtained as red, orange, or yellow powder, consisting of minute crystals. Thus, the Chinese theory was, indeed, properly conceived, but it failed to include a spirituous element like sulphur, while lead obviously was not.

Alchemy as a philosophical system is based on a dualism, postulating that everything consists of two elements, of light (yang in Chinese) and darkness (yin). When the metals were ascribed their constitution, sulphur and mercury came to be taken respectively as positive (yang) and negative (yin) elements. And the realistic basis of this theory, as has been explained, came from the actual knowledge of what constituted cinnabar and the identification of cinnabar with blood. When the cosmic forces, yang and yin, are in perfect balance, it means yin exists as a negative creative energy and not as frozen matter, while yang naturally always remains spirituous; the result of their union is like that of two substances, identical in nature but oppositely charged, like positive and negative electricity.

The resultant is everlasting. Pure sulphur and pure mercury are imagined to be existing as energy, even though they may not appear to be so, and their resultant, when ideal or when the two are perfectly balanced, means an everlasting union, which is gold. According to another tenet of animism, like makes like; gold, the everlasting metal, as a drug makes the consumer also immortal. Gold remaining in mines for millions of years loses this property of donation, its negative element, mercury, having become less spirituous or more material; hence gold, as a drug, must be freshly pre-pared.

Better still it must be in a stage prior to its becoming gold, so to say, in a nascent stage when it is the iksir of gold, a ferment-like substance which will convert any metal into gold. This is the Philosophers' Stone, converting matter into energy, energizing the material or the negative element until it comes to the same level as its positive or spirituous element.

We, thus, see that rich or spirit consists of only the positive element, the soul; and iksir consists of two elements, the positive element and the purified material element sublimated into reactive negative energy. Philosophers' Stone is double iksir; it consists of sulphur as a substance, which has a body and a soul (or failing sulphur, its substitute, say lead), and mercury as a substance, likewise with two elements of its own, its body and soul. In all, there are two purified bodies and two souls returned to their respective bodies.

The question now arises that if there are four elements compounded to form a fifth substance, why not another which is double that of the Philo-sophers' Stone. There are only four cosmic elements-heat, cold, dryness, and humidity. The body and soul of sulphur and the body and soul of mercury represent all these four cosmic elements; hence, between themselves, mercury and sulphur fully represent the cosmic force, the highest imaginable.

We have seen that Islamic alchemy was almost non-existent at Damascus. Baghdad produced its first two masters without whom there would perhaps have been no alchemy in the Islamic world. If alchemy at Damascus meant an importation from Alexandria, alchemy at Baghdad was an importation from Khurasan, which in turn was really an importation from China. Now two sub-stances used by Jabir reveal the alchemy which he borrowed and upon which he improved. Ammonium chloride has played a very important role in al-chemical preparations to which Stapleton³⁶ devotes a special monograph.

From Holmyard³⁷ we learn that Jabir's "is one of the earliest Arabic mentions of sal-ammoniac which for a time was imported from inner Asia. Jabir, how-ever, knew how to prepare it from organic matter." Inner Asia is a vague term which makes it difficult for the reader to locate the actual source of the product. However, Stapleton³⁸ explains that the Arabic word, nushadar, for sal-ammoniac, is a loan word-from Chinese. The origin of the product is thereby assured.

Another substance Jabir used is what he named khar sini. Holmyard³⁹ comments, "Muslim writers say that it was used in China to make mirrors. According to Laufer, it was an alloy composed of copper, zinc, and nickel, known as pai-t'ung in Chinese, or white-copper." Khar is salt and a loan-word in Arabic. It cannot be made to express any metal or alloy. An alloy compar-able with pai-t'ung is called bidri in India, consisting of copper, lead, and zinc in the ratios of 1:1:16. To give it a dark surface, sodium sulphate is used. A similar salt may be used for giving a metallic white surface to a different alloy of copper and zinc. In fact, it is easier to give it a metallic shine than to make it dull black. This salt of Chinese origin further points to the source of Jabir's alchemy.

Jabir being a mystic incorporates numerology into his alchemy, a fact discussed by some writers, above all by Stapleton⁴⁰ According to him, the square with the nine cells was found as a motif near Nineveh as early as 4000 B.C. But in China also from at least the seventh century B.C., if not actually from the eleventh century B.C., the nine rooms of the square of the Imperial Temple had assigned to them the first nine numbers arranged in the actual order of these numbers in the simplest Magic Square. Even Jabir's numerology can thus be safely classed as Chinese in origin.

The Emerald Table of Hermes.-Among Jabir's writings, Holmyard first discovered in 1342/1923 the Arabic original of the famous Latin work bearing the above name. It deals with the phenomenon of change in nature, a typical Taoist idea, couched in phrases like those used in the following quotation from it: "That which is above is like that which is below and that

which is below is like that which is above.” Such mystical statements are more deco-rative than illustrative in any other context.

Turba Philosophorum.-A Latin work of this title was very popular with European alchemists. It contained many names which were cited by Jabir in one of his books. On that account Ruska, in 1352/1933, proved that there should be an Arabic original of the Turba and this was confirmed by Stapleton by indicating that a fourth/tenth-century authority, ibn 'Umail (see later) quoted passages from it. Plessner having studied the problem exhaustively says, as quoted by Holmyard,⁴¹ that “it is the three-fold result of the cosmo-logical discussion, the Qur'anic Creator-God, the unified world, the four elements (heat, cold, dryness, and humidity) that gives the discussion its clear direction towards the chief subject of the Turba, alchemy.” From the contents of the two classical works of medieval alchemy, the Turba and the Emerald Table, incorporated in Jabir's writings, the reputation he enjoyed in the Middle Ages can be easily visualized.

Al-Razi (c. 251-313/865-925).-Engaged as he was in preparing elixirs, Jabir was called upon as a consultant to use them when ordinary drugs had proved ineffective. On the contrary, abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Razi, an account of whose philosophy has been given in Volume I (Chapter XXII) of the present work, was a physician by profession. At the age of thirty he went to Baghdad, where the achievements of Jabir must have been narrated almost as miracles. Al-Razi could not but have been inspired by the tradition existing at Baghdad in favour of Jabir's elixirs. At Baghdad he decided to become a physician. As a Muslim alchemist he comes next only to Jabir. His fame in the medical world became so high that he was consulted when a hospital at Baghdad was being extended and ultimately became its chief physician.

Holmyard unwittingly remarks that “like the majority of physicians of medieval times, Razi was led to the study of alchemy.” In fact, alchemy has been nothing else but pharmaceutical chemistry and the physicians of those times had to prepare their own medicines. When Razi decided to become a physician he was probably attracted by the reports about elixirs. In other words, he became an alchemist first and a physician afterwards. Among his writings only one book dealing with alchemy has reached us. It is entitled “The Book of the Secret of Secrets” translated into German by Ruska.⁴² “Stapleton,” says Holmyard⁴³ “places Razi on an intellectual level with Gallileo and Boyle.” There is an illuminating article on al-Razi and alchemy by Heym,⁴⁴ where we read⁴⁵ that “bodies are composed of invisible elements and of empty space that lay between them. These atoms were eternal and possessed a certain size.” The statement reminds us of the modern explanation of the structure of crystals.

Razi accepted Jabir's Sulphur-Mercury theory of the constitution of metals but Heym says that “in the same way the attribute of salinity enters into Razi's scheme.” He comments at the same time that “without doubt it is here [with Razi] that the origin of the popular conceptions of alchemy with its three elements-mercury, salt, and sulphur-can be found which reappears later in Europe and plays such an important part in the history of Western alchemy.” Without mentioning Razi's name, Thompson⁴⁶ writes,

“This Sulphur-Mercury doctrine was accepted by most alchemists until about the twelfth century, when the theory was extended by the addition of a third elementary principle, to which the name “salt” was given.

It was believed to be a basic principle which gave solidity and resistance to fire. Mercury was considered to be the connecting link between the spirit and the body, and the element on which depended blood and life.” The source of the Sulphur-Mercury-Salt theory not mentioned in Thompson is revealed by Redgrove,⁴⁷ who writes that “Isaac Hollandus appears to be the earliest known writer who makes mention (c. 1063/1652) of the famous Sulphur-Mercury-Salt theory.”

Thompson places the theory in the twelfth century; Redgrove, makes it seventeenth century; while Razi, the real author of it, lived in the third/ninth century. An explanation can also be offered as to how an alchemist of Holland came to be credited as the pro-pounder of this modified theory. Heym writes that “in Europe throughout the Middle Ages until the seventeenth century, Razi's works on medicine were still part of the curriculum at Dutch Universities.”

It has been casually indicated that alchemy as a system of thought is based on dualism which characterizes Manichaeism and which was at its best in China. At any rate, al-Razi was so much influenced by dualism that Heym says, “al-Razi was also called a Manichaeon,” though he gives a different explanation for this appellation of his. Where Razi continued the tradition of Jabir, which rightly made an appeal to the judgment of Hopkins, was his love for practical work. Heym states that “even though al-Razi in his alchemy was not strictly empirical in our sense of the word, his great work mentioned above is a book of experiments; it is a book of practical alchemy.... There it can be said that al-Razi is the creator of a new alchemy for he seems to be the first to have transformed theoretical alchemy into a new strictly scientific system. Or, to be more definite, al-Razi transformed alchemy for the first time into a new and strictly scientific system.” To a practising physician and to one who was not a mystic like Jabir, it was practical phase of alchemy, which was inorganic pharmaceutical chemistry of the age that naturally appealed most.

Ibn Sinn (370-428/980-1037.)-Europeans in the Middle Ages had Latinized the names Jabir into Geber and Razi into Rhasis or Rhazes, and these easily passed on as those of their own masters in science and medicine. The greatest medical authority of the Muslim world was abu 'Ali Sina whose name was likewise adapted as Avicenna. Muslim physicians call him the Shaikh, meaning the Prince of Physicians. His career shows nothing revolutionary like that of Razi. He studied medicine in the routine way and became proficient enough to treat patients even by the age of sixteen. Being a genius he was called by one prince after another from Bukhara to Iran and served them even as a vizier. Enjoying Court life in every sense of the word, luxury above all, he could have hardly found time to experiment as a pharmacist. In his classic entitled the “Canon of Medicine,” some seven hundred and fifty drugs are mentioned, but they are all simples or individual drugs, vegetable, animal, and mineral in origin. None of them are of the class of high potency or synthetic inorganic chemicals, or iksirs. In his

writings alchemy is discussed but critically. As a physician he did not use any iksir; it is out of question that he could have believed in a substance changing base metals into gold.

Ibn 'Umail (250-300/864-912).-In a short contribution on the subject such as this we have to be strict in selecting the representatives of Islamic alchemy. In doing so we have dealt with authors whose works were translated into Latin during the Middle Ages. These are, so to say, the masters who served as progenitors of European alchemy. Now, Davis⁴⁸ has tried to prove by the common contents and even the common illustrations of the works on the subject that the alchemy of medieval Europe is almost identical with that of China. To connect European alchemy with that of the Chinese, it becomes necessary to place Islamic alchemy as the real connecting link between the two. It would at once explain a continuity of thought and give a complete sketch of the evolution of alchemy. As depicted at present, there seem to be at least two different systems of alchemy isolated and unconnected. For this reason we wish to mention one more author whose work was translated into Latin and printed in 1032/1622. He is Ibn 'Umail. Stapleton⁴⁹ and his colleagues have edited 'Umail's three Arabic texts and also the Latin translation in 1032/1622, along with copious notes which together make the presentation a model of scholarship. When we compare 'Umail's treatise with an original European work on alchemy, *Splendor Solis*, a classic in itself, by Solomon Trismosin,⁵⁰ composed about 990/1582, we get the impression that the contents and even the style of presentation are the same in both the works. The influence of alchemical literature in Arabic on medieval European writers becomes thereby quite evident.

Our present contribution will serve its purpose better if we indulge in offering in modern phraseology what these alchemists were actually after. It is a problem of science to explain how one form of energy is converted into another, e.g., heat into light. Likewise, a far greater problem, but of the same category, is to explain how matter changes into energy and vice versa. Ibn 'Umail, like a typical alchemist, expresses this as follows: "Turn bodies into non-bodies and non-bodies into bodies." Iksir was the energizing principle which could sublimate matter into energy. This was with regard to technique only. The aim was to energize the human body to make it immortal. When the soul is strengthened and the body merely reconditioned and not thoroughly purified, life is only prolonged. The agent that purifies the human body can purify the body of a base metal as well. With a purified body man mutates into an immortal being capable of flying about in the air, as Davis⁵¹ has clearly emphasized. With the purified body a base metal mutates into an everlasting form which is gold. Alchemical improvement ended in the permanency of form. Thus, the active agent behaved in one and the same way, converting impure body into sublime energy, resulting in man's immortality and in the synthesis of gold. This is what Ibn 'Umail actually meant.

Jildaki (d. 762/1360).-The last authority we propose mentioning here is Jildaki. One of his works, "End of Search," has been the subject of detailed study by Dr. M. Taslimi of Teheran—a study which was accepted as a thesis

for Doctorate by London University in 1954. Unfortunately, the thesis has not yet been published. But Holmyard⁵² summarizes it by saying, “That there is a great deal of similarity between the ideas contained in the quotations of Jabir given in the 'End of Search' and those found in the Latin works of Geber but the correspondence is not sufficiently close to establish a definite affiliation.” Our problem has been to find how, from author to author, alchemy has actually progressed. After al-Razi or at the most after 'Umail we find repetition of what had been said before in different words and with other illustrations. No wonder that Holmyard justly observes that “after Jildaki there is no outstanding figure in Muslim alchemy.”

Alchemy in Other Islamic Countries.-No writer to our knowledge has spoken of alchemy by Muslims outside the schools of Damascus and Baghdad. What about the impact of local schools of alchemy upon Muslims living in India, Burma, Indonesia, and elsewhere? Dr. Maung Htin Aung,⁵³ Vice-Chancellor of Rangoon University, speaks as follows: “Some members (of the Burmese Science) association may (be) also (among those who) consider the Burmese alchemist to be a charlatan and an impostor. But I will plead with you to spare him a sigh. Of all the religious cults that existed in Burma before the advent of Buddhism, alchemy was the noblest. Like modern science, Burmese alchemy aimed at the conquest of nature, and discovering for suffering humanity a way to preserve the human body in its vigour and beauty.” Jabrian alchemy was certainly that and it is impossible to think that any two systems in- corporating such ideas did not fuse.

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Chapter 66: Natural History

A

Inasmuch as the sciences studied in any traditional civilization, that is, one based upon a divine revelation, depend upon the metaphysical and religious bases of that civilization, Muslim sciences have always echoed and reflected the central Islamic doctrine of unity (tauhid). Just as the Islamic religious and moral sciences have begun from and returned to the idea of divine unity, the natural sciences have tried to discover the interrelation of all created beings. It is a general feature of all medieval cosmological sciences¹ that they seek to express the “unicity of all that exists.” Especially in the Muslim natural sciences this goal has been central, and the idea of the unicity of nature and the interrelatedness of all parts of the universe has remained as a complement to and necessary consequence of the oneness of the Creator.

Since the most legitimate and meaningful way of studying a science is with respect to its ultimate aim and from the point of view of those who have cultivated it, we shall best understand the Muslim sciences if we keep in mind that their primary aim, unlike that of the modern natural sciences which are only analytical and quantitative, has been to arrive at the unity lying behind the veil of multiplicity of natural forms by a synthetic and qualitative study of nature.²

This search for unity is clearly manifested in a general science like natural history. As studied by the Muslims, natural history covers a large number of fields and includes not only such subjects as geology, botany, zoology, and anthropology, but also cosmogony and sacred history³ Natural history means essentially the history of nature in the vastest sense of the word, and because Muslims have never separated the spiritual and the mundane, they have usually written natural history within the context of sacred history as is seen so clearly in the universal histories like those of Tabari and Mas'udi. The many allusions in the Qur'an to natural phenomena and the fact that the verses of the sacred book as well as the phenomena of nature are called ayat (signs) signify that in the Islamic perspective there is a fundamental affinity between the divine and natural orders and indicate, therefore, the legitimacy of connecting sacred history with natural history.

The question of the “signs” of nature leads to another basic feature of Muslim natural history. Most Muslim scientists have sought to study nature in order to observe “signs” of the Creator in it, to witness directly the “vestiges” of God in His handiwork.⁴ This is a feature which seems most irritating to some modern scientists who aim to discover only the immediate and the material causes of things. But from the point of view of Islam, no science can be considered legitimate which does not ultimately consider things in reference to their divine origin and which does not take into account the transcendent cause of all finite beings. The marvels and wonders of nature and the moral and spiritual lessons drawn from plant and animal life mentioned by the Muslim natural historians, which many modern historians have ridiculed, have been from the point of view of Islam itself the most beneficial and basic elements of natural history because they have led the reader to a recognition of the divine agent present in nature.

The Islamic perspective is in a way very practical. The sciences which this perspective has nourished and matured are all in a sense useful, that is, they correspond to a basic need of man as envisaged in Islam. They may, like agriculture, medicine, and the sciences of history and society, be useful in the limited sense and fulfil man's physical and social needs. Or, like logic and theology, they may be useful in preventing people from being misled by false reasoning. Or, finally, like the esoteric doctrines of Sufism, they may be useful in quenching the thirst for spiritual realization of the few, who seek God here and now. But Islam has never considered simple curiosity or intellectual pas-sion either a virtue or a basic need of man and for this reason has never legitimized a science based only on curiosity.⁵ The desire of natural historians to learn moral and spiritual lessons from the phenomena of nature is, there-fore, legitimate from the point of view of Islam because it is spiritually meaningful and fulfils a need, whereas finding the weight of a certain leaf of a tree to be so many grams is from this point of view a secondary and un-important inquiry unless it leads to higher knowledge. The modern criticism of Muslim natural historians on this point is, therefore, unjust and based on a misapprehension of their point of view.

There is yet another aspect of Muslim natural history which is difficult to understand from the modern point of view. It is the description of strange animals and plants and magical properties of nature which the medieval authors seem to have recorded so credulously. One finds similar accounts in ancient books like Pliny's *Historia Naturalia*. The creatures described in these texts, which appear strange today, are of several types. One type is of strange animals, especially sea animals, which could certainly have existed but later became very rare or extinct and the description of which, therefore, seems fantastic now for they can no longer be observed. Another type is of animals and plants like the dragon, unicorn, and mandarine, which originally had symbolic meaning only, but the symbolism of which in certain cases was so forgotten that they came to be erroneously described as living creatures.⁶

As to the apparent frequency of "strange" phenomena within nature and the innocence with which medieval authors recorded them, it must be noted that the minds of those people were not as "hardened" as those of the moderns, and that nature in turn then was not taken to be so "dense" and "coagulated" and far separated from its psychic aspect as now.⁷ Therefore, while reading ancient and medieval texts it should be kept in mind that just as the people of those ages, like the people of certain parts of Asia, Africa, and America today, regarded nature from a point of view different from that of modern science, nature also revealed an aspect of itself to them different from that which it reveals to those moderns whose mental constitution is no longer capable of receiving nature's more subtle elements. There is, of course, much misinformation due to narrative and exaggerated style characteristic of the poetic mind of many Muslims. But on the whole most of the contents of Muslim natural history can be understood in terms either of direct observation of physical realities or of symbolism, i. e., the description of the subtle aspects of nature the reality of which is not in any

way affected because the modern quantitative sciences refuse to consider it from their own peculiar point of view.

B

Types of writings which contain material on natural history, particularly on plants and animals that form the centre of our interest in this chapter, are quite diverse. Muslim authors have rarely had a taste for over-specialization so that one finds a discussion of the plant and the animal kingdoms not only in scientific texts but also in literary, historical, philosophical, and theological works. More specially, the sources for natural history include the writings of historians, geographers and travellers, physicians, alchemists, philosophers, encyclopedists, cosmographers, moralists, theologians, and Sufis, and, of course, authors writing specifically on the subject of natural history.

The *Tarikh al- Reful w-al-Muluk*, the universal history of Tabari, the *Kitab al-Buldan*, the book of countries of Ya`qubi, the *Kitab al-Bad' w-al-Tarikh* of Maqdisi, the *Muruj al-Dhahab* and *Kitab al-Tanbih w-al-ishraf* of Mas`udi, the *Tarikh-i Jahan-gusha* of Juwaini, and the geography of abu 'Abd Allah ibn al-Idrisi, all dealing with history and geography, contain valuable sections on natural history. Moreover, they provide, on the one hand, the perspective of time in the light of which Muslims have viewed the life of all creatures, a time stretching between the creation and the final annihilation of the universe on the Last Day, and, on the other, they mention the geographical setting, the seven climates, and other terrestrial conditions which form the matrix of natural history.⁸ They demonstrate, further, how closely the study of plants and animals is bound up with that of the other parts of the universe, both terrestrial and celestial,⁹ and how the history of nature is intrinsically related with the history of man as well as with sacred history.

Another source for the knowledge of natural history comes from the many books of travel which survive from that period of Islamic history when the Muslim world was still more or less united and travelling from one place to another was easy. The accounts of the travels of abu al-Hasan al-Maghribi, ibn Jubair, Biruni, Nasir Khusrau, and ibn Battutah, to mention a few names, provide a wealth of information on plants and animals which these men observed themselves or the accounts of which they heard from others. The interpretation which they gave to their observations varied greatly, depending on their knowledge and experience as travellers. One often finds simple description as in the case of Maghribi, or detailed physical observation and inference based upon it as in the case of Biruni, or philosophical and metaphysical reflection upon natural forms as is found in the writings of Nasir Khusrau.

Besides these land travellers, there were several ocean travellers like Sulaiman the Merchant, who in the third/ninth century journeyed by sea to the coast of China and described many of the wonders of the Indian Ocean and the Chinese coast, and Shihab al-Din ibn Majid, Sulaiman ibn Mahri, and Phi Ra'is, who in the ninth/fifteenth and tenth/sixteenth centuries travelled extensively through the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean and gave a detailed description of these areas. The accounts of sea animals

found in books of natural history and the fables of the sea encountered so often in Arabian Nights, Sindbad Nameh, and other collections of stories, both Arabic and Persian, were originally taken from the accounts of the sea travels of merchants, adventurers, and occasionally military men who roamed the then known extremities of the world.

Another source of natural history, considered from quite another aspect of our subject, is medicine. Muslim medicine, the heir both to the Greek and to the Indian science of medicine, has always had a general theory of living beings; nearly all medical treatises have included in their introduction a general treatment of the constitution (mizdj) of animals, which provides a major source of information for the internal structure of animals and the functioning of their organs ¹⁰Moreover, since much of the treatment of diseases in Muslim medicine is based on plants, medical books have usually contained sections on pharmacology treating of the medical properties of plants. In fact, one may say that, apart from the metaphysical and philosophical study of plants and animals, most of Muslim research in botany and zoology has been in the service of pharmacology, agriculture, medicine, and animal husbandry. The important medical treatises like 'Ali al-Tabari's *Firdaus al-Hikmah* (The Paradise of Wisdom), Muhammad Zakariya Razi's *al-Hdmi* (Continens), and ibn Sina's *Qdnun* (Canon) contain important chapters on zoology and botany.

Alchemy, a subject closely allied to medicine and botany in ancient times and later identified more with the study of the mineral kingdom, has also much to contribute to natural history. In Chinese alchemy we find a close link between the elixir and the plant life; certain modern scholars have even suggested that the Arabic word *kimiya* itself, from which the English word alchemy is derived, comes from the Chinese *Chin-Ia*, meaning the gold-making juice of a plant.¹¹ Whatever the validity of this theory may be, there is no doubt that plant and animal symbolism has a major role to play in alchemy as the writings of so many alchemists like Jabir ibn Hayyan or in the Western world Flamel and Basil Valentine demonstrate. In Muslim alchemy certain authors like Jabir have written specific treatises on plants and animals dealing with their hidden and "occult" qualities¹² Authors writing on the esoteric sciences (*al-'ulum al-gharibah*), like Jabir, Shams al-Din al-Buni, and Jildaki have all written treatises dealing with the psychic and symbolic aspects of both plants and animals and their influence on man's physical, psychic, and spiritual life.

The philosophers have also treated plants and animals in their general consideration of the world of "generation and corruption," to use the terminology of Aristotle. It must be kept in mind that medieval philosophy is based upon the idea of hierarchy and the chain of Being which begins from the One and through the angelic and intellectual orders descends to material manifestations, to rise once again through the mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms to the origin of all things. The philosophers, especially the systematic Peripatetics (*Masha'iyun*), therefore, have always entered into a discussion of plants and animals from the point of view of their place in the great chain of being. We find examples of this type of discussion not only in the Peripatetics like Farabi, ibn Sina, and ibn Rushd but also in the

philosophers of the Illumi-nationist (ishraqi) school like Suhrawardi Maqtul and Mulla Sadra, and in Sunni and hi`ah theologians like al-Qhazali and ghwajah Nasir al-Din al-Tusi. The most detailed and profound scientific account of plants and animals in these philosophical treatises appears in ibn Sina's Shifa' (Sulfcientia), the greatest encyclopedia of philosophy and sciences ever written by one man. Here, ibn Sina deals not only with the place of plants and animals in the cosmic hierarchy but also with their morphology, genesis, and growth. Sections seven and eight of the Shifa' on natural philosophy (Tabi`iyat) are among the most important pages of medieval natural history.

Writings similar to the Shifa in the universality of their subject-matter, but not so strictly systematized, are a number of encyclopedias which have been popular from the very early centuries of Islam. We find an early example of these in the Book of Treasures of Job of Edessa written at the end of the second Islamic century.¹³ More important works are the Rasa'il of the Ikhwan al-Safa containing a wealth of information on plants and also on animals drawn from Indian, Persian, and Greek sources and integrated into a vast metaphysical and philosophical panorama.¹⁴

Also of great importance for natural history is the encyclopedia of Mustaufi Qazwini entitled Nuzhat al-Qulub (Delights of the Heart), written in Persian in the eighth/fourteenth century, which includes sections on plants and animals.¹⁵

Other works of this kind include the Kitab al-Await (Book of Primordial Knowledge) and al-Nuqayat al-Usud al-Muhimmah li 'Ulum Jammah (the encyclopedia of sciences) of 'Abd al--Rahman al-Suyuti, the ninth/fifteenth-century historian, and the Kashf al--Zunun (The Clearing of Doubts) of Haji Khalifah dealing mostly with scholars of all types including scientists of the medieval period. All these encyclopedias contain some sections on plants and animals while some like the Nuzhat al- Qulub and the Rasa'il have large chapters devoted specifically to natural history.

Works on cosmography are in a way similar to encyclopedias, but usually they do not cover as many subjects. Moreover, they are concerned more directly with the creation of the world and its subsequent development as well as with the wonders of nature. This genre of writing became popular especially during the later centuries, the most famous examples being the `Aja'ib al-Makhluqat (The Wonders of Creation) of abu Yahya Zakariya al-Qazwini and the Nuhbat al-Dahr (Choice of the Times) of Shams al-Din al-Dimashqi, both written in the seventh/thirteenth century. These works represent a combination of natural history and mythology and provide an excellent example of the attitude of the Muslim mind, which takes nature to be as displaying at every turn the power and wisdom of the Creator.

To mention all the sources for natural history, one should include the moral, theological, and Sufistic texts in which the life and qualities of plants and animals are studied with the aim of learning a moral and spiritual lesson from them. Such use of natural history, particularly of the life of animals, is very frequent in Oriental literature as for example in the Kalilah wa Dimnah,¹⁶ the Shah

Nameh of Firdausi, the Thousand and One Nights, and the Gulistan of Sa'di. Likewise, in certain theological texts animals are discussed in the light of their moral virtues. The famous Kitab al-Hayawan (Book of Animals) of at-Jaliiz is above all a theological and moral discussion about animals.¹⁷ In Sufi writings also, plants and animals are discussed in the light of their cosmic qualities and in relation to the initiate's (salik's) journey through the cosmos. In these works plants and animals appear primarily in the light of their symbolic aspects which represent realities of a universal order. The Mathnawi of Maulanaa Jalal al-Din Rumi is particularly rich in this respect. There is also the Mantiq at-tair (Conference of the Birds) of Farid al-Din `Attar in which the whole spiritual quest of the Sufi disciple for the divine presence is presented in the language of thirty birds, each symbolizing a particular spiritual type.

Finally, among writings dealing with natural history, there are works devoted almost exclusively to plants and animals,¹⁸ constituting perhaps the most important sources of our knowledge of natural history. We mention here a few of these texts. These works concern agriculture, pharmacology, and botany, all dealing with plants, and zoology and animal husbandry.

In agriculture, the Filahat al-Nabattiyah (Nabataean Agriculture) of ibn Wabshiyah is the most influential of all Muslim works on the subject. Written in the third/ninth century and drawn mostly from Chaldaean and Babylonian sources, the book deals not only with agriculture but also with the esoteric sciences, especially magic and sorcery, and has always been considered to be one of the important books in Arabic on the occult sciences.¹⁹ The agricultural section of the work was systematized and elaborated by ibn `Awwam in the sixth/twelfth century in his Kitab al-Falaltalt (Book of Agriculture) which is perhaps the most important Muslim work on agriculture. Ibn `Awwam describes over five hundred plants and fruit trees mostly from the point of view of their agricultural properties. These two works contain the experience of centuries of agriculture by the people of the Middle East and offer a great deal of descriptive material on the life of plants and animals.

In botany itself, early Arabic poetry has much descriptive material to offer. There were also many early works of a systematic nature most of which have now been lost. One of the most important of these early books was the Kitdb al-Nabdt (The Book of Plants) of abu Hanifah al-Dinawari (the celebrated third/ninth-century historian and scholar) of which only fragments have survived.²⁰ Among later writings in which pharmacology and botany proper are combined, the most famous works are the Kitab al-Adwiyat al-Mujradah (The Book of Simple Drugs) of abu Ja'far al-Ghafiqi²¹ the writings of the seventh/thirteenth-century Andalusian author, ibn al-Baitar, the best of all Muslim botanists,²² and the Hadiqat al-Azhar fi Sharh Maziyat al-'Ushb w-al-'Aqqar (Garden of Flowers in the Explanation of the Character of Herbs and Drugs) of the tenth/sixteenth-century Moroccan author, Qasim al-ahassani.

In zoology, the Manafi' al-Hayawan (The Benefits of Animals), by abu Sa'id Bakhtishu', and the treatises on various wild and domestic animals by Asma'i are among the earliest works on animals. To this early period

belongs also the Kitab al-Hayawan (Book of Animals) of al-Jahiz, the celebrated Mu'tazilite theologian and philologist. Being one of the most famous works of Arabic literature, this book, written in the third/ninth century, combines the account of the life of animals with tales, anecdotes, theological discussions, and frequent quotations from Arabic poetry. The sources of this book include the Qur'an, the Hadith, and Arabic poetry, especially pre-Islamic poetry, which last contains many descriptions of animals that al-Jahiz often quotes to refute Greek authors, personal observations of Aristotle, and information collected from various travellers.

Hayat al-Hayawan (Life of Animals) of Kamal al-Din al-Damiri, written five centuries after al-Jahiz, came to be acknowledged as the most important Muslim work on zoology, especially on animal psychology. It was based to a large extent upon the book of al-Jahiz as well as on the writings of the inter-vening encyclopedists and cosmographers already mentioned. Al-Damiri's is the most comprehensive work of its kind in Arabic literature and has, therefore, been taught and studied extensively since the date of its composition.

C

The philosophical point of view in terms of which plants and animals have been studied by the great majority of the above-mentioned authors is nearly the same and is one derived mostly from the Greeks, particularly from Aristotle. According to this view, the universe is divided into two parts: the heavens and the world of change or generation and corruption; the latter occupies the sublunary region. This region is made of four elements, fire, air, water, and earth,²³ arranged in concentric spheres with fire at the highest and earth at the lowest sphere. These elements combine in various ratios and when a correct proportion is reached, one of the faculties of the world-soul or nature, as some authors have called it, joins them together into a nexus²⁴ and by this wedding, minerals, plants, and animals come into being, each having been brought about by the coming into play of a new faculty of the world-soul or, as some have called it, a new soul.²⁵ All the kingdoms of nature are, therefore, united in having been made of the same four elements and given life by souls or faculties which belong to the same single power called the world-soul or nature running through all the arteries and veins of the universe.

As minerals, plants, and animals lie in the hierarchical order of Being, they also come into existence by means of causes which are dependent upon other orders of creation, although these causes may appear to be hidden.²⁶ The causes are the four already mentioned by Aristotle, namely, the material, the formal, the efficient, and the final. The material cause for plants consist of the four elements; the formal cause, the set of planetary influences symbolizing various cosmic intelligences and forces which are instrumental in sublunary changes; the efficient cause, nature or the world-soul; and the final cause, which last is their use by animals as food.²⁷ The causes for animals are the same except that their final cause is their use by man.²⁸

The plants have the powers of the mineral soul (rise `aqdiyyah) as well as those of the vegetative soul (al-nafs al-nabatiyyah) which is possessed of the

three faculties of feeding (ghadha'iyah), growth (namiyyah), and reproduction (muunlidah).²⁹ The animals in turn possess all the faculties of the mineral and vegetative souls as well as the powers of motion (muharrikah) and comprehension (mudrikah). The animal faculties may be summarized as follows³⁰:

The classification of plants and animals is closely allied with the study of their faculties and is based in certain cases upon the hierarchy of the powers of the soul mentioned above. Muslim authors have followed several principles of classification, some drawn from Aristotle, especially in the case of animals, and some devised by them independently.³¹

The plants have been divided usually into trees, shrubs, grass, and those intermediate between trees and shrubs and shrubs and grass. A most extensive discussion of this division is found in the seventh section of the *Tabl'iyat* of the *Shifa'* where each type is clearly defined; for example, the tree is defined as a plant which stands on its stem or trunk, the shrub the stem of which spreads over the earth, and the grass or herb that which has no stem. Ibn Sina divides plants also according to the climates of regional territories in which they grow, that is, of the desert, of the semi-tropical regions, etc.

In Mustaufi Qazwini's *Nuzhat al-Qulub* a distinction is made between trees of which only the leaves and fruit are renewed yearly and the seed-bearing plants of which everything changes every year except the roots. The trees are divided into those that bear fruit and those that do not³² Furthermore, the seed-bearing plants are divided into the four classes of aliments (aqhdhiyah): (i) those which are daily used for food and create one of the four humours (akhlat)-cold, warm, dry, or moist-that soon becomes a part of the body; (ii) medicines and spices only a little of which can be eaten for medical purposes and which are mostly cold and wet; (iii) perfumes (mashmumat) which have a good odour and are derived mostly from flowers; and (iv) miscellaneous plants in which the qualities of aliments and medicines are present but in a lesser degree.

Most authors dealing with the classification of plants also treat of their morphology. We find an extensive treatment of this kind in the *Shifa'* where ibn Sina divides the parts of plants into primary and secondary organs. The primary or essential organs are root, trunk, branches, bark, wood, and pith or core and the secondary organs, fruit, leaves, and blossoms. In a somewhat different manner, the *Ikhwan al-Safa* divide the plant into nine parts-root, vessel, branch, bough, leaves, colour, fruit, shell, and germ-and hold that only perfect plants possess all the nine of them.

Both ibn Sina and the *Ikhwan* make continuous comparison of plants with the animal world; in the case of the *Ikhwan* as well as in the case of many later authors comparison is also made with the celestial bodies so as to draw attention to the symbolic correspondence existing between various cosmic orders.³³

In their comparisons of plants with animals, Muslim authors were quite aware of the presence of male and female parts of plants which in most cases are united in the same plant but which in higher plants like the palm become differentiated. Ibn Sina draws an analogy between seeds of plants

and eggs of birds each of which has a centre that is the source of life and a periphery which provides food for the new generation. Likewise, he compares the growth of the branch of a tree from the trunk with the birth of a new generation in the animal world.

In the classification and description of plants, one can hardly fail to mention ibn al-Baitar, the greatest of the Muslim botanists. Basing himself on al-Ghafaqi and other previous authors like Dioscorides and Galen and making many observations of his own, he described extremely carefully over 1,400 plants from Andalusia, his homeland, as well as from the rest of the Islamic world. Furthermore, in the *Kitab al-Mughni*, following the example of ibn Sina's *Qanun*, he gave the medical uses of these plants. The influence of ibn al-Baitar was felt everywhere within the Islamic world from Morocco to India. Three centuries later, the Moroccan botanist, al-Ghassani, was to give the best classification of plants found anywhere in Muslim literature, drawing mostly upon the information accumulated by ibn al-Baitar.

In the study of animals, like that of plants, interest evolved around the constitution of plants and their classification and description. The temperament (*mizdj*) of animals including man was studied in the light of the qualities and nature of which the other kingdoms are possessed. Their relation with the bodily humours may diagrammatically be represented as follows.³⁴

The animal constitution has been understood in terms of the equilibrium of the four humours each of which is connected with a particular internal organ. The organs in turn have been studied in the light of their function of preserving internal equilibrium. Likewise, the effect of plants both as food and as medicine upon animals has been considered with respect to their nature, that is, coldness, moisture, etc., which the two kingdoms share in common. This is one example of the underlying unity in terms of which the diversities of nature have been understood.

In the classification of animals, as in that of plants, several principles have been followed, some of them based upon Aristotle's works on animals. Al-Jahiz, in his *Kitab al-Hayawan* divides animals according to how they move. There are, according to him, four classes of animals: those that walk, which include men, quadrupeds, beasts of prey, and insects; those that fly, which include wild birds, hunting birds, and gnats; those that swim; and those that crawl. The *Ikhwan al-Safa* give several types of classification. One type is similar to that of al-Jahiz, and divides animals into those living in the air like birds and insects; those living in the sea, like fish, crabs, frogs, and snails; those living on land like the quadrupeds; and those dwelling in the earth like worms.³⁵ Another classification is according to the perfection of the senses, that is, the lowest animals having only the sense of touch; grubs and others having the senses of touch and taste; marine animals and certain land creatures occupying dark places having the senses of touch, taste, and smell; insects having all the senses except sight; and finally perfect animals having all the five senses.

Many Muslim authors have followed Aristotle in classifying animals according to the manner of their reproduction. We find a simplified version

of it in the Rasa'il of the Ikhwan where animals are divided into three classes: those that are most complete, which conceive their young, suckle them, and foster them; those which do not perform such functions but leap at the female and lay eggs and hatch them; and those which do none of the above things and come into being in putrefaction. More elaborate classifications of the same type are found in the writings of ibn Sina, ibn Rushd, and many later com-mentators of the shifa which contain a detailed discussion of animals.

A rather general definition of animals including the jinn³⁶ and men is given by Qazwini in his 'Aja'ib al-Makhluqat. He divides animals into seven classes. First, there is man who possesses a rational soul (nafs natiqah) and whose body is a miniature model of the universe, a microcosm, each part of which has a spiritual meaning and purpose. For example, he stands erect because of his spiritual aspiration to transcend physical existence, and his head is round because of the perfection of the spherical figure. The second type is of the jinn who are composed of fire and appear in many forms. As Qazwini writes, God created angels from the light of fire, jinn from its blaze, and devils from its smoke. The jinn occupied the earth before the coming of man, that is, the fall of Adam, and had their own religion and prophets; but because of corruption God sent angels to purify the earth, and they were dispersed to remote islands. Satan or Iblis is himself from this species of animals.³⁷

After the jinn come the beasts of burden like the horse, then cattle like cows, then wild beasts, then birds, and finally insects and reptiles. Qazwini has further a section on "strange" animals which are primarily mythological and symbolical and finally a chapter on angels, their forms, functions, and colour.³⁸

In the description of animals, there is no book in Muslim writings that is as complete as Damiri's Haydt al-Hayawan in which he is concerned with the traits, instincts, and psychology of animals and their use, medical and spiritual, for man. Following ibn al-Baitar, by whom he was influenced, he classifies animals alphabetically and then gives their description drawing on Aristotle, the natural historians, theologians, esoteric writers like Shams al-Din al-Bfmi, Arabic poetry, and the Qur'an and the Hadith. In his description he often refers to the symbolic character of animals, like the royal quality of the lion, and, as is characteristic of similar descriptive works of natural history, intertwines the spiritual as well as the physical study of nature.³⁹

In discussing the classification and morphology of plants and animals a comparison may be made between the traditional concept of gradation and the modern notion of evolution. There is no doubt that many Muslim authors like Biruni and the Ikhwan were quite aware of the meaning of fossils and of the fact that during other periods of the history of the earth flora and fauna of a different kind existed on the earth. Moreover, the idea of the gradation of Being or the passage of the One Spirit through all the realms of nature has been expressed by many philosophers and Sufis.⁴⁰

Some thinkers, especially the Masha'i philosophers, envisage, like Aristotle, the gradation of fixed spheres, while the Ishraqi philosophers

connect, like Plato, this gradation of spheres with the conception of archetype belonging to the transcendent “world of ideas.” There is yet another school of thinkers (al-Jahiz, the Ikhwan al-Safa, ibn Miskawaih, Jalal al-Din Rumi, etc.), what-ever their persuasion otherwise, who believe in the continuous self-develop-ment of Being from stage to stage-a position nearest to the present-day theory of evolution.

The tradition of Muslim natural history upon which we have touched briefly has had a past going back to the first Islamic century. During this long history it absorbed much of the Greek and certain of the Indian and Persian sciences and created a science which was in every way superior to what had preceded it, except the biological studies by Aristotle. This tradition was to develop as a properly Muslim science, that is, one based upon the particular genius of the Islamic perspective which is centred upon unity. This tradition is manifest in Muslim natural history in many ways, for example in the vision of the unity of nature and interrelation of all things, which Muslim natural historians asserted so often in affirming the presence of the signs of God in nature and in the study of plants and animals for the purpose of seeing divine wisdom therein.

This tradition, especially that part of it which preceded the seventh/thirteenth century, was to have a profound influence on Latin Christianity and on the formation of the science of natural history in medieval times. It is well known how much seventh/thirteenth-century authors like Albertus Magnus and Roger Bacon were indebted to it and how even during the Re-naissance men like Paracelsus and Agrippa were constrained to draw largely on Muslim sources. In the Orient, this tradition has continued until the present century although in a much weakened form after the ninth/fifteenth century. Scholars in India and Persia as well as those in the Maghrib have continued to study nature as the unified handiwork of God in order to discover His wisdom, to see “His sign upon the horizon” as the Qur'an states, and to learn spiritual lessons from it. Only in following this spirit has this tradition of natural history been able to be an integral aspect of Muslim learning and remain in harmony and conformity with the spiritual and intellectual perspective of Islam.

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Notes

1. By cosmological sciences we mean all sciences dealing with the cosmos, including the natural sciences. The traditional sciences should, properly speaking, be divided into the metaphysical, dealing with God and supracosmic realities, and the cosmological, dealing with beings in the cosmos. See T. Burckhardt, "Nature de la perspective cosmologique," *Etudies Traditionelles*, Vol. XLIX, 1948, pp. 216-19.

2. See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, introduction to the section on "Muslim Sciences" in the *Mentor Foundations of Scientific Thought*. Vol. II, Signet Books, New York, (in press). In his famous *'Aja'ib al-Makhlugat (The Wonders of Creation)*, abu Yahya Zakariya al-Qazwini writes that the presence of divine wisdom in every atom of the universe and in all forms of multiplicity is itself a proof of divine unity, and quotes the famous verse "un g kull-i s_hai'in lahu ayatun ta`dullu 'ala annahu wahidun" (that His sign exists in all things is a proof of His unity).

3. But in this chapter we are concerned only with botany and zoology.

4. The medieval Christian scientists had a similar aim in view when they sought to observe the *vestigio dei* in nature.

5. Our argument does not seek to make knowledge subservient to action. Know-ledge is always superior to action in the Islamic perspective as is indicated by such sayings of the Prophet as "One hour of meditation is better than a thousand works of charity," or "The ink of the scholar is more valuable than the blood of the one who fights the Holy War." What we wish to show is that in Islam a mental activity for its own sake, divorced from the spiritual and religious needs of man on the one hand and from his social needs on the other, has never been encouraged.

6. Many medieval authors, especially certain alchemists, were quite aware of animal and plant symbolism and were conscious of what they were writing.

7. It is difficult for many to conceive of the possibility that nature and its laws may not have always been the same, but there is no logical or scientific reason to prove that they have been uniform. In fact, this uniformity is one of the assumptions upon which the historical aspects of modern science are based. On the other hand, sacred texts and

metaphysical doctrines point to the “cyclic” change both in nature and in man's psychic and mental structure. R. Guenon, *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, Luzac & Co., London, 1953, and F. Schuon, *Les Stations de la Sagesse, La Barque du Soleil*, Paris, 1958, pp. 119ff.

8. For general information regarding these and other authors whose names are to follow, see G. Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science*, Vols. I to III, Williams and Wilkins Co., Baltimore, 1927-48; A. Mieh, *La science arabe et son role dans l'evolution scientifique mondiale*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1939; B. Carra de Vaux, *Les penseurs de l'Islam*, Librairie Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1921-27, Vols. II and IV. Among the texts mentioned above, the *Muruj al-Dkahab (Prairies of Gold)* translated into English by Sprenger, W. H. Allen Co., London, 1841, especially offers useful material on the historical and geographical framework of natural history.

9. Muslim natural historians not only divided the earth into several climates, each with its own flora and fauna in conformity with its particular terrestrial condition, but further assigned each climate to a particular planet which acted as the archetype and “guardian angel” for that particular climate. For an example of this astrological theory, see the *Rasa'il of the Ikhwan al-Safa*, Cairo, 1928, I, pp. 116ff. and P. Duhem, *Le systeme de monde*, Vol. 11, A. Hermann et fils, Paris, 1914, pp. 267ff.

10. Regarding the internal constitution of animals, perhaps no book is so masterly and complete as *ibn Sina's Qanun*. See the introduction to *ibn Sina's A Treatise on the Canon of Medicine, Incorporating a Translation of the First Book*, by O. C. Groner, Luzac & Co., London, 1930; also *ibn Sina, Poeme de la medicine-Urgdza f't-tibb*, Societe d'edition “les Belles Letters,” Paris, 1956.

11. See S. Mahdihassan, “Chemistry, a Product of Chinese Culture,” *Pakistan Journal of Science*, 1957, Vol. IX, No. 1; also his “Alchemy, in Its Proper Setting, with Jinn, Sufi and Suffa, as Loan-words from the Chinese,” *Iqbal*, 1959, Vol. VII, No. 3.

12. See P. Kraus, *Jabir Ibn Hayyan*, 2 Vols., Imprimerie de l'Institut Francais d'Archeologie Orientale, Cairo, 1942-43.

13. A. Mingana, *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences as Taught in Baghdad in c. 817 A. D. or Book of Treasures of Job of Edema*, Cambridge, 1935.

14. An interesting section of the *Rasa'il* dealing with the discussion between man and animals has been translated into English as *Dispute between man and the Animals*, by J. Platts, V. H. Allen Co, London, 1869.

15. See J. Stephenson, “The Zoological Section of the *Nuzhat al-Qulub*,” *Isis*, 1928, Vol. NI, pp. 285-316.

16. This famous book of tales about the animals is the *Sanskrit Panchatantra* translated into Pahlawi and later into Arabic by *ibn Muqaffa'*. Various versions of it in Arabic and Persian like *Anwar-i Suhaili* of *Husain Wa'iz Kashifi* have remained very popular throughout the centuries.

17. This genre of writing has continued to recent times. A work called *Insan ua Haiwan (Men and Animals)* by *Haji Mulls Isma'il Sabziwhri* written during the last century, treating of the moral and spiritual qualities of animals, is still widely used by Persian preachers in their sermons.

18. By “exclusive” we do not mean so strict a limitation of the subject as is found in a modern text-book on botany or zoology. Muslim sciences have been too closely united to permit a complete separation of one subject from another so that in nearly every book dealing with plants and animals there are references to other sciences as well as to philosophy and theology.

19. *Ibn Khaldun* in referring to this book writes that “people learned the sciences of sorcery from the work and developed its manifold branches” (*Muqaddimah*, tr. F. Rosenthal, Pantheon, New York, 1958, Vol. III, p. 156). Many Western historians have refused to believe that *ibn Wahshiyyah* could know anything about the Babylonian civilization and therefore consider his claim to be a forgery.

20. M. Hamidullah, “*Dinawari's Encyclopaedia Botanica (Kitab al-Nabat) in the Light of Fragments in Turkish Libraries*,” *Melange F. Koprulu*, pp. 195-200. See also B. Lewin,

The Book of Plants of Abu Hannah al-Dinawari, A. B. Lunde-guistska Bokhandeln, Upsala, 1953, introduction, in which is discussed the influence of this early work on the later Muslim botanists.

21. This sixth/twelfth-century Maghribi botanist lies given some of the most detailed descriptions of plants found anywhere in Muslim botanical literature.

22. His two most important books are the *Kitab al-Jami' ft al-Adwiyat al-Mufradah* (The Complete Book of Simple Drugs), dealing with the classification of plants, and *Kitab al-Mughni fi al-Adwiyat al-Mufradah* (The Sufficient Book of Simple Drugs), dealing with the medical properties of plants.

23. These are not elements in the modern sense but rather the principles. They are to the sensible substances of nature what the geometric points and lines are to points and lines actually drawn on a piece of paper.

24. The union of the soul, which in Muslim cosmology lies above the cosmic spheres, with a certain combination of the elements in the sublunary region is also considered to be *ad extra* and not as in a compound. As the combination of elements attains more harmony and greater equilibrium, it becomes purer so that the combination naturally attracts the soul to itself. In the minerals the elements are not as perfectly balanced as in animals so that they attract a lower soul unto themselves.

25. Although minerals have been considered by many Muslim authors to be transmutable into one another, plants and animals have been considered to be unchangeable. Each plant, according to the Ikhwan al-Safe, for example, has a chyme (kaimii8) formed from a particular combination of elements which always reproduces the same plant as each animal has a sperm which propagates the same species.

26. "Although plants are obvious and visible creations, the causes of their exist-ence are hidden and veiled from the perception of man. It is what the philosophers call 'natural forces; what the Lari'ah calls 'the angels and troops of Allah appointed for the nurturing of plants, the generation of animals and the composition of minerals,' and what we call 'partial spirits.'" Ikhwan al-Safe, *Rasa'il*, II, p. 130; also R. Levy, *The Social Structure of Islam*, Cambridge, 1957, p. 490.

27. We are following here the teaching of the Ikhwan, but these views are shared by most Muslim authors writing on this subject.

28. The Ikhwan have a most interesting section in their *Rasa'il* in which the animals dispute with man over his right to use them for his own ends. They refute all of man's claims of superiority by demonstrating their own spiritual and bodily qualities and virtues. It is only by realizing that there are among men a few sages and saints who in their spiritual realization fulfil the purpose of the whole of crea-tion that animals finally agree to submit to man. See the *Dispute between Man and the Animals*

29. The most thorough discussion of the vegetative and animal souls appears in the sixth part of the *Tabi'iyat of the Shila'* of ibn Sina where he deals in detail with all the faculties of plants and animals and their functions. Cf. J. Bakos *La psychologie d'Avicenne*, Editions de l'Academia Tschechoslovaque des Sciences, Prague, 1956. Ibn Sina and also most other authors writing on the faculties of the vegetative and animal souls derived many of their ideas from the *De Anima* of Aristotle. The Ikhwan, however, enumerate the faculties somewhat differently: as attraction, fixation, digestion, repulsion, nutrition, formation, and growth.

30. For a summary of ibn Sind's views on the souls and their faculties, see E. Gilson, "Les sources greco-arabes de l'augustinisme avicennant," *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Litteraire du Moyen Age*, Vol. IV, 1929, pp. 5-149.

31. In general, the Muslims depended more upon the Greeks in the study of ani-mals than that of plants. Whereas Aristotle's works on animals were studied extensively, the botany of Theophrastus was nearly ignored. Muslim authors had already created a science of plants drawing their terminology mostly from the Qur'an and Arabic poetry before the first important Greek text on plants, that is, the famous work of Dioscorides, was translated into Arabic.

32. See the botanical section of the *Nuzhat al-Qulub*, irazi, Bombay, 1311/1893, pp. 87 ff., where sixty-nine fruit-bearing trees and sixty-six fruitless ones are describ-ed in alphabetical order. Qazwini, like many other Muslim natural historians, gives not only the

description of a tree, the quality of its fruit and its wood and the location where it is found, but also its medical uses, its nature, that is, whether hot or cold, dry or moist, and its appearance in literature and sacred books. As for seed-bearing plants, Qazwini follows a similar procedure, describing altogether 280 kinds, each class arranged alphabetically.

33. The famous scientist and compiler, Biruni gives a good example of this astrological correspondence. He writes: "The various organs of a plant are distributed to different planets. Thus the stem of a tree is appropriated to the Sun; the roots to Saturn, the thorns, twigs, and barks to Mars; the flowers to Venus; the fruit to Jupiter; the leaves to the Moon; and the seed to Mercury" (Elements of Astrology, tr. R. Ramsay Wright, Luzac & Co., London, 1934, p. 236).

The correspondence between plants or animals and the planets is not to show astral "influences" as is done in contemporary astrology which is only a residue of the real subject known by the same name in medieval times. It is to show rather that the physical world is a symbol of the intelligible world, that there is an analogy between the archetypes symbolized by the planets and their earthly shadows which are the physical forms.

34. This is a schematization of ideas presented in ibn Sina's medical poem as well as in the Qanun to which we have already referred. Pathology based on the doctrine of humours is a heritage from the Hippocratic tradition of medicine as systematized by Galen.

35. Mustaufi Qazwini in the Nuzhat al-Qulub follows a somewhat similar procedure dividing animals into those living on land, in sea, and in air, and sub-dividing each of the classes according to its more specific features

36. They may be said to symbolize psychic forces.

37. A similar account is to be found in the Rasa'il of the Ikhwan

38. We see in Qazwini's writings a good example of the blending of the natural and supernatural order to which we have already referred. His description of the colours and forms of animals and angels served as an inspiration for later Persian miniaturists

39. Damiri also interrupts his discussion of animals at several places in order to write about Islamic history, prayers based on the divine names, the science of jafar (symbolism of letters), and other subjects.

40. A beautiful expression of this doctrine appears in the Mathnawi of Maulana Jalal al-Din Rami. See Book IV, verses 3637 to 3647 of the text of Mathnawi ed. R. A. Nicholson, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1929.

Chapter 67: Medicine

A - Introductory

It was not until nearly a hundred years after the conquest and consolidation of their empire that the Muslims turned their minds towards creative pursuits. It is remarkable in this context to find how quickly they directed their activities to productive ploughshares and prolific pens. Soon the Muslim Empire extended from Andalusia to the Indus, and its various parts vied with one another in producing intellectual giants in every branch of art and science. Nearly half a century ago Fonahn¹ enumerated no less than one hundred and fifty-one works on Persian medicine alone during this period and Max Meyerhof² says that “the treasure-houses of Islamic science are just beginning to be opened. In Constantinople alone there are more than eighty mosque libraries containing tens of thousands of manuscripts.

In Cairo, Damascus, Mosul, Baghdad, as well as in Persia and India there are other collections.... Even the catalogue of the Escorial Library in Spain which contains a part of the wisdom of Western Islam is not yet complete.” The subject of Muslim medicine is so vast that in the following pages only a bird's-eye view of it can be given.

For a proper appraisal of the Muslim contribution to medical science it is important to ascertain its position in Arabia at the birth of Islam. The country, as everyone knows, was at the time torn by internecine wars and family feuds. Ignorance was abysmal and education non-existent. The city surgeon (jarrah) cauterized wounds, sustained in war, or applied obscure ointments as healing balms, and the village apothecary administered simples for simple ailments. People generally were living under most unhygienic conditions. Such was the dismal medical background when the Prophet of Islam started preaching. Early in his career he said that knowledge was of two kinds, that of religions and that of the bodies (i.e., of medicine). Inspired by the Qur'anic injunction,³ he preached moderation in all walks of life. Realizing the miserable lack of medical facilities, he advocated prophylactic measures as is evident from the following.

Sa'di,⁴ the great Persian poet, philosopher, and traveller, relates the story of an eminent Persian physician who was sent by the Persian king to the Prophet to minister to his own as well as to his followers' needs. For a long time after the physician's arrival in Mecca no one called on him or sought his treatment. Driven by ennui he approached the Holy Prophet and complained of his forced odium. The Prophet's reply was: “These people do not eat until they are hungry nor drink until thirsty and then cease eating while a desire for food still remains.” That must be the reason for their perfect health, said the physician. But medicine was not the Prophet's mission. He had dedicated himself to the moral and spiritual uplift of humanity at large. Winwood Reade⁵ says, “Muhammad's career is the best example that can be given of the influence of the individual in human history. That single man created the glory of his nation and spread his language over half the earth.

The words which he preached to jeering crowds are now being studied by scholars in London, Paris and Berlin ... and in obscure villages situated by obscure streams.” According to Browne,⁶ the Prophet's biggest miracle was

that he brought unity among the fighting Arabs with the result that they adopted one goal; and soon the Arabs as one nation became rulers of half of the civilized world. Care of the sick and wounded was but one facet of the Prophet's humanitarian personality. As pointed out by Wasti, the so-called Tibb-i Nabawi is not, therefore, to be confused with any medical treatise as such.⁷ The book is not taught in any recognized medical Yunani institution (as remarked by Browne), nor is it credited by Hakims and scholars of Arabian medicine.

The only known physician in Prophet's time was al-Harith ibn Kaladah, an Arab Jew who later embraced Islam. He had studied medicine at Jundi--Shapar school of medicine in Persia. He used to be consulted at the time of dire necessity, and he mainly advised moderation. Among the surgeons of this time the last known was ibn abi Ramsiah of the tribe of Tamim.

The Arabs adopted their medical theory chiefly from the Hippocratic and Galenic systems, though there were plentiful translations from Syriac, Persian, Indian, and Egyptian authors as well. The Hippocratic system, as is well known, is based on the humoral theory, i. e., the four humours of the body: blood, phlegm, cholera, and melancholy. This system served the Arabs and Persians for five hundred years as it had served the Greeks and Romans for a thousand years before that. The Persians carried the humoral theory a step further by identifying the four humours with the four elements of nature, i. e., air, fire, earth, and water. Browne⁸ however, defines Arabic medicine as one which has been presented in Arabic and considers that a large portion of it has been derived from the Greeks, though contributions have also been made by Indians, Persians, and scholars of other countries. He further states that during the period between the downfall of the Greeks and the Renaissance of Europe, the Arabs kept up the medical traditions and subsequently Europe was benefited by their treasure of learning.

Wasti⁹ remarks that the Arabs not only translated the old medical books but also prepared their abstracts, commented upon them, enriched them, and improved upon them. In his support Cumston¹⁰ states, "It has been regarded for a long time that the Arabs slavishly copied the Greeks, rather they stood in the way of progress in medicine. But this is a wrong conception, because when the Arabs came into the field, Greek medicine had completely vanished and everywhere charm and magic were practised. At that moment the Arabs not only saved the Greek knowledge from destruction but popularized Greek medicine by commenting and improving on it and subsequently created a taste for scientific learning in Europe. Even if the Arabs had only restricted their activities to collecting and translating Greek medical books into Arabic and had transmitted this knowledge to Europe again, it would not have been a mean achievement. But they stepped further and wrote original books."

While the Greeks surpassed all other peoples in their achievements in antiquity, the Muslims did so in the Middle Ages. Their works written in Arabic were, in Sarton's words, "the most original, the most valuable and the most pregnant." Arabic became a most progressive and scientific language from the middle of the second/eighth to the end of eleventh/fifteenth century. In the contemporary West there were hardly any

names as glorious as those of 'Ali al-Tabari, Ahmad al-Tabari, al-Razi (L. Rhazes), 'Ali ibn al.'Abbas (L. Haly), ibn al-Baitar, abu al-Qasim al-Zahrawi (L. Abulcasis), and ibn Sina (L. Avicenna). In fact, this was precisely the period which is known as the dark age of the West.¹¹

The spread of Greek traditions was stifled in the West by the extreme Roman utilitarianism which was followed by the theological expediency and later by a theological domination which seemed for a long time to destroy every hope of genuine scientific revival. After the birth of Islam, the Arabs on the other hand were fired with the zeal for knowledge. The following sayings of the Prophet exhibit the importance he attached to the seeking of knowledge:¹²

1. Seek ye knowledge from the cradle to the grave.
2. To seek knowledge is the duty of every Muslim man and woman.
3. Seek ye knowledge even if it be in China.
4. The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr.
5. He who leaveth his home in search of knowledge walketh in the path of God.
6. He dieth not who seeketh knowledge.

In medicine the Arabs translated Hippocrates, Galen, and Dioscorides. Cumston says that the Arabs extracted the most important material from Greek writings and placed it in relief, leaving aside everything that was super-fluous.¹³ One has merely to read Galen and afterwards ibn Sina in order to see the difference. The former was obscure, the latter perfectly clear; order and method reign in the latter, which in the former we seek in vain.

Khairallah, in evaluating the contribution of Muslims to medical sciences, enumerates the reasons which militated against their work. For instance, most of the Arabic books and manuscripts have been lost; a bare one per cent has been salvaged so far. The Mongol hordes carried death and destruction in their wake, and the fanaticism of European conquerors in the south-west of Europe destroyed the largest part of Arabic writings. Fortunately, most of the classics have survived. Many of the books that have come down to us have been distorted and mutilated either by bad copying or by spurious editions. "Repeated copying from copies and alterations and additions inserted by various teachers helped in their distortion so that one rarely sees two copies of the same book that read alike."¹⁴

The manuscripts that have come down to us have not been studied with care and diligence. They require a thorough study before we can arrive at a fair estimate of Muslim contribution to medicine. The Latin translations from Arabic were often careless. Many of the Latin translators claimed as their own what they had only translated. Campbell believes that "the Latin translations failed to convey the true con-ception of Arabian medicine to the medieval scholastics"¹⁵; and Browne says that "it must be said once for all that no just idea of Arabian medicine can be derived from the imperfect renderings of standard Arabic books."¹⁶

B - Collection And Translation Of Books

Before proceeding to examine the contribution of different Muslim scholars to medicine, a word might here be put in about the translators who laid the cornerstone of the edifice built by the subsequent authors.

The task of translating from foreign languages, e. g., Greek, Syriac, Pahlawi, etc., into Arabic was more difficult than would appear at first sight; but for the princely patronage and philanthropists' munificence, it might well have been impossible. In this connection the names of al-Mansur, Harnn al-Rashid, and al-Mamun in Baghdad, of Zangi in Damascus, of Sahib al-Din in Cairo and of 'Abd al-Rabman III and Hakam in Andalusia illuminate the pages of history. Their generosity and fair-mindedness made no distinction between Christians, Jews, Sabaeans, and Muslims. Their boundless bounty and complete lack of bigotry gravitated men of letters to their capitals.

But the immensity of the task of translation can be judged from the fact that the vehicle of the new Muslim civilization was the language which had never been used before for any scientific purpose and yet it was in this very language that every bit of knowledge had to be translated for proper assimilation. This necessitated the creation of a philosophic and scientific terminology which did not exist. The collection of manuscripts was carried on by the Muslims at that time with fervid zeal in every corner of the civilized world. Arab conquerors sometimes made the acquisition of manuscripts a part of the peace treaty. Thus, when Harun al-Ras_hid conquered 'Ammilriyah and Ankara, he collected all the manuscripts he could find,¹⁷ and al-Mamfin sent a special mission to the Byzantine Emperor to collect manuscripts.¹⁸ On several occasions books were sent and accepted as appeasing presents.¹⁹

After collecting all available manuscripts from Greece, Asia Minor, Egypt, Syria, Persia, and India, the Caliphs, princes, and rich men appointed able men to study, edit, and translate the manuscripts, but before translation, several copies were thoroughly studied, compared, and edited. Ibn al-Ash'ath divided each of Galen's books into sentences, paragraphs, chapters, and divisions-a thing that was never done before-in order to facilitate the acquisition and understanding of Galen's teaching.²⁰

According to Khairallah, two methods of translation were adopted. The first was that of ibn al-Batriq and 'Abd al-Masih Na'im al-Himsi who under-took literal translation. This was obviously unsatisfactory as there were many words which had no Arabic equivalent; besides the whole construction and syntax were different in the different languages. The second method was that of Hunain ibn Ishaq and al-Jauhari, who would read the whole sentence or paragraph, get its meaning or sense, and then put it in proper Arabic.²¹ According to al-Nadim's Fihrist, Khalid ibn Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah was the first to encourage Greek philosophers in Egypt to translate works on medicine. He died in the beginning of the second/eighth century.

The early translations were made by Christians, Jews, and Sabaeans under the patronage of Muslim rulers. The first man to translate a medical work into Arabic was Masarjawaih (b. 61/680), a Jewish physician from Basrah. But the credit of being the greatest translator of medical works goes

to a renowned Nestorian physician of remarkable scholarship, Hunain ibn Ishaq, who died in Baghdad in about 264/877. He was assisted by Ishaq, his son, Hubais_h al-A'sam, his nephew, Yabya ibn 'Adi, 'Isa ibn Yabya, and others. Other translators of repute were abu Yabya ibn al-Batriq (d. a.191/806), Thabit ibn Qurrah (d. 289/901), a Christian from Ba'labakk.

The work of these translators and a host of others covered many subjects besides medicine. This great intellectual activity in due course brought its results, for gradually every large city developed a library which contained reading-rooms, quarters for translators, and meeting-places for scientific discussions. Such were Bait al-Hikmah (House of Wisdom) in Baghdad and Dar al-Hikmah (Hall of Wisdom) in Cairo. The library at Cordova had over a quarter of a million volumes. The library of Nuh ibn Mansur, ruler of Bukhara, contained books on all subjects together with their indices. Ibn al-Matron, the famous phy-sician of Salah al-Din, had a library of 10,000 manuscripts. Ibn al-Tilmidh, author of the best known pharmacopoeia of his time, had 20,000 manuscripts in his library. The well-known medical historian al-Qifti had a library worth more than 50,000 dinars. Every large hospital possessed a library of its own.²²

C - Hospitals

The hospital at Jundi-Shapdr in Persia was the first and foremost to in-fluence the Arabs. Al-Harith ibn Kaladah, a relation of the Prophet practising during his time, was an alumnus of this hospital. Small hospitals for the blind and lepers were built during the Umayyad period, but they were little more than segregation camps. Proper hospitals, however, came to be built during the 'Abbasid period. Those at Baghdad, Damascus, and Cairo were the best known at the time. Besides the hospitals for the lepers and the blind, there were asylums for the insane and ambulatory clinics to minister to the needs of far-flung places where there were no physicians. Prisons were not forgotten and physicians looked after prisoners since they were considered to be a State charge. First-aid stations were established near mosques where large numbers congregated. The army had its physicians, and field hospitals attached to the armies were carried on camel-back. Female nurses used to serve in the field hospitals.

General hospitals were established not only at Baghdad, Damascus, and Cairo, but also at Mecca, Jerusalem, Aleppo, Harran, and several cities in Andalusia. Patients in such hospitals were admitted on the sole criterion of their condition without prejudice to colour, creed, sex, or social status. Al-Mansiir Qalawun, the ruler of Egypt, dedicated the hospital erected by him for the benefit of “the king and the subject, the prince and the soldier, the great and the small, the freeman and the slave, for men and for women.”²³ Foun-dations (auqaf) were created to support the hospitals and were administered by high dignitaries with the utmost care. Issa writes in his *Histoire des bimaristans al'epoque Islamique*:²⁴ “The furniture, bedding, and clothing at the Mansiiri hospital at Cairo, rivalled in their luxury and perfection those that adorned the palaces of the Caliphs and the princes. The nourishment consisted of flesh of fowl and mutton, and each patient was given the quantity of food that the state of his health permitted.”

Sometimes musicians and singers were brought to hospitals to entertain the sick and convalescing patients.

The conditions prevailing in hospitals in those days can best be described in the words of Usaibi`ah²⁵ “Abu al-Hakam, the dean of the Nari hospital of Damascus, used to make the rounds of patients every morning, find out their condition and consider their affairs. With him were his assistants and orderlies and all that he wrote down as orders for the patients regarding medicine and diet were carried out on time and without delay.

After finishing his rounds he used to go to the citadel and treat whoever was sick among the nobility and government officials. He would then come back to the hospital and sit in the large auditorium, read his books, and prepare his lectures. Nur al-Din had installed in the hospital a large library with a collection of books and manuscripts placed in book-cases in the main hall. Several physicians and students used to come and sit at his feet. He taught the students and discussed medical topics and interesting cases with the physicians.” Usaibi`ah continues: “Patients were examined in an outside hall and those who did not need hospital treatment were given prescriptions which were prepared at the hospital pharmacy.

Those who needed hospital treatment were registered and admitted. They were given a bath and made to put on clean hospital clothes, their own clothes being taken away and stored. They were kept at the hospital until completely cured. On their discharge from the hospital they were given a suit of clothes and some money to defray immediate and necessary expenses outside the hospital until they were able to work.” Usaibi'ah proceeds: “A pharmacy under a competent and registered pharmacist was attached to every large hospital. It was well stocked with syrups, all sorts of drugs and drug preparations, fancy porcelain, and rarities. Pharmacists were licensed and registered and in each large town an inspector kept constant watch over pharmaceutical preparations and chemical products.

“Attached to large hospitals were medical schools where students gathered in the main hall and reviewed their studies and copied medical manuscripts which were compared and corrected by the teachers. The teachers lectured to them from the books of Galen and later from al-Razi and al-Majflsi until the advent of ibn Sina's Canon which eclipsed them all.”²⁶

Several books were written on hospitals and hospital management. Unfortunately, most of them have been lost. Al-Razi wrote a book on Sif at al-Bimaristan and Zahid al-`Ulama' wrote Kitdb al-Bimaristan. The first regular hospital was built by Haran al-Rashid in Baghdad in 170/786, but a bigger and more up-to-date hospital was founded in 368-36/978-979 by `Adud al-Daulah. In Damascus there was the al-Nuri, built by Nur al-Din Zangi; one was built by Salah al-Din at Jerusalem and another at Cairo. Qalawun built the al-Mansuri at Cairo. Besides these there were hospitals in Mecca, Medina, Harran, and other notable towns. In Andalusia there were over fifty hospitals in Cordova alone, besides those at Granada, Seville, and Toledo.

It will be seen from a brief description of the conditions obtaining at the time in hospitals that in many respects they were better than those prevailing

even today. The Arabs may not have been the first to build hospitals but they were certainly the first to improve upon them. They started to give regular instruction in hospitals and to have out-patient departments. They were the first to have regular inspection over the administration and finances of the hospitals, the first to examine and license physicians, and the first to have regular pharmacies attached to hospitals. They went further by examining and licensing a physician for the practice of a speciality. The interest of Muslims in building hospitals was not limited to the Arab period; it continued throughout the ages.

D - Physicians And Surgeons

Let us now come to the most important part of our narrative, namely, the great authors and practitioners of the medical science whose theory and practice enlightened the path of scientific research and whose fame is indelibly imprinted on the pages of history. Here again, needless to say, we shall have to confine ourselves to the selection of a few of these geniuses.

The first great name amongst Muslim physicians is that of abu Bakr Zaka-riya al-Razi. He was a prolific writer and is said to have written no less than 117 books dealing with all the different branches of medicine. Of al-Razi's works, al-Hawi (Continens), running into twenty volumes, is undoubtedly the most important. This work was translated into Latin by Faraj bin Salim in 678/1279 and printed at Brescia nearly two centuries later. Al-Razi did not actually write this book; he left notes on his original observations, extracts from other peoples' works, and clinical notes of his medical experience. All this material was sold by his sister to ibn al-'Amid, the vizier of Rukn al-Daulah, who got the drafts of those rough notes properly arranged in book-form by the noted physicians of his time including al-Razi's own pupils. 'Ali ibn 'Abbas (Haly Abbas) was of the view that during his time only two copies of the book were in existence. He regarded al-Hawi the repository of medical knowledge concerning hygiene, diseases, their symptoms, and treatment with medicine and diet, al-Razi's sources being Hippocrates, Galen, and all the physicians that preceded him. E. G. Browne translated some of its clinical notes into English and Max Meyerhof published the text and translation of some more.

Relatively speaking, the most important of al-Razi's minor treatises is Kitab al-Judari w-al-Haabah. It deals with smallpox and measles. It was translated into Greek and Latin and printed in several European countries. This work is particularly significant because it is the first to give a clear description of smallpox as a disease and also the first to give a symptomatic distinction between smallpox and measles. Al-Razi was the first to include in the pharma-copoeia the white-lead ointment, later on known in the Middle Ages in Europe as Album Rhases, and the first to use mercury as a purgative. He was also the first to use "animal gut as a ligature for surgical operations and was the first to recognize the reaction of the pupil to light."²⁷

The next great physician was 'Ali ibn al-'Abbas al-Majfisi known in the West as HalyAbbas. Either he himself or his father was originally a Zoroastrian; hence the name al-Majfisi. He was a Persian by birth and flourished during the period of 'Adud al-Daulah and died in 384/994. After al-Razi and ibn Sina his is the greatest name in the Caliphate of Baghdad.

His most famous work is the medical encyclopedia called the Kitab al-Maliki (Liber Regius). Sarton regards this work as more systematic and concise than al-Razi's al-Hawi and more practical than ibn Sind's Qanun by which it was superseded. Half of the book deals with the theory and half with the practice of medicine.

Most important parts of it relate to dietetics and materia medica. He made some original clinical observations and was the first to give close description of the capillary circulation long before Harvey. He says that during relaxation (diastole) the pulsating vessels (arteries) that are near the heart draw air and thinned blood from the heart by suction, because during their contraction (systole) the arteries empty themselves of blood and air, so that when they relax, air and blood is sucked to them to fill them. Those that are near the skin draw air from outside. Those that are in the middle, between the heart and the skin, have the property of drawing the thinnest blood from the non-pulsating vessels (veins).'

That is because the veins have pores communicating with the arteries. The proof of this is that if an artery is cut, all the blood that is in the vein is emptied through the cut. He was also the first to give proof of the motion of the womb during parturition and to show that child does not come out by itself, but it is the movement of the womb that pushes it out.²⁸ In al-Qifti's words al-Maliki was the splendid work and the noble treasure of the theory and practice of medicine admirably arranged. It had been one of the most popular texts on medicine until it was replaced by ibn Sind's Qanun.

Al-Majusi gives a remarkably well-worded advice to the physicians. He says that the patient should be treated if possible with diet, not with drugs. If he can be treated with simple drugs he should not be administered compound ones, nor indeed strange or unknown ones. With regard to the relation between the physician, the patient, and the disease, he says that they are three. If the patient co-operates with the physician they would become two against one and would be able to beat the disease, but if he does not listen to the physician nor follow his direction, he and the disease would be two against one, i.e., the physician; one can hardly beat two. He states that all physicians agree that the preservation of health is more important than the cure of disease and quotes Hippocrates that the curing force of disease is nature itself.²⁹

Al-Majusi's surgical technique is no less remarkable. His lucid description of the surgical operation for the removal of tubercular glands is a fine specimen of his art. He says: "Cut the skin longitudinally down to the gland. Retract the skin with hooks. Dissect slowly and gently, freeing the gland from the tissues around it. Take care not to cut any vessel or puncture any nerve. If a vessel is cut, ligate it, lest the haemorrhage obscure the field and prevent you from carrying out a proper and thorough operation." After removal of the gland, put your finger in to feel for any small glands that might be left. If there are any, remove them too. When all the glands are removed, suture the incision.

Al-Majusi recognized the gravity of cancer and says that medicines do not help in curing the disease. He advises removal of the whole area affected by cutting at a distance from the growth so that none of its roots are left. He

advises that after removal blood should not be stopped from running but that the surgeon should see that the diseased blood is drained off.³⁰

The famous physician who succeeded 'Ali ibn 'Abbas in the Muslim world was abu al-Qasim Khalaf ibn 'Abbas al-Zahrawi (d. 404/1013). He took his name from his birthplace al-Zahra', the famous suburb of Cordova. He was Court physician to the Caliph al-Hakam II. His fame chiefly rests on surgery for he was admittedly the greatest of all Muslim surgeons. He wrote one of the biggest medical encyclopedias, al-Tasrif, in thirty sections. One of the topics discussed in this work is the preparation of medicines by sublimation and distillation. It's most important part is, however, surgical wherein he "introduces and emphasizes such new ideas as cauterization of wounds, crushing stone inside the bladder, and the necessity of vivisection and dis-section."³¹ He also deals with obstetrics and the surgery of eyes, ears, and teeth and gives a description of surgical instruments.

The surgical part of al-Tasrif was translated into Latin by Gerard of Cremona, and various editions of it were published at Venice, Basel, and Oxford from the ninth/fifteenth to the twelfth/eighteenth century. For centuries it was used as a text-book in surgery in the universities of Europe such as Salerno, Montpellier, and other schools of medicine.³²

The man who is described by one Orientalist as "the most famous scientist of Islam and one of the most famous of all races, places and times" and by the other "the greatest man that this world has ever seen"³³ is abu 'Ali al-Husain ibn'Abd Allah ibn Sina. William Harvey puts him in the same category as Aristotle and Cicero. At the age of eighteen he cured the Samanid Amir of Bukhara and as a result was appointed Court physician and given per-mission to use the royal library.

Ibn Sina's greatest medical work was the Qanun (Canon) used as "medical Bible for a longer period than any other book,"³⁴ an encyclopedic work of about a million words covering the entire medical knowledge, ancient as well as contemporary. In many ways he resembled Galen. Before ibn Sina's Qanun, the best work on medicine was al-Razi's al-Hawi but, according to all competent authorities, that work was superseded by the Qanun. Ibn Sina analysed for the first time pathological and psychological phenomena and made acute observations about the differential diagnosis of medastinitis and pleurisy, infectious nature of phthisis, skin diseases, sexual ailments and perversions (including love-sickness), diseases of the nervous system, and transmission of diseases through water, food, and soil.

Ibn Sina is the first to write a careful description of meningitis and differentiate between primary and secondary meningismus. He also gives a full description of the various types of diseases which cause jaundice. He differentiates between facial paralysis of central origin and that of local origin. He describes apoplexy as being caused by plethora. He gives a clear description of the symptoms of pleurisy and its differential diagnosis. The signs of pleurisy, he says, are: continuous fever; stitch in the side which many times does not appear except after a deep breath; shortness of breath; see-saw pulse; and cough, usually dry in the beginning, but may be wet and with expectoration from the start. He says: In as much as pleurisy might resemble hepatitis and pneumonia, we must differentiate between them. The

difference between pleurisy and hepatitis is that in the latter the pulse is wavy, the pain is dull and heavy and not pricking, the face is yellowish, the urine thick and the stools “livery.” There is heaviness in the right side over the liver region and no stitch in the side. The difference between pleurisy and pneumonia is that in the latter the pulse is wavy, the shortness of breath more marked, the breath hotter besides other symptoms?³⁵

The Qanun is divided into five major sections. Briefly stated, the contents of these sections are as follows. The first section deals with definitions, elements, humours, temperaments, and spirits; anatomy (bones, muscles, nerves, arteries, and veins); diseases, their causes and symptoms; hygiene and prophylaxis; and general treatment. The second section deals with simples, in an alphabetical order. The third section gives a description of diseases from the head downwards, including the anatomy of the organs-head, brain, nerves, eyes, ears, nose and mouth; tongue, teeth, lips and gums; throat, chest, and lungs; heart, breast, oesophagus and stomach, liver, and gall-bladder; spleen, intestines, male and female genital organs-and general diseases. The fourth section deals with fever, prognosis and crisis; swellings and ulcers, surgery, fractures and dislocations, poisons, skin diseases, and cosmetics. The fifth section deals with compound drugs and therapeutics.

Several commentaries on the Qanun are extant, the best known being by ibn Nafis under the title al-Mu'jiz. In the Asian part of the Muslim world, the Qanun held the sway, but in Spain it was played down by ibn Zuhr and ibn Rushd. It was translated into Latin by Gerard of Cremona³⁶

Another unique book by ibn Sina is the *Urjuzah fi al-Tibb*, which is a medical poem that sums up the medical knowledge of the time. It was meant to facilitate the study of medicine. With their wonderfully tenacious memories the Arabs were able to memorize it. Its first part deals with the theory of medicine and hygiene, and the second with treatment. Another of his well-known books is *al-Shifa'*. Usaibi'ah credits him with having written nineteen medical and ninety non-medical books³⁷

The illustrious “Shaikh,” by which name ibn Sina is generally known throughout the Muslim world, died at Hamdin in 428/1037. He reigned supreme for more than six centuries not only in the Muslim world but also in Christendom. His theories, as propounded in the Qanun, are still widely respected in the Orient by Hakims and form the cornerstone of the history of medical teaching in the Occident.

In Egypt flourished ibn al-Haitham (Alhazen of the West), “the greatest Muslim physicist and one of the greatest students of optics of all times.”³⁸ He was born in Basrah but migrated to Egypt in the time of Caliph al-Hakim. “He was also an astronomer, mathematician, physician, and he wrote commentaries on Galen and Aristotle.” He corrected the Greek misconception about the nature of vision and taught, for the first time, that light does not “exude” from the eye but enters it. He also taught that the retina was the seat of vision and that the impressions made upon it were conveyed along the optic nerve to the brain forming visual images on symmetrical portions of both retinas.

In Spain there was a most famous family of physicians whose contribution to medicine was no less remarkable. Translations from the works of this family are found in the libraries of Western universities even to the present day. We are referring to the ibn Zuhr family that drew its name from their ancestor Zuhr. The first great physician of the family was abu Marwan 'Abd al-Malik (d. 470/1077-78). He was renowned as a diagnostician. His son abu al-'Ala' (d. 525/1130-31) was even a greater physician than him. He was first attached to the Court of Seville but was later raised to the rank of a vizier when that kingdom was conquered by Yusuf ibn Tashifin. He wrote several medical works, viz., Kitab al-Khwass (Book of Properties), Kitab al-Adwiyah al-Mufradah (Book of Simple Drugs), Kitab al-Idah (Book of Explanation), Mujarrabat (Personally Tested Prescriptions), Kitdb Hall Sukiek al-Rdzi 'ala Kutub Jalinus (Resolution of al-Razi's Doubts regarding Galen's Works), Kitab al-Nukdt al-Tibbiyyah (Book on Principles of Medicine). The last mentioned work among other things specially deals with climatological and anthropological conditions prevailing in Marrakush and with deontological guidance. He also wrote a treatise in refutation of certain points in ibn Sina's work on simple drugs.

The most illustrious member of this family was abu Marwan 'Abd al-Malik ibn abi al-'Ala' Zuhr (d. 556-557/1160-1161) known in Latin works as Avenzor. His supremacy as a physician was acknowledged not only in the Muslim world but also in Christendom. His medical theory had strong empirical tendencies. He may justly be said to be the greatest clinician of Islam after al-Razi. Only three of his at least six works are now extant.

1. Kitab al-Taisir fi al-Muddwat w-al-Tadbir (Book of Simplification on Therapeutics and Diet), written at the request of ibn Rushd, is the most important of them all. It deals elaborately with pathology and therapeutics and at the end gives a comprehensive collection of recipes. In this work ibn Zuhr makes acute clinical observations about mediastinal tumours, intestinal phthisis, pericarditis, scabies, pharyngeal paralysis, and inflammation of the middle ear.

2. Kitab al-Aqhdhiyah (Book on Eatables).

3. Kitab al-Iqtisad dealing with therapeutics, psychotherapy, and hygiene.

Ibn Zuhr is said to be the first physician to have described the itch-mite. He advocated artificial feeding through the gullet and rectum.

Ibn Zuhr's son abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Malik was a successful physician and his daughter and the daughter of that daughter were capable mid-wives. Medicine went into the family down to six generations. Ibn Zuhr's influence through Hebrew and Latin translations upon Western medicine lasted till the end of the eleventh/seventeenth century. The translations of Taisir like ibn Rushd's Kulliyat saw several editions.

The great Spanish philosopher ibn Rushd (Averroes) was a contemporary of ibn Zuhr. His greatness as a physician was eclipsed only by his greatness as a philosopher. His most important medical work Kitab al-Kulliydt fi al-Tibb (Latin Colliget) was a veritable encyclopedia of medicine. As mentioned above, the Latin translation of this work went through several editions in Europe. It was also translated twice in Hebrew. It had seven parts (books) dealing with anatomy, physiology, pathology, diagnostics, materia

medica, hygiene, and therapeutics. He was the first to discover that no person can get smallpox more than once. He is also said to be the first to understand the working of the retina.

Ibn Tufail, ibn Rushd's predecessor in philosophy, was also a renowned physician; he wrote two books on medicine, neither of which is extant.

Another name worth mentioning in connection with the development of medicine in the Muslim West is that of ibn Baitar. He was born in Malaga and travelled all over Spain, North Africa, Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor. He was a botanist rather than a pharmacologist. Most of his work was done in Egypt where he was appointed chief inspector of pharmacies. His two chief works, *al-Mughni fi al-Adwiyah al-Mufradah* and *al-Jami' li Mufradat al-Adwiyah w-al-Aqhdiyah*, embodied all the Greek and Arabic literature on botany and materia medica as well as the author's own wide experience and research. He describes more than one thousand and four hundred drugs from the vegetable, animal, and mineral kingdoms, three hundred of which are novelties. The book is arranged alphabetically. Usaibi`ah³⁹ describes the thoroughness of his teacher's methods; Usaibi`ah was not only al-Baitar's pupil but also herborized with him in Syria. His book *al-Adwiyah al-Mufradah* was translated into Latin, *Simplicibus*, printed in twenty-six editions during and after the ninth/fifteenth century, and was used in the formation of the first London pharmacopoeia issued by the College of Physicians during the reign of James I. Some parts of its Latin version were printed as late as 1172/1758 at Cremona.⁴⁰

`Ala' al-Din abu al-Hasan `Ali ibn abi al-Hazm, better known as ibn al-Nafis, flourished during the first half of the seventh/thirteenth century. Born in Damascus, he spent most of his life in Cairo where he practised medicine and became dean of the Mansuri hospital. He wrote several books, the most important being *al-Mu'jiz* and *Sharh Tashrih al-Qanun*. In describing the anatomy of the pulmonary vessels, ibn Nafis also described for the first time the pulmonary circulation and declared three centuries before Servetus that blood is aerated in the lungs. In his description of the anatomy of the heart he gives the nearest description in those times of the coronary circulation. He says that ibn Sinn's statement that the blood which is in the right side of the heart is to nourish the heart is not true at all, because the nourishment of the heart is from the blood that goes into the vessels that permeate the body of the heart.⁴¹

In this' section we have briefly touched upon the works of the great authors who have contributed so largely to the development of the various branches of the medical science. There are a host of others who played an equally important role. They live in history. We have also been unable to deal with the veterinary science, especially hippology, of which the Arabs were so fond and in which they displayed so great a mastery.

Arab biblio-biographers, like al-Qifti, ibn abi Usaibi`ah, and ibn Khallikan, have done a magnificent job in collecting the works of various authors, but it is a fact that scores and scores of manuscripts are still lying unexplored in libraries and mosques, palaces and museums and are awaiting careful examination; these may open fresh sluice-gates of knowledge regarding Muslim contribution to medical and other sciences. The need for

more texts and more translations, more especially of those works which were composed after the Mongol hordes broke in upon Persia and Baghdad, is vey great indeed for the present renaissance of the Muslim world. The task is not easy; in fact, it is superhuman.

E - Influence

Muslim physicians, more particularly some of those who lived in Spain, contributed largely to the Renaissance in Europe. But in the matter of Muslim influence upon European medicine no names are greater than those of al-Razi and ibn Sina. Within a century and a half of the death of ibn Sina his works reached Spain and Sicily where they began to be translated. It was from these centres of learning that Arab science spread to the other parts of Europe. The spread of Arab science in the West was mainly due to the fact that the Eastern Caliphs were in constant touch with the rulers of Europe.

Harun al-Rashid sent an ambassador to the Court of the Roman Emperor. It is even said that Charlemagne came to Palestine incognito in order to consult the Arab physicians about his health. The medical scholars of the universities of Western Europe like Montpellier and Bologna particularly specialized in Arab learning and were responsible for the propagation of the teachings of al-Razi and ibn Sina. Montpellier had an immense library.

All the translations made by Constantine the African and Gerard of Cremona were housed in this library at a time when the Paris University library hardly contained more than a score of medical works. From these centres the teachings of the Arabs spread to all medical schools in Europe. From the sixth/twelfth to the eleventh/seventeenth century al-Razi and ibn Sina were considered superior even to Hippocrates and Galen.⁴²

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39. Usaibi` ah, Vol. II, p. 133; cf. Khairallah, *op. cit.*, p. 154, also P. K. Hitti, *op. cit.*, p. 576.
40. M. M. Sharif, *Muslim Thought, Its Origin and Achievements*, p. 63.
41. Cf. Khairallah, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-30.
42. C. Elgood, *op. cit.*, pp. 205ff.

**A History of Muslim Philosophy Volume 2, Book 6:
Influence of Muslim Thought**

Chapter 68: Influence of Muslim Thought on the West

Western Thinkers On Islam In General

Muslim philosophy influenced Western thought in several ways. It

- (1) initiated in the West the humanistic movement;
- (2) introduced the historical sciences and
- (3) the scientific method;
- (4) helped the Western scholastics in harmonizing philosophy with faith;
- (5) stimulated Western mysticism;
- (6) laid the foundations of Italian Renaissance and, to a degree, molded the modern European thought down to the time of Immanuel Kant, in certain directions even later.¹

1. The Muslims were the first humanists and they gave a humanist bend to the Western mind. They were the first to reveal to the West that outside the prevailing Catholic Church it was not all darkness and barbarism but untold wealth of knowledge. They captured and further developed all the intellectual achievements of Greece and transmitted them to the West before any direct contact between the Greek intellect and the Western mind was established.

It was through their influence that ancient and contemporary men outside the Christian West also began to be looked upon as human and even possessed of higher civilizations.²

Nothing can prove their own humanism better than the fact that within eight years of the establishment of Baghdad they were in possession of the greater parts of the works of Aristotle (including the spurious Mineralogy, Mechanics, and Theology, the last of which was actually an abridged paraphrases of the last three books of Plotinus' Enneads), some of the works of Plato and the Neo-Platonists, the important works of Hippocrates, Galen, Euclid, Ptolemy, and subsequent writers and commentators, and several Per-sian and Indian writings on mathematics, astronomy, and ethics.

All this was taking place in the Muslim world when Greek thought was almost un-known in the West. While in the East "al-Rashid and al-Maman were delving into Greek and Persian philosophy their contemporaries in the West, Charle-magne and his lords, were reportedly dabbling in the art of writing their names."³

Humanism spread to Western Europe through contact between the Muslims and the non-Muslims in Spain; to Italy by a similar contact in Sicily; and throughout Europe by the impress of a higher culture received by the Crusaders in Syria and Asia Minor.

Since Islam originated from monotheism, it conceived idolatry as its real enemy and acted with the purpose of subduing it first in the Arab lands and then throughout the world. The Qur'an accepts Christianity and the Jewish religion as divine religions; therefore, it did not instigate any struggle against them. However, Christianity first conceived of Islam as a competitor and, therefore, attacked it directly.

The Arian and Nestorian sects of Christianity had a positive outlook on Islam since they were monotheistic in outlook. As compared to Islam the doctrine of the Trinity and the Monophysite mode of thinking retained the

residues of idolatry. The places of ancient Jupiter, Apollo, Venus were given to God, Jesus, and Mary. Since iconoclasm of Islam was against their frame of mind, the Christians started a religious struggle against Islam.

The following verses from the Qur'an indicate that in Islam there is no obligatory doctrination but religious tolerance: *Lakum din-u-kum wa li-ya din* (you have your religion and I have mine); *la ikra'ha fi al-din* (religion is not to be forced on anyone). On the other hand, the idea of proselytism is dominant in Christianity. Christianity indoctrinates that it is the only way to spread and spreading is its main duty.

In spite of this principle in Christianity, the spread of Islam in all domains from the first Hijrah on not by wars but sporadically was much more rapid. Barthold sees the reason for this in the capacity of the Arabic language and in the Islamic custom of not collecting taxes and duties from defeated nations if they accepted Islam.⁴

Although these sociological factors play a significant role, the ease in accepting a natural and rational religion and its consistency with human idealism are additional reasons for the spread of Islam.

The Christian reaction to Islam in the East and West took different forms. Those who criticized the new religion vehemently and did not wish to accept it as a religion at all come first. John of Damascus in his book *De Haeresibus*, considered Islam to be heresy. The first Byzantine writer who referred to the Prophet was Theophanes the Confessor (202/817). He also attacked Islam as severely as John. Guilbert de Nogent's (518/1124) criticism was based on the fact that wine and pork were tabooed in Islam.

As an exception, Hilderbert de Lemans for the first time, in the Middle Ages in the West, stated that Muhammad was a real Prophet and he did produce miracles. Guillaume de Tripolis' work on Islam was written with extreme hate and was most offensive. Its descriptions were far from reality, being a mixture of mythical elements with history.⁵

Peter de Cluny (d. 551/1156) translated the Qur'an into Latin for the first time. His work set the foundation for St. Thomas' attacks on Islam. Two helpers named Peter de Toledo and Peter Poitier participated in Peter Cluny's attempt at translating the Qur'an. The Latin translation of an epistle on the discussion over the principles of Christianity and Islam between 'Abd al-Masill al-Kindi who was the Caliph Mamun's secretary and Yahya al-Dimashgi was added at the end of this version of the Qur'an.

This epistle indicates how tolerant the 'Abbasid Caliph was about re-religious discussions even in the third/ninth century. When this work was translated into Latin in the West in the sixth/twelfth century, very bitter and offensive expressions were used for Islam in the preface to the Latin translation. Casanova and Muir critically investigated whether or not this epistle really belonged to the third/ninth century.⁶

Massignon has looked for a relationship between the epistle of this al-Kindi-who has no relation to the philosopher al-Kindi-and that of Yahya ibn 'Adi in which the Trinity is defended.⁷ The problem has not yet been solved.

St. Thomas referred to Islam and to its theologians. He is the first to give his criticisms a philosophical orientation. Raymond Lull (633-716/ 1235-1316) studied Arabic at Majorca and Muslim philosophy in Bugia near

Tunisia. It was he who suggested to the then Pope to start the moral crusade against Islam.

This suggestion which was met at first with complete disinter-estedness was later accepted by the Popes after Raymond's long endeavor to that effect; it became indeed the foundation of the Missionary movement. Raymond translated Asma' al-Husna (The Beautiful Names of God) of Muhyi al-Din ibn 'Arabi. He adapted several passages from Futahat al-Makkiyyah (The Revelations of Mecca).

He wrote an epistle relating to the discussions of a Christian, a Muslim, and a Jew. Although he wrote many epistles and books about Sufistic theology and philosophy, yet he essentially preserved his enmity against Islam.

At the same time Constantine Porphyrogenitus was referring to the Pro-phet with respect and politeness in a passage of his work on history. Ibn Sab'in, an adherent of tasawwu/, in qa book entitled al-Ajwibah 'an al-As'ila al-Saaliyyah (Answers to Sicilian Questions) answered the questions asked on Aristotle's philosophy by the King of Naples and Emperor of Germany.

Yet the moral tension between the two worlds did not ease. Dante in the section on "Inferno" of the Divine Comedy describes the Prophet in the eighth sphere of the underworld in a most atrocious manner, although, as Asin Palacios in his studies of his Divine Comedy demonstrates, he owed to ibn 'Arabi his entire topic, his manner of synthesis, and his idea of moral ascension. Since all the publications in the West against Islam for centuries after the Middle Ages had continuously been written by adaptations, trans-lations, imitations, copying without any mention of source, they were no more than expressions of a complex against Islam as a faith.

It was at first rather difficult for the Western philosophers to get rid of religious, imperialistic, and racial prejudices and look at Islam and the East with understanding. In spite of the fact that Renaissance became possible only through profiting by Muslim works on philosophy, and science and their trans-lations and interpretations thereof for centuries, the attitude of some Western people who were hostile to the very civilization that created these works indi-cates how deep-rooted the religious, political, and racial prejudices were.

From the eleventh/seventeenth century on, Western philosophers gradually got rid of their prejudices against Islam. Cultural and intellectual influences from the Muslim East for centuries were instrumental in bringing about that change.

From the twelfth/eighteenth century on, the attitude of Western free thinkers took a truly humanistic turn. The libre penseurs took a stand against negative and malicious publications. Edward Sale, in the preface he wrote for his translation of the Qur'an in 1147/1734, likens the Prophet to Theseus and Pompillus.

He praises his philosophy, his political views, and his realism. Boulainvilliers in his book, The Life of the Prophet, going one step further tried to prove that Islam is superior to Christianity in rationalism, realism, and its consistency with the nature of man. Savory in the preface he wrote for his translation of the Qur'an completed in 1198/1783, describes

Muhammad as “one of the marvelous persons who appear in the world from time to time.” Due to its importance, Savory's translation was again published ten years ago.⁸

This sympathetic attitude towards Islam evoked a strong reaction in Voltaire. He made extremely offensive and insolent statements about Islam and the Prophet of Islam. Kant praised Islam in his *La Religion dans les limites de la simple raison*. “Islam,” he said, “distinguishes itself with pride and courage, for it propagates faith not by miracles but by conquests, and it is founded on courageous asceticism.

This important phenomenon is due to the founder who propagated the conception of the unity of God. The nobility of a people who were freed from idolatry has been an important factor in bringing about this result. The spirit of Islam is indicated not in conformity without will but in voluntary adherence to the will of God, and this, above all, is a noble quality of a high order.”⁹

In his *Mahomet*, Goethe, with great sympathy and enthusiasm, describes the power of the new faith exalted against idolatry, and the sincere adherence of its believers to it. This work of Goethe is in the nature of an answer to Voltaire's work bearing the same name.¹⁰ Goethe read the Qur'an in 1184/ 1770 and annotated certain verses which were later referred to in Megerlin's German version of the Qur'an.

By this time the Prophet of Islam was well known in Germany as the founder of a “Natural Religion,” and a protagonist of intellectual advance. Megerlin's translation of the Qur'an (1186/1772) and that of Boysen's (1187/1773) were published in Germany in addition to Turpin's work, *The Life of Muhammad*, in which Muhammad is described as a “great Prophet,” “powerful mind,” “true believer,” and “the founder of natural religion.”

Auguste Comte, in his “*Law of Three Stages of Social Development*,” considers Islam to be the most advanced phase in his so-called theological stage and regards it even as preparatory to the metaphysical stage.¹¹ Oswald Spengler compares Islam with the Protestant faith. In Muhammad he sees the puritan personality of a Luther or a Calvin. According to him, Islam calls for the same kind and quantity of “Illumination” and “Intellect” as was insisted on by Confucius, Buddha, Lessing, and Voltaire.¹²

Although Nietzsche severely attacks Christianity in all his works, particularly in his *Antichrist*¹³ he did not include Islam in his adverse judgment. On the other hand, he mentioned it with praise. Eduard von Hartmann, in his book entitled *The Religion of the Future*, remarks that, although Hebrew religion is an advance over paganism, the conception of monopolistic and rationalist God rather hinders its progress; and he concludes that monotheism finds its most powerful way of expression in Islam.¹⁴

Carlyle designates Islam as a very superior faith and thinks that Muhammad is the hero of the prophets.¹⁵ He refutes the false accusation made against the Prophet and states that “this kind of opinion is shame on us.”

Thus, Orientalism, interest in which began during the seventh/thirteenth century merely through religious fanaticism and with the aim at establishing

missionary organization, gradually became a subject of methodical research.¹⁶

After the twelfth/eighteenth century those who possessed intensive knowledge of Arabic began to occupy themselves with the study of Islamic sciences, principles of Islam, and the history of Muslim nations. The number of those who got rid of their prejudices and subjective views and who knew how to take truth seriously increased as scientific research became more extensive.

Dieterici, Sebillot, Quartermere, de Slane, Pococke, Sylvestre de Sacy, Fleisher, Wustefeld, Horten, de Boer, Masson Oursel, Goichon, L. Gardet, Massignon, Rene Guenon, M. Asin Palacios, E. G. Browne, Nicholson, Sir Hamilton Gibb are among them. We may add that Orientalism today is oriented towards understanding Islam and other Eastern religions by serious scholarship, although there still are some who carry on their studies for imperial or missionary purposes.¹⁷

In the above account an attempt has been made to show how, starting with thorough antagonism to Islam, the West gradually moved towards a humanis-tic approach to Islamic culture. But this humanistic attitude was directed not only towards Islam but also to other Eastern religions.

August Wilhelm Schlegel, from 1234/1818 to the time of his death, occupied himself with Oriental studies. From 1239/1823 to 1246/1830 he published the journal I ndische Bibliothek in three volumes and also edited the Bhagvad Gita and the Ramayana. These efforts mark the beginning of Sanskrit scholarship in Germany.

How the Jews and Christians in the West followed in the footsteps of Muslim thinkers in their recapture of Greek learning, and how they captured Muslim thought itself will be shown later.

2. A large part of the Qur'an refers to the past and takes the mind of the reader to the rise and fall of nations in the days gone by. In fact, it lays special emphasis on history as well as on nature as sources of knowledge. This Qur'anic attitude to history developed a true historical sense amongst the Muslims who in due course produced next to Herodotus world's first great historians like al-Tabari, al-Mas`udi, ibn Hayyan, ibn Khaldiin, and others.

One of them, al-Biruni, laid down for the first time in history the principles of historical criticism. The Muslims were, thus, the first after Herodotus to develop the historical sense and to lay open the various historical sciences before the West.

3. The greatest boon that the Muslim East bestowed upon the West was the scientific or inductive method of inquiry. Although most of the Muslim thinkers used the inductive method in their scientific investigation in different fields, the two of them who particularly expounded this method were Muhammad bin Zakariya al-Razi and ibn Haitham. Ibn Hazm, writing on the scope of logic, emphasized sense-perception as a source of knowledge. Later ibn Taimiyyah in his refutation of Aristotelian logic showed that induction was the only form of reliable inference. Suhrawardi Maqtul too offered a systematic refutation of Greek logic.

It was the method of observation and experiment which led al-Birimi to the discovery of reaction time, al-Kindi to the formula that sensation is a response of the organism proportionate to the stimulus, and ibn Haitham to his findings in optics.¹⁸

The influence of Muslim method of observation and experiment on the West has been recognized by Briffault in the following terms. "Numerous Jews followed William of Normandy to England and enjoyed his protection ... establishing a school of science at Oxford; it was under their successors at that Oxford school that Roger Bacon learned Arabic and Arabic science.

Neither Roger Bacon nor his later namesake has any title to be credited with having introduced the experimental method. Roger Bacon was no more than one of the apostles of Muslim science and method to Christian Europe; and he never wearied of declaring that knowledge of Arabic and Arabic science was for his contemporaries the only way to true knowledge.

Discussions as to who was the originator of the experimental method...are part of the colossal misrepresentation of the origins of European civilization. The experimental method of the Arabs was by Bacon's time widespread and eagerly cultivated throughout Europe; it had been proclaimed by Adelhard of Bath, by Alexander of Neckam, by Vincent of Beauvais, by Arnold of Villeneuve, by Bernard Silvestris, who entitles his manual *Experimentarius*, by Thomas of Cantimpre, by Albertus Magnus."¹⁹

Science is the most momentous contribution of Arab civilization to the modern world, but its fruits were slow in ripening. Not until long after Moorish culture had sunk back into darkness did the giant to which it had given birth rise in its might. It was not science only which brought Europe back to life. Other and manifold influences from the civilization of Islam communicated its original glow to European life.²⁰

"Although there is not a single aspect of European growth in which the decisive influence of Islamic culture is not traceable, nowhere is it so clear and momentous as in the genesis of that power which constitutes the paramount distinctive force of the modern world, and the supreme source of its victory natural science and the scientific spirit."²¹

"The debt of our science to that of the Arabs does not consist in startling discoveries of revolutionary theories; science owes a great deal more to Arab culture, it owes its existence. The ancient world was, as we saw, pre-scientific. The astronomy and mathematics of the Greeks were a foreign importation never thoroughly acclimatized in Greek culture. The Greeks systematized, generalized, and theorized, but the patient ways of investigation, the accumulation of positive knowledge, the minute methods of science, detailed and prolonged observation and experimental inquiry were altogether alien to the Greek temperament.

Only in Hellenistic Alexandria was any approach to scientific work conducted in the ancient classical world. What we call science arose in Europe as a result of a new spirit of inquiry, of new methods of investigation, of the methods of experiment, observation, and measurement, of the development of mathematics in a form unknown to the Greeks. That

spirit and those methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs.²²

4. In the West, even up to the ninth/fifteenth century, philosophy and science were regarded as antagonistic to religion. Hence the teachings of Aristotelianism and Averroism were banned, Bruno was burnt, Kepler was persecuted, and Galileo was forced to retract. Muslim thinkers, following Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus, harmonized faith with reason and made possible, for themselves and for Europe, unhampered development of both.

5. European mysticism was also much influenced by the mysticism of Islam. Arthur J4 Arberry observes in *The History of Sufism* that “it is impossible, for example, to read the poems of the Spanish mystic St. John of the Cross without concluding that his entire process of thinking and imagi-native apparatus owed much to those Muslim mystics who had also been natives of Spain.” In the beginning of the eighth/fourteenth century, Raymond Lull wrote on mysticism.

He was an accomplished scholar and founder of school of Oriental languages at Rome. His mystical writings are “beyond question” influenced by Sufi speculation. These are only a few examples of what Arberry regards as “unquestionably a general process.” In later times the influence of Persian mystical poetry on so great a genius as Goethe is too well known to be mentioned.

Miguel Asin Palacios, in his study of the influence of the Muslim conception of the next world on the *Divine Comedy*, investigated ibn 'Arabi's influence on Dante. The relationship between ascension to heaven in Dante's book and the Ascension (mi'raj) in Islam had already caught the attention of some scholars. Ozanam, a thirteenth/nineteenth-century French scholar, in his great study of Dante, mocked at those who thought that the work of the poet from Toscana was “a lonely monument of the Middle Ages” and he considered the poet an erudite who was considerably well informed and who made use of all past experiences.

According to him, “two roads, one going north and the other south, lead Dante to the old Eastern sources. He maintained that the relationship between the Saracens and Europe was very close at that time.” Dante had read the Latin versions of the works of many Muslim philosophers and adherents of tasawwuf, at least those of ibn Sina and all-Ghazali.

Following Ozanam and d'Ancona, Charles Labitte, in the preface he wrote for Brizeux's translation of the *Divine Comedy* into French, maintained that the theme must have been borrowed from the world of Islam. At that time, Modi de Goeje and some other authors held similar views. More recently Edgard Blochet published two studies on this problem: *Etudes sur l'mistoire Religieuse d' l'islam*, 1307/1889, and *Les Sources de la Divine Comedie*, 1319/ 1901.

In these studies he defended the view that the idea of ascending to heaven came directly from Islam. According to Blochet, in a verse in the *Qur'an*, there is a reference to mi'raj (ascension to heaven) though no details are given. Many of these details are the products of public imagination in Islam and they must have been due to more ancient sources. He finds the roots especially in Mazdaism.

He relates the mi'rdj description in the Mazdakite poet Artay Viraf's literary work based on Zend-Avesta. Barthelemy translated Artay Virrif's Namak and in his foreword demonstrated similarities between the Divine Comedy and the Mazdakite book. Bloebet claimed that the idea of ascending to heaven in Dante was transmitted both from the Persian and Islamized sources.

Asin Palacios' conclusions are more precise. Not being satisfied with mere comparison between the texts, he studied the sources of Dante and thereby demonstrated how these depended on Islamic works, i. e., on their translations. By emphasizing the special significance of ibn 'Arabi's "Revelations", he solved the problem with great success. Ibn Masarrah al-Jibali from Mercier and Cordova who specialized in ibn 'Arabi's doctrine of tasawwuf, demonstrated the influence of this doctrine on Western scholastics, in general, on the priests of the Franciscan denomination, and on Dante who was till then known as a follower of Aristotle and of St. Thomas in particular.

Palacios' book is composed of four parts: (1) comparison of the Divine Comedy with lailat al-isra and mi'rdj; (2) comparison of the Divine Comedy with Muslim descriptions of the next world ('uqba); (3) Islamic elements in the Christian legends before Dante; (4) studies and determination of the transmission of Islamic works to Christian Europe in general. In the first part, Asin studies the development of the idea of mi'raj in Islam. He traces this with reference to different texts and footnotes and compares each separately with the Divine Comedy. Many phantasies were created in the public imagi-nation about a verse in the Qur'an on mi'raj.²³

All these got incorporated in the descriptions of descent to hell at night (isra) and the Ascension to heaven (mi'raj). The theme of mi'raj, which public imagination worked on, is used as a mystic symbol by ibn 'Arabi. Several adherents of tasawwuf, e.g., Junaid Baghdadi, Bayazid Bistami, etc. had used the moral symbol before. In ibn 'Arabi's work it received a more significant place. Later, in the books entitled Mi'raj Nameh and in Nizami Ganjeh's Makbzan al-Asrar the event of Ascension to heaven is related in great detail. Muslim miniature artists illustrated these works with many drawings about this spiritual journey.

The construction of Dante's hell is the same as that of ibn 'Arabi's hell. Both are large funnel-shaped edifices composed of several storeys. Spiral staircases lead down to these storeys, in each of which a different class of sinners is housed. The weight of the sinners increases as they descend further down. Each floor is sub-divided into various parts. The first floor in ibn 'Arabi's hell is an ocean of fire and corresponds to what Dante called Dite, on the shores of which there are various fire tombs.

Thieves, murderers, plunderers, despots, and the gluttons are tortured in the same chambers. The punishment of thirst given to the makers of false money in the Divine Comedy is given to drunkards in the Mi'raj Nameh.

The Prophet meets the angel placed at his service by God at the gate of heaven. He takes the Prophet to a group of nymphs in heaven surrounding the sweetheart of the poet Im u' al-Qais. In the same way, when Dante enters heaven, he meets a fair maiden Matilda who politely and elegantly answers

his questions. The construction of heaven is the same in both images and is inspired by Ptolemy's *Almagest*.

In accordance with the degree of their virtues, the happy souls are located in one of the nine heavens. Each of the nine heavens corresponds to a sign of the zodiac. Both works have a moral structure, assigning virtues to each storey or to each sphere in heaven. Islamic books entitled *Mi'raj Nameh* give the same amount of details and demonstrate the same kind of skill in the description of the heavenly world as is to be found in the *Divine Comedy*.

The eyes of both travelers are dazzled by getting near God as they enter a new phase of the *mi'raj*. When their respective guide Gabriel or Beatrice informs them of His grace, their eyes open. Gabriel and Beatrice not only serve them as guides, but also pray for them at each post. As finally Beatrice leaves her place to St. Bernard when Dante enters heaven, so does Gabriel leave the Prophet when he advances to the presence of God guided by a ray of light.

In studying Dante's Muslim sources, one has to compare the *Divine Comedy* with the Arab poet abu al-'Ala' al-Ma'arri's *Risalat al-Ghufran*. There is a close re-relationship between the religious ecstasy, charitable pity, and irony, orienting the feelings of the author of this book and the religious ecstasy, criticism, satire, and irony of Dante.

Since the topic of *mi'raj* is basic to the Arab poet's book too, in the absence of any historical documents to supplement a comparison of this kind, its study is still useful. In heaven, Dante meets his contemporaries Piccardo from Florence and Gunizza from Padua. According to abu al-'Ala', the Prophet meets Hamdum from Aleppo and Taufiq from Baghdad. Both have similar endings. As the Prophet in one case and Dante in the other enter the presence of God, they see Him as a strong ocean of Light.

The Muslim adherents of *tasawwuf*, with the exception of ibn Masarraah of Spain (270-319/883-931) and ibn 'Arabi, were not as well known in Europe as were the "philosophers." Ibn Masarraah was the founder of the illuministic or Ishraqi School. From Spain the ideas of this school were transmitted to the Augustinian scholastics such as Duns Scotus, Roger Bacon, and Raymond Lull.²⁴

Yet Goethe wrote the *Der west-ostliche Diwan* (Compendium of Poems on the East) during his mature years after reading Hafiz. Fitzgerald translated Kh-ayyam's *Rubd'iyat* into English and it was received with great interest. Nicholson published in several volumes English translation of Rumi's *Mathnawi* in addition to the selections from his *Diwan* and also from the *Mathnawi*.

Massignou has devoted his entire life to the study of Halaj Mansflr. The number of studies on the works of Harith Mulaasibi has increased recently. Aldous Huxley makes frequent references to Rumi in his *Perennial Philosophy*, and thinkers like Rene Guenon have been directly inspired by *tasawwuf*.²⁵

In our own times Corbin, by publishing the greater part of Suhrawardi Magtuli's books in two volumes with their Arabic and Persian originals at Istanbul and Teheran entitled *Opera Metaphysica et Mystica*,²⁶ has brought

the great martyr to the attention of existentialists and philosophical anthropologists.²⁷

6. The process by which Muslim thought laid the foundations of the Italian Renaissance and influenced subsequent thought was a long one. It will be briefly described in the sections that follow.

Theological Influence

The influence of Muslim theologians on the West was only secondary. Tension between the two religions, Islam and Christianity, was the reason for this. Nevertheless, Muslim theologians were known to the West even though indirectly through the works of the “philosophers”; only al-Ghazali, theology was known to the Western scholars directly. St. Thomas refer to the theologians in his *Contra Oenetiles* as loquentes.²⁸

However, fm long knowledge of Muslim theology remained meagre and that for two reasons:

(i) the information about the Mu'tazilah and the first theologian was second-hand, nothing was taken from their own works; and

(ii) the masters of the philosophico-theological movements after al-Ghazali long remained unknown. Up to the thirteenth/nineteenth century hardly ani scholar in the West was acquainted with the works of Fakhr al-Din Razi

Saif al-Din 'Amidi, ibn Taimiyyah, Siraj &I-Din Urmawi, Sayyid Sharif al-Jurjani, Sa'd al-Din Taftazani, and others. No complete account can, therefore, be given of the influence of Muslim theology on the West.²⁹

However, important works on the philosophy of religion have been translated since the beginning of the present century. Among these the *Irshad* of abu al-Ma'ali (Imam al-Haramain) and several books by ibn Taimiyyah have been translated into French. In addition to these, Max Horten has published a big volume on Muslim theologians.³⁰ Recently, Louis Gardet together with Anawati has released *Introduction a la Theologie Musulmane*. Albert Nader has written *Le systeme Philosophique des Mu'tazila* (first published in Arabic and then translated into French by the same author).³¹

Al-Ghazali had a unique position. He was a theologian as well as a philoso-pher. Therefore, his influence in the West was theological as well as philo-sophical. Miguel Asin Palacios studied al-Ghazali's theological influence on Western thought in several of his writings.³² As it was previously assumed, this influence cannot be confined to the *Tahafut* only, the Latin version of which was made during the sixth/twelfth century. Al-Qhazali's influence was also effected through his other works.

The *Magdsid* was translated into Latin under the heading *Logika et philosophea Algazelis Arabic* by Gundisalvus; it was published in Venice in 912/1506. His *al-Nafs al-Insdni* was also translated under the title *De Anima Humana*. Al-Gazali's influence which Asin Palacios elaborately discussed in his book, *La espiritualidad de Algazel su sentido cristiano*, has several phases. The influence on Raymond Martini, a Dominican monk who profited by al-Ghazali's works on theology and philosophy, comes first.

According to Palacios, the influence of the early Christian sources, for instance of St. Augustine, on al-Ghazali himself should first be taken into

consideration. Although it is not possible to indicate how and by what means Augustine's ideas were transmitted to al-Ghazali, it is quite possible that his influence was widespread in the intellectual circles where al-Ghazali was brought up.³³

Palacios, however, fails to refer to any evidence to prove his assertion, though he has much documentary evidence about the transmission of al-Ghazali's thought to the West. Take the case of historian-philosopher Bar Hebraeus known in the Muslim world as abu al-Faraj. He was a minister at a Syriac Jacobite church and was famous during the seventh/thirteenth century. He wrote in Arabic and Syriac and copied many chapters from al-Ghazali's *Ihyd'* (Revivification of Religious Sciences) and adapted them in his books entitled *Ethicon* and *The Book of the Dove*. This marks the beginning of al-Ghazali's influence on Christian spirituality.

If an author like Bar Hebraeus, who was rather influential in the Christian church, profits by al-Ghazali's ideas in writing his own books considered fundamental in monastery instruction, the reason for this, according to Palacios, was that he regarded these ideas totally consistent with his own doctrine.

In his study of al-Ghazali, Wensinck shows that the two books by Bar Hebraeus are not only written in accordance with the organization of the chapters taken from al-Ghazali's *Ihya'* (e.g., virtues, vices, the degrees of moral perfection) but also al-Ghazali's ideas and even his examples, analogies, and at times phrases, and the kind of evidence *Ihya'* brings from poetry and literature, are employed in them in exactly the same way.³⁴

According to Palacios, Bar Hebraeus did so because in reality these were fully consistent with the Christian spirit even though he wanted to keep secret the apparent source of the ideas transmitted to him. However, there was no need for Palacios at this point to go into making interpretations which would contradict his own straight arguments.³⁵

Palacios traces the development of al-Ghazali's ideas in the West as follows. The Spanish Dominican monk Raymond Martini, who was Bar Hebraeus' contemporary, borrowed the same ideas from him and from al-Ghazali. Instead of profiting only by the books of Muslim "philosophers," he, unlike the scholastics, directly profited by al-Ghazali's texts in his books entitled *Pugio Fidei* and *Explanatio Symboli*, written in the field of religion. These texts were taken from *Ta'ed/ut*, *Magasid*, *al-Mungidh*, *Mizdn*, *Magsad*, *Mishkat al-Anwdr* and *Ihyd'*. According to Palacios, the benefit derived here is more substantial than Bar Hebraeus' adaptations which he had made without mentioning any source, for the arguments have been taken exactly as they were in the original.

Furthermore, St. Thomas used some texts of al-Ghazali's in *Contra Gentiles* either directly or through the mediation of Raymond Martini. Al-Ghazali's arguments in favour of the *creatio ex nihilo*, his proof that God's knowledge comprises particulars, and his justification of the resurrection of the dead were adopted by many scholastics including St. Thomas. St. Thomas, who had received his education from the Dominican order in the University of Naples, had known al-Ghazali's philosophy well, and used his arguments in attacks on Aristotelianism.

St. Thomas' *Summa Theologica* and al-Ghazali's treatise on the place of reason as applied to revelation and theology run parallel in many places in their arguments and conclusions. Both of them claimed to have found happiness in the beatific vision and both stated the case of their op-ponents fairly before pronouncing their own judgments on it. The questions on which St. Thomas seems to have been deeply influenced by al-Ghazali are the ideas of contingency and necessity as proving the existence of God, divine knowledge, divine simplicity, divine names, and divine attributes, God's speech a *iverbum mentis*, the miracles as a testimony to the truth of prophecies, and resurrection of the dead.³⁶

Al-Ghazali's influence was very significant towards the end of the Middle Ages. During the eighth/fourteenth century, three sceptic philosophers were influenced by al-Ash'ari's arguments on the problem of causality through the mediation of al-Ghazali. Their names are (1) Peter of Ailly, (2) Nicholas of Autrecourt, and (3) Gillaume of Occam. Occam, the scholar most influenced by al-Ash`ari's nominalism in the West, arrived at the conception of intuitive divine knowledge via his own criticisms of the theory of causality and his occasionalism (by which he tried to explode St. Thomas' rationalistic philo-sophy) under al-Ghazali's influence.³⁷

A relation was established for the first time between Christian and Muslim philosophies with Gundisalvus' translations from al-Ghazali. C. Baumker was the first to call public attention to these translations. From the works of this great scholar (as later from those of E. Gilson) it has become clear that ibn Sina had an influence on the West in two ways: (1) directly through his own works and (2) indirectly through al-Ghazali's works translated by Gundisalvus.

Al-Ghazali was in a way ibn Sind's disciple even though he later opposed him. First he elaborated the ideas inspired by him, and later he criticized them. For instance, he followed the philosopher's point of view in the classification of souls. Ibn Sins, divided the soul into three faculties named in Latin: *vegetabilis*, *sensibilis*, *rationalis*. In al-Ghazali's translations, the terms used are: *anima vegetative*, *anima animalis*, *anima humana* (al-nafs al-nabdti, al-nafs al-hayawdni, al-nafs al-insdni). As to *nafs al-ndtigah* (the soul endowed with the gift of speech) Gundisalvus uses slightly different terminology. Above the hierarchy of the intellects there is *al-'aql al- f a'dl* (*intellectus agens*) which al-Ghazali designates as *Substantia existens per se quae non est corpus*-substance existing in its own right without the need of body-a definition which we do not find in ibn Sina and which proved valuable for the Western scholastics. Al-Ghazali calls the active intellect *dator formarum*.³⁸

Al-Ghazali's influence on the West was not confined to Raymond Martini. In his book *Huellas des Islam*, Palacios carries this influence down to Pascal. According to him, there is a conformity between al-Ghazali's and Pascal's ideas about the next world which is not due to coincidence. The sort of argument concerning the defence of religion extensively employed by al-Ghazali, known in the West as "betting" (*pari*), is elaborated again and again by Pascal in his *Pensdes*. In addition to Lachelier's well-known study on this

topic, the same theme has also been studied by E. Degas in his *Pari de Pascal*.

Statement of the argument aims at making the non-believers see that there is no inconsistency in performing religious duties and believing in the possibility that the next world may not exist at all. This argument may be summarized in one sentence: If you win you shall win all; if you lose you will loose nothing (*Si vous gagnez vous gagnez tout, si vous perdez, vous ne perdez rien*). Those investigating the roots of this argument give us information about a short text by Arnobius who, after Bayle, was the first to use it. Another text in *Sohund's Theologie Naturelle* concerned itself with those roots. Finally, two French theologians, who were contemporaries of Pascal, formulated the betting argument in a way similar to his.

One of them was Silhon, the author of *Immortalite de l'Ame*. Blanchet and Lachelier studied in what ways these authors were like Pascal and how they differed. Following a penetrating analysis of the text, Blanchet demonstrates that they were Pascal's sources both in ideas and literary form. The result of these investigations is as follows. Pascal's betting idea was held by many authors in embryonic form since Arnobius.

The idea took a long journey from al-Ghazali to Raymond Martini and then to Pascal. Let us see only the comparisons Palacios draws between Pascal and al-Ghazali basing them on well-founded studies of the texts. Pascal, like al-Ghazali, is of the opinion that our senses may deceive us. Here, Palacios compares the text of al-Mungidh with that of *PensEce* and indicates the similarities. Pascal as much as al-Ghazali strongly suspects that our dreams are the reality, our life is nothing but a dream when we are awake, and that we wake up from that dream when we die.

The resemblance to the effect that life is a dream and death waking up from that dream is significant. Both philosophers find the way to get rid of the state of doubt in mysticism. Both of them look for it in divine inspiration as a product of moral virtues and love of religion free from all logical judgments. This power of inspiration bestowed by God on the believers is the most dependable source for knowledge of the super-natural world, both in al-Ghazali and Pascal.

It is evident that the foundation of Pascal's theory about the "logic of the heart"³⁹ was laid in al-Ghazali's idea about the "eye of the heart." Both assigned deductive intellect to the lowest category, for it has practically no influence on our emotional life and beliefs; the mental attitudes determined by it vary; its field of activity is confined to a limited number of elite; and most people remain outside its influence. On the other hand, the functioning field of practical life which is based on habits, familiarity, imitation, and the emotions of the heart is very broad and can be considered to be the common and normal foundation of religious life.

Palacios compares the ideas of al-Ghazali and Pascal on faith and human certitude, and also the anecdote on p. 68 in al-Ghazali's *Faisal al-Tafriqah* with that on p. 350 in Pascal's *Pennies*. In terms of ideas, both say the same thing, viz., "God is felt not in the intellect but in the heart" (*Dieu est sensible au c.œur, non- a la raison*). Then, Palacios notes the following points in Pascal about "betting" which remind us of al-Ghazali.

(i) The indifference of non-believers and free-thinkers towards the problem of the next world and eternity is stupid. It shows a weak intellect, an evil heart, and faulty perception. The Spanish author compares Pascal's work with al-Ghazali's Mizdn al-'Amal (Criterion of Action) and Ihya' in this respect. '

(ii) In order to remedy the indifference of this group of non-believers it is not sufficient to depend on objective arguments, intellect, and faith, for, the state of doubt they are in originates from the doubtfulness of the causes of existence and the non-existence of the next world. Therefore, one should begin with the hypothesis which would affirm the impossibility of definite arguments concerning the eternity of the soul. Here, Palacios compares Pascal's Pennies with certain chapters and passages in al-Srhazali's works, e.g., Ih,d', Mizan, and Arba`in, and shows how the arguments in them are repeated by Silhon and Pascal with very little change.

(iii) If one begins with the above hypothesis, in case of the insufficiency of convincing arguments by direct proof, one should look for such an argument as would recommend the idea of the existence of the next world where rewards and punishments should be calculated after death, depending upon personal interest, egotism, and the rules of most elementary caution and thereby con-vince non-believers of it. Here again Palacios compares passages from al-ghazali's works, e.g., Ihya', Mizan, Arba'in, Mustazhiri, with the texts of Silhon, Sirmond, and Pascal.

(iv) Above all this argument consists in putting the problem of next life in the same way as the possibility of success in present life in terms of the game of chance and fate. The game of fate consists of actions and events dependent on chance, like hunting, taking a sea-trip, wars, surgical operations, drugs for therapy, commercial transactions, professional education, new industrial enterprises, etc. The person who takes measures in all these activities calculates that the gain which is expected to be obtained in the future would be more beneficial than the one that is risked. Here Palacios points out that in his Ihya' and Mizan, al-Ghazali used the examples of hunting, commerce, political occupation, taking a sea-trip, drugs, and industry, and that as a matter of fact Pascal repeated many of them.

(v) The bulk of the argument is like the process of weighing as in a pair of scales. The values of the gains risked by betting as to whether the next world existed or not were put on one tray of this pair of scales and the values of the gains and losses, in either world, were put on the other. Here, Palacios gives examples from al-Ghazali's books, e.g., Ihya', Mizdn, and Musta.Ihiri, and compares them with those in the works of Silhon, Sirmond, and Pascal. Pascal says, *Lequel prenez vous voyonn; pesons le gain et la perte.*

(vi) The first point to be taken into consideration in order to complete this comparison is that the pleasures and properties of this world should be weighed and then their uselessness and total quality stressed. The limited use that can be made of one's worldly possessions, during the lifespan lasting for about seventy years, should be emphasized. Texts from al-Ghazali's Ihya', Mizdn, and Muatazhiri are compared here with those of Sirmond's and Pascal's.

(vii) The eternity of next life (the loss or gain of which is the case in point), i.e., its infinity, limitlessness, unique timelessness which cannot be compared with millions of years and centuries, is weighed. For this too Palacios makes detailed comparisons between al-Qhazali's and Pascal's texts.

(viii) It is understood that there is no comparison between that which has an end and is limited and that which is unlimited and is endless, in terms of the worth and quality of values. The party that wins is of those who choose the road of virtue and accept the existence of the next world, thus getting rid of the sinful pleasures of this life. Here, Palacios compares parts of Mizan, Ihyd', and Arba'in with the like parts in the works of Pascal. "The one who does not believe is the loser."

(ix) This argument may leave the possibility to the infidels of raising the objection that it is based on doubt about the things to be gained or lost in the next world. We have no definite idea about a thing to be gained or lost in the next world, whereas in this world we can determine with absolute certainty the things we are going to gain or lose. There is doubt about the matters of the next world but definiteness about those of this world.

(x) This difficulty is solved by pointing out that a limited thing which is definitely risked is negligible as compared with the infinity of expected gains even though doubtful. Here too Palacios makes comparisons between the texts of Mizdn al-'Amal and Ihya' and those of the works of Sirmond and Pascal, and indicates striking similarities between them.

(xi) Finally, assuming that the next world does not exist, if the laique person who is not under religious discipline acts virtuously in this world, he shall lose nothing. For the real happiness that man can find on this earth is not merely the satisfaction of his passions. Just the opposite; it comes from control-ling the passions, putting them under the control of the intellect. Only in that way can man rise above the level of animals.

This state saves man from becoming a slave to sensuality and helps him gain his true freedom which gives him nobility. It enables him to get rid of anxiety, sorrow, mental weak-ness, and leaves him with infinite peacefulness of the soul, which is purer and more lasting than the sensuous pleasures. Here also Palacios quotes from Mizdn al-'Amal, Arba'in, Mustazhiri and shows how many of Pascal's statements resemble those of al- Ghaziili.

According to Palacios, it should be granted that there are some differences between the two# philosophers besides their similarities. First of all, like Sir-mond, Pascal did not present the problem openly but mentioned it in an indirect way. Al-Ghazali, however, made a careful and detailed study of it. The point mentioned in paragraph (xi) illustrates this. According to Palacios, neither Sirmond nor Pascal stated the problem as thoroughly and analytically as al-Ghhazali did.

Thus, if the irreligious people and free-thinkers act virtuously, as if the next world really did exist, they will strengthen their position when a world which is doubtful for -them materializes in the future. Besides, they would be acting in a way which is consistent with their interests in this world. The

direct source for the betting problem lies in self-interest and the principle of expediency.

This kind of reasoning directed against the irreligious and the free-thinkers who disregard all metaphysics and altruism is consistent with the rule of argument ad hominem which consists of using the arguments of the opponent against himself leaving him no way of escape. "If you win, you win all; if you lose, you lose nothing" principle will constitute the strongest proof for them. However, so long as they are convinced that as they bet in favor of the existence of the next world, which establishes control over their appetites, not only is earthly happiness which is very dear to them not sacrificed, but is, on the other hand, realized positively and fully.

Al-Ghazali explains the critical aspect of the betting idea better than Sirmond and Pascal. For neither of the two thinkers debates with the irreligious who directly refute the next world and consider the religious dogma a mere fake and absolute nonsense. Sirmond and Pascal argue only with those who are in a state of hesitation because of the lack of positive arguments to reach a decision. Al-Ghazali begins debating with the irreligious in *Ihya' 'Uliem al-Din* because of their ruthless actions and in *Mizdn al-'Amal* and *Arba'In* he faces them and meets them on their own ground.

In doing so, al-Ghazali's aim is to make them believe that they will find the positive happiness of the only life they believe in and wish to lead, not in loose life but in knowledge and virtue. According to Palacios, al-Ehseems more open and thorough than Pascal on betting. Pascal's *Pensdes* does not seem to be a completed work as al-Ghazali's books are. It is in the nature of an outline which the philosopher intended to develop in a complete work. His death, however, hindered that plan. But the mathematical clarity of Pascal and the results of his calculations of probability cannot be found in al-Ghazali. Palacios finds the reason for this in the Muslim philosopher's Islamic view of regarding all chance games as illegitimate.⁴⁰

Philosophical Influence Before Descartes

Interest in Muslim philosophy developed in Europe towards the end of the fifth/eleventh century. The Muslim rule in Spain, the Crusades, the seminaries in Sicily, the inadequacy of the old Western scholastic and scientific systems, and the density of population and internal congestion necessitated relations of the West with the world of Islam. In Toledo Muslims and Christians lived side by side. It was here that Raymond I, Archbishop of the provincial capital (525/1130-545/1150), established a translation bureau to render Arabic masterpieces into Latin.

In France and especially in Normandy, scientific trend appeared first among the monks. Robert, the King of France of the Capetian dynasty, at one time a disciple of Gilbert's, was friendly towards the Muslim scientific endeavor. At the time he invaded southern Italy, Calabria, and Sicily, he observed the Italian seminaries and borrowed many things from them. In that way, the seminaries of Sicily and Naples acted as transmission media of Islamic science to the West.

The transmission of Muslim thought to the medieval West passed through the following phases.

1. In the first phase, a band of scholars went to Muslim countries and made personal studies. Constantine of Africa and Adelhard made studies of this sort for the first time. Constantine, who was born in Carthage near the end of the fifth/eleventh century, travelled all through the East. He made translations into Latin from the Arabic translations of Hippocrates' and Galen's books in addition to those of the original works of Muslim scholars on medical science.

Later on, many students from Italy, Spain, and southern France attended Muslim seminaries in order to study mathematics, philosophy, medicine, cosmography, and other subjects, and in due course became candidates for professorship in the first Western universities to be established after the pattern of the Muslim seminaries.

2. The second phase starts with the founding of the first Western universities. The style of architecture of these universities, their curricula, and their method of instruction were exactly like those in the seminaries. First, the Salerno seminary was founded in the kingdom of Naples. Courses were offered in grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, music, geometry, and cosmography. Books of Aristotle and those on the interpretation of his philosophy were brought to Italy by way of Salerno.

Emperor Frederick of Sicily was known as a patron of Muslim science. He founded the seminary at Naples. Aristotle's books were translated from Arabic into Latin by his order. He corresponded with ibn Sab'in on philosophical matters.⁴¹ Alphonso X, King of Castile and Leon (650/1252-683/1284), ordered that astronomical tables be made following a study of Arabic works. At that time, important seminaries were also established at Padua, Toulouse, and later at Leon.

3. At last, the science of the Musalmans was transmitted to France and to other Western countries via Italy. Bologna and Montpellier seminaries were founded at the beginning of the seventh/thirteenth century. The University of Paris opened its doors for instruction somewhat later. At that time Oxford and Koln Universities were established after the same pattern and thus the new science was transmitted to England and Germany.

During the seventh/thirteenth century, the Oxford school became a centre of the activities of translation and interpretation. Here for the first time Alexander Neckam translated from Arabic Aristotle's books "On Heaven" and "On Soul." In the same School Michael Scot translated into Latin a book by al-Bitraji (Albatragius) on cosmography and several books by ibn Sina and ibn Rushd. Robert Grosseteste was another member of the Oxford Group (651/1253).

His efforts were noted in the translations of Greek and Muslim philosophical works. Roger Bacon (611/1214-692/1292) was the most important member of this group. This great scholar who made researches in language, mathematics, and biology became known as a magician and occultist during the Middle Ages and was, therefore, convicted; in fact he was one of the founders of empiricism. The influence of Muslim philosophers on Roger Bacon, particularly that of ibn Sina, was very great.

The word "experiment" (experimentum) is closely associated with his scientific and extra-scientific studies. While the trends initiated by ibn Sina

and ibn Rushd constituted the roots of Western rationalism, Muslim naturalists like al-Razi and ibn Haitham influenced the empirical thought of England.

The best known Polish author during the translation period was St. Thomas' friend Wittelo (b. 628/1230). Wittelo went from Poland to Italy. He compiled an important work about Greek and Muslim scholars. In his book entitled *Perspective*, there were important selections from Euclid, Appolonius, Ptolemy's *Optica*, and ibn Haitham's *Kitab al Manazir*. Wittelo and Roger Bacon carried further ibn Haitham's work in physical research.

In the University of Paris, from the day it was established in 612/1215, much importance was given to Aristotle's texts and their interpretations in Arabic. From 629/1231 on, the Pope Gregory IX renewed the decree against the instruction of Aristotle and his texts. In the following years the Pope's actions against the universities became increasingly severe. Bacon, Duns Scotus, and Nicholas of Autrecourt were convicted. Investigations were made about the Averroists; they were convicted and circulation of their books was prohibited. These severe actions continued until the end of the eighth/fourteenth century.

These severe measures which had originated from fanaticism had ideological roots too. In general, they embodied a reaction against Aristotelian-ism. The tendency of Platonism and dialecticism against Aristotelianism and experimentationism was again aroused. Muslim philosophy was unable to meet the needs of the West when it came to Plato's *Dialogues*. For, many of them were not known to the Muslims. Those that were known were in-complete.

At the end of the ninth/fifteenth century extensive publication of books translated into Latin from Arabic rendered the decrees by the priests partially ineffective and these books rapidly spread everywhere, even outside the university curricula; while the mental orientation towards experimentation was now struggling against reaction in the fields of ideology and research, the ground was being laid for the Renaissance.

The translation into Latin of the works of abu Bakr Zakariya al-Razi, founder of the philosophy of nature in Islam, was an important step in the transmission of Muslim philosophy to the West.⁴² Constantine the African translated into Latin two philosophical works of al-Rfzi, *Kitab al-'Ilal* and *Sirr al-Asdr*, and Gerard of Cremona translated al-Mansuri, another work of his, under the title *Liber Alubatri Basis qui dicitur Almansoriua*. Al-Razi's greatest work *Kitab al-Hawi* (*Liber de Continens*) was translated into Latin and the Latin translation was published several times.

It was translated by Faraj ben Salim known as Faragut, a Jew educated at Salerno, in twenty-five volumes, under the orders of the King of Naples. It was first published in 892/1486 in Brechia, then in Venice in 906/1500, 912/1506, 915/1509, and 949/ 1542. Al-Razi's influence was not confined to the Latin translation of his works only; it led further to the translations of other Muslim philosophers who referred to him in their works.⁴³

The famous Jabir bin Hayyan is known among the naturalists as an alchemist, chemist and philosopher.⁴⁴ He is known in the Latin world better than in Islam, not as a philosopher and chemist but as a magician and

alchemist. *Summa pert ectionis magisteri* is a translation of his collected works.

E. Gilson, in a number of detailed studies, investigated how Aristotle's psychology reached al-Farabi and al-Kindi, how it developed in their hands, and how it was transmitted to the Latin world.⁴⁵ Many of al-Kindi's books were translated into Latin. Plato of Tivoli translated his book on the problems of geometry; Arnold of Villanova, his books on degrees under the title *De Gradibus*; Robert the Englishman, his book on astronomy entitled "On the Dragon"; and de Azogont, his book on physics and meteorology.

This last book was first printed in Venice in 913/1507 and then in Paris in 947/1540.⁴⁶ One of al-Kindi's important books, *Kitab al-'Aql* (Book of the Intellect), was translated into Latin perhaps by John of Seville under the title *De Intellectu*. Gerard of Cremona also translated some books by the philosopher. According to Quadri, Giordano Bruno, the great philosopher of the Renaissance, refers to al-Kindi thus: "Al-Kindi is an Arab philosopher. Among the first scholars he is the best. Ibn Rushd profited by his books. Does this not signify his power?"

In the West, al-Kindi was known as one of Aristotle's faithful disciples and, therefore, for a long time, was considered to be a heretic. However, with his works and those of his successors, empiricism penetrated into the West from the Arab world and helped the rise of modern thought. Quadri notes that besides al-Kindi's book "On the Intellect," the Latin translation of two other works of his, namely, *Liber de quinque essentiis* and *Liber intro-torius in artem logica demonstrationis*, were also known in the West.

The latter was compiled by his disciple Mubammad ibn Taiyib al-Sarakhsi; its authenticity, however, is doubtful. The former marks progress in the classification of the intellects and is a very important work. According to Latin texts, al-Kindi's philosophy is inclined towards Neo-Platonism.⁴⁷

Coming to al-Farabi, not all but some of his works were known in the West during the Latin medieval period.⁴⁸ Translations were made into Latin from his psychology, metaphysics, and logic. Through these translations he had a penetrating influence on Latin philosophers of the medieval West.

One of the most important figures in the translation activity during the Western Middle Ages was Gundisalvus (d. 546/1151). He was the spiritual leader at Segovia; in addition to numerous translations, he wrote a book, *De Division Philosophiae*, which imitated al-Farabi almost step by step.⁴⁹ In this book he substituted al-Farabi's encyclopedic classification for the system of seven types of knowledge (*trivium et quadrivium*) which was traditional in the East during the medieval period,⁵⁰ and this classification which was very new and original for the Western world was followed for long in the then recently established universities.

Gundisalvus' translations had an influence on Christian scholastic philosophy, newly awakened during the seventh/thirteenth century, and especially on St. Thomas and Albert the Great. Al-Farabi and, following him, Ibn Sina added the third form of the famous cosmological proof of God based on the conceptions of possibility and necessity, the first two being based on the ideas of motion and potentiality as formulated by Aristotle.

It was taken up from ibn Sina by the Jewish philosopher, Maimonides, and from him by St. Thomas Aquinas, and then it passed on to Spinoza and Leibniz. It was this proof that Kant criticized as the model cosmological proof. Al-Farabi's idealistic logic, according to B. Carra de Vaux, produced a permanent effect on the logical thought of Latin scholars.⁵¹ Robert Hammond, comparing the arguments of St. Thomas about the existence of God with al-Fhrabi's, has recently shown his influence on the Christian philosopher.⁵²

By placing some other ideas of these two thinkers in opposite columns as follows, Hammond reinforces his views regarding this influence:

The proof of movement:

The proof of movement:

Due to our sense it is evident that in this world there are things that move. Each being is moved by something else. Summa In this world there are moving beings. Each being is moved by an instigator. 'Uyutn al-Masa'il

Active cause:

Al-'illat al-fa'ilah:

In this world we evidence an order of active cause. Summa

Every being has a cause in this changing world and this is the cause of another being. Fusus al-Hikam

Divine attributes:

Divine attributes:

God is an absolutely eternal Being. Summa God is an eternal Being without cause. Al-Siyasat al-Madaniyyah

Al-Farabi synthesizes Aristotelianism and Neo-Platonism but supports the trends towards Neo-Platonism in the medieval West. As E. Gilson has shown, al-Farabi's translations were long used as arguments by those Western philo-sophers who wished to reinstate the Augustinian era.

With al-Farabi originated the idea of definite determinism based on a meta-physical foundation. As a result this conception led to the distinction between psychological necessity and physical necessity. God is the Necessary Being according to al-Farabi (Wajib al-Wujud) and takes necessity from Himself. All other beings take their necessity from God. The conception of God understood as Universal and Necessary Being is substituted in this way for the conception of God as the "efficient autonom"⁵³ of the theologians.

The world which takes its necessity from God and is as necessary as God Himself depends no longer, as in Aristotle, on the subtle laws of beauty and habit. It is not dependent on the autonomous will of God either. Thus, physics found a stronger and more unshakable foundation in al-Farabi than in the Greeks. This foundation is the metaphysical conception of necessity.

During the era of translations into Latin, the following were the main translations from al-Farabi:

John of Seville and Gundisalvus,

Liber Alfarabii de Ortu Scientiarium.

Gerard of Cremona,

Liber Alfarabii de sillogismi, De Divisionis, de Scientiis,

Distinctio super librum Aristotelis de naturali auditu
Liber Alf arabii de Scientiis.

Hermann the German,

Declaratio compendi viam divisionis Alf arabii super libri rhetoricum
Aristotelis ed formam clariorom et totale reducta.

To this list may be added E. Gilson's edition of *De Intellectu et intellectibus* with a French translation.⁵⁴

The philosophical development of the great Arab physicist ibn Haitham (Alhazen) proceeded from skepticism to a kind of criticism. The evolution from scepticism to his own ideological synthesis, he owed to al-Farabi. The Latin translations of some of ibn Haitham's books written during his empiricist and skeptical periods were instrumental to the development of Roger Bacon's ideas.

In addition to this, Western science profited by ibn Haitham's detailed research on optics. He really marks the beginning of physics as well as that of the movement of empiricism in the West. In the origination of empiricism, his role is even greater than that of al-Razi. Ibn Haiham explained the role of induction in syllogism. He criticized Aristotle for the meagreness of his contri-bution to the method of induction which he regarded as superior to syllogism. He considered it to be the basic requirement for true scientific research.⁵⁵

Besides his analysis of light, ibn Haitham devoted the major part of his book to a detailed discussion of the problem of perception. He studied the perception of darkness, distance, position, body, size, and then in the mental field, the perception of proportion, appearances, and beauty. He saw the relation between perception and reflection and showed great acuteness in explaining how true knowledge is founded on these two processes. He held that knowledge combines the substance of the intellect with the content of experience and, thus, reconciled rationalism with empiricism.

The influence of ibn Sina on the West was very significant. During the period of translations into Latin, many of his books became known in the West. His greatest work *al-Shifa'* was first transmitted to the West in the fifth/eleventh century through Yanbu'al-Hayat, a philosophical work by the Jewish philosopher, Solomon b. Gabriel (known to the Latins as Avencebrol or Avicenna).

Many adaptations of ibn Sina's philosophy were made by the Latin philosophers. B. Haneberg has given an elaborate account of this influence (*Zu Erkenntnislehre von ibn Sina and Albertus Magnus*, 1866). In his article published in *Arch. d'hist. et lit. du Moyen Age*, Gilson shows this influence still more fully. By comparing the Latin translations of ibn Sina's works with the original, Arabic texts we have prepared the following table of parallel terminology.

(i) <i>Anima vegetativa</i>		<i>al-nafs al-nabāti</i>
<i>vis nutritiva</i>		<i>al-quwwat al-ghādhīyyah</i>
<i>vis augmentativa</i>		<i>al-quwwat al-nāmīyyah</i>
<i>vis generativa</i>		<i>al-quwwat al-muwallidah</i>
(ii) <i>Anima animalis</i>		<i>al-nafs al-hayawāni</i>
a. <i>vis motiva</i>	(<i>al-quwwat al-muḥarrakah</i>)	<i>al-quwwat al-bā'ithah</i> —
		<i>al-shahwīyyah</i>
		<i>imperium motui — concupiscibi</i>
		<i>al-quwwat al-shauqīyyah</i> —
		<i>efficiens</i>
		<i>motum irascibilis al-ghaḍabiyya</i>
		<i>visus al-bāṣirah</i>
		<i>auditus al-sāmi'ah</i>
		<i>olfactus al-shāmmah</i>
		<i>gustus al-dhā'iqaḥ</i>
		<i>tactus al-lāmisah</i>
b. <i>vis apprehendens</i>	(<i>al-quwwat al-mudrikah</i>)	<i>fantasia sensus communis</i> —
		<i>al-bantāsiyyah</i>
		<i>imaginatio al-muṣawwirah</i>
		<i>imaginativa al-mu'akhayyilah</i>
		<i>estimativa al-wahmīyyah</i>
		<i>memorialis al-dhākirah</i>
		<i>passiones corporales artem</i> —
		<i>al-akhlāq al-radhiyyah</i>
		<i>eforis</i>
		<i>al-ḥawāss al-zāhirah</i> —
		<i>ab intus</i>
		<i>al-ḥawāss al-bā'inah</i> —
(iii) <i>Anima rationalis</i>		<i>principia actionis</i> —
<i>al-nafs al-nāṭiqah</i>		<i>al-akhlāq al-ḥaqīqīyyah</i>
	<i>activa intellectus</i> —	<i>intellectu in potentia, materialis</i> —
	<i>activus — al-quwwat al-'āmilah</i>	<i>al-quwwat al-hayūlana</i>
	<i>contemplativa</i>	<i>intellectu in effectu</i> —
	<i>al-quwwat al-'ālimah</i> —	<i>al-'aql bil malakah</i>
	<i>ingenium subtilitas</i> (<i>al-ḥads</i>)	
	<i>intellectu adeptus prophetia</i> (<i>al-quwwat al-quḍsiyyah</i>)	

The translation movement received new impetus during the beginning of the sixth/twelfth century. By his work *Dalalat al-Ha'irin* (The Guide for the Perplexed) Maimonides introduced Muslim philosophers and especially ibn Sina (Avicenna), to the West in great detail.⁵⁶ During the same century arguments started between Abelard and St. Thomas in the Latin world. Numerous translations from Arabic into Latin, especially of al-Farabi and ibn Sina, during that era suddenly widened the horizons of thought in the West.⁵⁷

During the sixth/twelfth and seventh/thirteenth centuries the main centres where translations were made from Arabic into Latin were Toledo, Durgos, Sicily, and Naples. Translations made by John of Seville and Gundisalvus were of primary importance. The first translated Arabic texts into the Roman language and the second, from Roman into Latin. Ibn Sina's al-Shifa was also partly rendered into Latin and entitled Sufficientia. Kitab al-Qanuln fi at-Tibb (Canons of Medicine) was also translated during the same period. The Latin rendering of the works of these as well as of other Muslim philosophers continued during the seventh/thirteenth century.⁵⁸

The influence of these translations has to be classified in two groups.

i) The influence beginning with ibn Sina and al-Farabi and leading to the development of the trend of Avicennism.

ii) The continued influence exercised by al-Ghazali's summaries of al-Farabi's and ibn Sina's views.

The translations from al-Farabi and ibn Sina helped in the establishment of Augustinian philosophy. It supplied it with affirmative arguments. Hippone, in his book *Doctrine Sacra*, succeeded in making that synthesis. Ibn Sina's influence on medieval Christian thinkers was of primary importance since they profited by his ideas directly and also since he was useful in interpreting St. Augustine. However, the Augustinians, who were adherents of ibn Sina and had accepted the major ideas of the Muslim philosopher, severely attacked some of his doctrines.

This trend originated from *De Anima* the authorship of which had been attributed to Gundisalvus for a long time though later on the probability of its belonging to John of Seville increased. This is a work fully inspired by ibn Sina. It was published in 914/1508 in Venice as a preface of *Shifa*.⁵⁹

In the seventh/thirteenth century an effort was made at the reconciliation of St. Augustine's ideas with those of Aristotle—a reconciliation for which ibn Sina's system served as an appropriate basis. This led to the movement called Augustinian-Avicennism. William of Auvergne was the most important witness of Latin Avicennism.

His mentioning ibn Sina in different sections of his books forty times indicates how full he was of his ideas. William benefited from ibn Sina's definitions, his classification of the sciences, and many of his ideas on theology; used the examples he borrowed from him; and took over with some modifications his idea that “the celestial sphere is a living being”.

Carra de Vaux states that William's idea of the immortality of the soul—immortalitate anime—was inspired by ibn Sina. However, William attacked ibn Sina for such ideas as the eternity of the universe, the necessity of creation, and the separate active intellect taken as the efficient and final cause of all souls, etc.

It was for this reason that, according to the decrees issued in 607/ 1210 and 612/1215, the teaching of Aristotle's interpretations and, among them, ibn Sina's books were prohibited by the Church. While William was criticizing Aristotle and ibn Sina, there were other Western thinkers of his time who were benefiting from the great Muslim philosopher. In de Vaux's terms, they were not Avicennists reconciling ibn Sina, as William did, with Christianity, but Avicennists who followed him in all respects.

Many Christian philosophers during that era accepted ibn Sine's theory of knowledge instead of Aristotle's. We observe the highest development of this trend in favour of ibn Sina, especially in Roger Bacon's illuminism. According to de Vaux, he was an Avicennist. Among the renowned scholars of the seventh/thirteenth century, he was the one best informed about ibn Sine's life and works. He did not only know all of ibn Sine's works translated into Latin, but also knew that apart from these he had other books in Arabic. With ibn Sine's treatise "Oriental Philosophy," now lost, he was well acquainted.

He not only knew his works on philosophy, but also those on astronomy, medicine, and alchemy, and since he was an empiricist, he benefited to a great extent from ibn Sina's researches and did not stick to the limited view of the scholastics concerning him. He even claimed to have found in him the doctrine of the Holy Ghost and that of the origination of the universe in time. According to Gilson, his thesis on illumination is connected with ibn Sina's idea of the separate active intellect.

Roger Bacon followed ibn Sina in social ethics, conception of the City-State, and also in philosophy of religion. He argued that God is eternal, and His being eternal signifies infinite power. Infinite power necessitates infinite quality and, therefore, infinite goodness and sagacity. If the power of the First Cause is infinite, then the universe can be created by it.

Goodness of the First Cause necessitates its creation by It and its sagacity necessitates its creation according to purpose. Ibn Sina had arrived at the same conclusions through the same kind of thinking (E. Gilson, "Les Sources, etc.," Archives, 1930). Alfred of Sareshel also studied ibn Sina and, like Roger Bacon, was an Avicennist in a broad sense.

The book entitled *De Causis Primis et Secundis* was attributed to ibn Sina for some time, because the anonymous author of this work was through-out inspired by him. Without mentioning the name, he refers to ibn Sina's *Metaphysics* three times and to his *De Anima* once. In another place, without mentioning his name, he quotes passages from him. Many times he summarizes him or makes free adaptations from him. The plan of the book as well as the dominant topics belong to ibn Sina altogether.

In the book entitled *De Divisione Naturae* the author of which is also unknown, ibn Sina's views are partially Christianized and St. Augustine's ideas are partially laicized in an attempt at reconciliation. Gilson regards this book as the limit of Augustinian-Avicennism. De Vaux sees an apparent Avicennism in it. The most daring passages from ibn Sina have been adopted in it without modifications. Ibn Sina dominates the book.

On the other hand, Erigena and St. Augustine are included in it with many modifications and further interpretations. In fact, texts from Erigena and Denys together with ibn Sina's cosmism are put into a Christian composition.

Eventually, the influence of Avicennism got stronger than Augustinianism. For instance, the classification of intellects by al-Farabi and ibn Sina dominated Albert the Great. St. Thomas was still under the influence of these philosophers even when he criticized them just as al-

Chazali was under their in-fluence on many points even when he offered a criticism of them.

Ibn Sina, was getting known in the Western world also through the efforts of John of Seville who is named Hispanensis in some of his translations. David, his father, was of Jewish origin after whom he is also called ibn Dawud. Some of ibn Sina's books on metaphysics were translated by him. John compiled these under the title Opera (Majmu'ah = Collections), and it was twice published in Venice, in 901/1495 and in 906/1500.

The following books have been included in this Opera:

1. Logika;
2. Suf ficientia;
3. De Coelo et Mundo;
4. De Anima;
5. De Animatibus;
6. Intelligentia (Kitab al-'Aql);
7. Philosophia Prima (Falsafat al-fla).⁶⁰

Ibn Sing's classification of the philosophical sciences was widely accepted in Europe in the Middle Ages and was preferred by the scholastics of the seventh/thirteenth century to that of any other. By his reading of ibn Bajjah's books, the Latin translations of most of which have now been lost, Albert the Great was led to the study of ibn Sing's works as also of al-Ghazali's.

Both he and his disciple Ulrich of Strassburg were influenced by him. The former followed ibn Bajjah's method and regarded him as the greatest commentator of Aristotle. One of the many new ideas that ibn Sina handed down to the West was that of intentio or the intelligible. His classification of the soul was also accepted by Albert the Great and through him by many medieval Western philosophers. One also sees ibn Sina's influence on St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas.

St. Thomas criticized ibn Sina indirectly while making a penetrating study of ibn Rushd (Averroes). In his book entitled Contra Averroistas, he examined all the interpretations of Aristotle made by ibn Rushd, and he profited by the ideas of Albert the Great who was his master. That way he got up to ibn Sina. St. Thomas developed his own philosophy by giving new meaning and direction to Aristotle while explaining and criticizing ibn Sina's and ibn Ruahd's theories on the problem of the intelligible as separate from the material (al-mufariqat).

According to St. Thomas' explanations in this book, for ibn Sina all knowledge of the universal depends upon the knowledge of the particular, that is, the universal can be comprehended only with the help of the lower faculties, like perception, memory, and imagination. A totally naturalistic philosophy appears here, although the philosopher is al-together in the field of metaphysics.

According to ibn Sina, the deeper our soul gets in the field of sensations, the nearer does it get to the intelligibles. According to St. Thomas, however, the farther the soul gets from sensations, the closer does it get to the

intelligibles. According to him, ibn Sina's doctrine is a form of Platonism without being faithful to it in its results.⁶¹

It is certain that the translations of the majority of ibn Sina's books into Latin led to a considerable change in Western thinking. E. Gilson studied his influence on Duns Scotus in the article: "Avicenne et le point de depart de Duns Scotus," *Arch.*, 1927. Ibn Sina's views about the definition and classification of the soul had a wide influence. Ibn Sina defines the soul both as maturity of the body, entelechy, or form, as Aristotle had done, and as substance which is independent of matter.

This second definition marks the beginning of the conception of the soul as a substance independent of matter—a conception which took its complete form in Descartes. The Muslim philosopher goes deep into the second category of the classification of the soul and, in order to prove that the soul is independent of the body, advances many arguments some of which, like the argument of identity and that of unity, were used by the Western philosophers following him.

The example of the flying man as cited by ibn Sina, in order to prove the substantiveness of the soul, given no doubt by the philosophers preceding him, was used in the West by St. Bonaventure and by others after him. Lastly, it may be noticed that ibn Sina's philosophy of illumination, developed under Neo-Platonic influence, paved the way for the development of several religiophilosophical trends in the West during the medieval period.

However, the failure to make complete translations of ibn Sina's works and to fill in the incomplete parts of Aristotle's texts found at a later date hindered the accurate appreciation of the Muslim philosopher and led even to the spread of certain vague ideas about him for centuries to come.⁶²

For ibn Sina as for al-Ghazali after him and for Kant in the modern age, the categories are subjective. Indeed, the Kantian position that the categories are subjective and the knowledge of objects is due to a synthesis of sense-perception and logical intelligence, was a common place of Muslim philosophy in the sixth/twelfth century.

It was expounded not only by ibn Sina and al-Ghazali, but also by the latter's contemporaries: ibn Haitham, famous for his optics, and al-Birfini (d. 440/1048), well known for his studies in mathematics, astronomy, geography, and ethnology.⁶³

By the middle of the seventh/thirteenth century, almost all the works of ibn Rushd, known as Averroës in the Latin world, had been translated into Latin. This translation work was executed in various institutions by several scholars. At the college founded by Raymond, Archbishop of Toledo, some of the most important works of Muslim writers on philosophy and science, including Arabic versions of Aristotle and commentaries and abridgments by al-Farabi, ibn Sina, and ibn Rushd were translated into Latin.

One of the well-known translators working at Toledo was a German, Hermann by name, but his renderings of the Arabic translations of Aristotle's works were regarded by Roger Bacon as barbarous and unintelligible. Orientalists like Cassiri, Rossi, Jourdain erroneously regard ibn Rushd as Aristotle's first Arab translator.

In fact, ibn Rushd knew neither Greek nor Syriac, let alone his being the first translator of Aristotle. Aristotle's work had, in fact, been translated into Arabic and interpreted by many persons before him and ibn Rushd read him through these translations.

The following of ibn Rushd's works were translated into Latin and/or Hebrew: Tahafut at-Taha/ut (Destruction of Destruction) into Latin and Hebrew;⁶⁴ so was his Manahij al-Adilah, a work on philosophy and theology;⁶⁵ his Fasl al-Maqal which discusses the relationship between faith and philosophy was translated into Hebrew; the Latin version of his three volumes on Lav is entitled Vigilia super erroris reportas in textibus civilis.

There was also the Hebrew translation of ibn Rushd's summary of al-Majisti (Almagest) on astronomy, but only its Latin version is extant under the title De Motu sphearr celestis. His writings on medicine were compiled in a volume entitled Kulliyd (Compendium). These were translated into Latin and published in sever volumes entitled De Colliget.

Volumes 2, 4 and 7 were compiled by Jean Bruyerii Champier and entitled Collectanea de Remedica. He also wrote an interpretation of ibn Sina's poem on medicine entitled Urjuzah fi al-Tibb which was one of ibn Rushd's best known books. An epistle by ibn Rushd entitled Theri-aque (Tirydq) too was translated into Latin and Hebrew.

Ibn Rushd's com-mentaries on Aristotle's works were translated into Latin by Michael Scot, Hermann the German, and others. Ernest Renan in his book entitled Averroi et l'averroisme gives full account of the Latin texts.

Ibn Rushd is considered to be the greatest interpreter of Aristotle in the Muslim world. He composed three kinds of works on the interpretation o' Aristotle, one in a summary form, another in medium size, and yet another in detail. But he was not an interpreter only; he was also an original thinker of no mean stature.

The trend he started in the West caller Averroism continued for centuries. Siger de Barbante was its last representative. Ibn Rushd considered all former interpretations of Aristotle t be deviations from the thought of the master. He tried to interpret his thought as it originally was, freed from all kinds of Neo-Platonic influences. It was through ibn Rushd's works that Aristotle became widely known in Europe. Those who were looking in the medieval period for the real Aristotle, and bad a glimpse of him from those preceding ibn Rushd, became enthusiastic Averroists.⁶⁶

No Muslim thinker influenced the medieval West more than ibn Rushd. The main ideas for which he was vehemently opposed by the scholastics o the East and of the West and most enthusiastically welcomed by the radicals in thought from the sixth/twelfth to the eighth/fourteenth century an, which opened the door to the European Renaissance were : (1) allegories interpretation of the Scriptures, (2) the theory of two truths, which, in th, words of Macdonald, "ran like wild-fire through the schools of Europe," (3) pan-psychism which implied immortality of the universal soul of humanity and mortality of the individual soul, (4) eternity and potentiality of matter, and (5) emancipation of women.

Ibn Rushd's theory of two truths, combined with the doctrine that matter is eternal and potent to produce all forms from within itself, was a godsend for the scientifically-minded people in the West who were, as a rule, condemned and persecuted by the orthodox Church and the State. They found in the above theses, which passed as Averroism, their best support. For this reason de Wulf calls Ibn Rushd Doctor of the Anti-Scholastics.

In transmitting Muslim thought to the non-Muslim West, the Jews of Spain took the lead. During the short fanatical rule of the Berbers of Morocco, the Muwahhids, one of whom, Abu Yusuf Ya`qub al-Mansur (r.580/1184-596/1199) banished even Ibn Rushd from Morocco for a time to appease the orthodox, the Jews were persecuted and forced to migrate to the neighboring countries, viz., to Leon and Castile (the Christian part of Spain), to France across the Pyrenees, and to Sicily.

They were welcomed by Alfonso VI who had himself been educated among the Arabs and had done the work of initiating the Christians into Muslim thought. His successors Ferdinand II and Alfonso the Wise maintained the tradition and engaged Jewish scholars for translation work. Later, many of the Jewish scholars who were living in the country adjacent to the Pyrenees, having been turned out from there because of their Averroism, fled to other parts of Europe taking with them the learning of the Muslims.

Wherever they settled down they translated the works of Muslim thinkers, especially those of Ibn Rushd whom they universally admired, from Arabic into Hebrew and from Hebrew into Latin. The family of Tibbonids established at Lunel undertook the translation almost exclusively of Ibn Rushd's original works and his commentaries.

Such were Samuel Ibn Tibbon's "The Opinions of the Philosophers," Juda ben Solomon Cohen's "The Search for Wisdom," and Gershon ben Solomon's "Gate of Heaven." Among Jewish philosophers, while Ha-Levi followed al-Ghazali, and Maimonides Ibn Sina, Gersonides was a disciple of Ibn Rushd. Besides Jewish scholars, Jewish statesmen and travelers were instrumental in spreading Averroism in France, Italy, and Central Europe. The Friars also took a lead in accelerating the spread of Averroism; under their influence were translated Aristotle's works from the original Greek as well as Ibn Rushd's commentaries on these works.

By the end of the sixth/twelfth century Averroism, i. e., the philosophy of Ibn Rushd, had become so popular, particularly among the whole school of philosophers represented first by the Faculty of Arts at Paris, and had become such a menace to Orthodox Christianity that in 607/1210 the Council of Paris forbade all teachings of Aristotle's Natural History and Ibn Rushd's commentaries on it.

This prohibition was confirmed by the Legate Robert of Courcon, Cardinal of Paris, in 612/1215, and renewed by the Popes in 629/1231 and 643/ 1245. The Physics and Metaphysics of Aristotle were forbidden at the University of Toulouse by Urban IV in 662/1263. In 668/1269 the Bishop of Paris condemned thirteen of Ibn Rushd's basic doctrines, and in 676/1277 he condemned the prominent Averroist, Siger of Brabant. Yet the strength of Averroism was irresistible.

No force could suppress it. In 612/1215, Frederick II became the Emperor of Rome. Having been educated at Palermo under Arab teachers and having come into close contact with the Muslims of Sicily and during the Crusades also with those of Syria, he had become a great admirer of Muslim thought in general, and of Ibn Rushd in particular. In 621/1224 he established a university at Naples chiefly with the object of introducing Muslim philosophy and science to the people of the West.

St. Thomas received his education at this university. Here both Christian and Jewish translators were engaged for rendering Arabic works into Latin and Hebrew. The works of Aristotle and Ibn Rushd in their Latin translation were used not only in the curriculum of this university, but were sent also to the Universities of Paris and Bologna.

Nowhere did Averroism strike deeper roots than in the Universities of Bologna and Padua. Of these two centers of learning Padua became the "hot-bed of Averroism."

Averroism became rapidly the ruling mode of thought in the West. Scholars of medieval Europe were agitated by Ibn Rushd's Aristotle as by no other author. From the end of the sixth/twelfth to the end of the tenth/sixteenth century Averroism remained the dominant school of thought, and that in spite of the orthodox reaction it created first among the Muslims in Spain then among the Talmudists and, finally, among the Christian clergy. "His writings... after being purged of objectionable matter by ecclesiastical authorities became prescribed studies in the University of Paris and other institutions of higher learning."

Ibn Rushd became more famous in the Latin world than in the Muslim world, because very few copies of his books had been made and circulated in Muslim countries. Besides, the disgrace he had to face towards the end of his life was instrumental to his being forgotten. Another important reason for it was the destruction of his books in Spain by Ximenez's order. In pursuance of this order, 80,000 manuscripts in Arabic were burnt in the squares of Granada.⁶⁷ In about 1009/1600, Scaliger, while searching for new manuscripts in Spain, could find not even a single copy of Ibn Rushd's works.

Philosophical Influence From Descartes To Kant

Although Pascal was a contemporary of Descartes, he cannot be said to have been a pioneer of modern philosophy in the West. Modern philosophical thought really began with the speculation of Descartes. Muslim philosophers had penetrated deep into the West much before Descartes' time, and most of the works of al-Ghazali had been translated into Latin before the middle of the sixth/twelfth century, and since then had exercised a considerable influence on Jewish and Christian scholasticism.

Much before Descartes, his skepticism had been taken up by Jehuda Ha-Levi (d. 540/1145) in his work *Chosari* and it had also shown its mark on Crescas (d. 813/1410). The Dominican Raymond Martin had freely used the Hebrew translation of Tahd/ut al-Falasifah, another of al-Ghazali's works, and incorporated a great deal of it in his *Pugio Fidei*. Pascal too had been deeply affected by his thoughts.

The influence that al-Ghazali had on modern European thought has not so far been fully appreciated. There is no acknowledgment by Descartes of

his indebtedness (direct or indirect) to any Muslim thinker, and yet it is difficult to believe that he did not know al-Ghazali's general position and was not influenced by it through the Latin scholastics, whom beyond question he must have read. This conclusion forces itself upon the mind all the more strongly when one realizes that he was not only a scholar of Latin, but had himself written two of his most important works, *Meditationes de prima philo-sophia* and *Principia philosophiae*, in Latin.

We notice that, exactly like al-Ghazali, Descartes came to his conclusions by a study of his own self, al-Ghazali's starting formula being "I will, there-fore, I am," and Descartes' being, "I think, therefore, I am." He followed al-Ghazali's derivation of the negative and positive attributes of God from the concept of necessary existence.

The distinction made by him, and by Galileo before him, between the infinite (that the parts of which cannot be expressed by any number or measurement) and the indefinite (that which has no limit) was exactly the same as given by al-Ghazali and ibn Sina, and, following them, by Crescas and Bruno. Exactly like al-Ghazali he begins with describing how in vain he interrogated in his mind every school and every creed for an answer to the problems that disturbed him and finally resolved to discard all authority.

If the Muslim world had possessed the original of any mode of thought or movement, particularly in matters of detail, which was developed by the West later, when most of the classics of Muslim thought in the spheres of philosophy, medicine, and science had been translated into Latin, then, even in the absence of direct evidence, one would be justified in presuming that that mode of thought or movement was stimulated by influence from the Muslim East.

Although all other masterpieces of al-Ghazali had been translated into Latin before 545/1150, and had admittedly exerted great influence on the Western scholastic thought, there is no evidence that al-Ghazali's *al-Munqidh min al-Dalal* had been translated into Latin before Descartes' time.

It is for the scholars of Latin to discover that. But there is so much internal evidence in the most remarkable parallel of that work with Descartes' *Discours de la methode*, printed in 1047/1637, that it becomes impossible to deny its influence on the father of modern philosophy in the West.

Both of these works, al-Ghazali's *al-Munqidh* and Descartes' *Discours de Influence of Muslim Thought on the West la methode*, are autobiographical. Both al-Ghazali and Descartes began the stories of their lives from their youth (M. 4, D. 8).⁶⁸ Both realized how, despite having the same reasoning faculty, the children of Muslim or Christian parents, thanks to custom and example, had different beliefs from the beliefs held by those brought up by Jewish parents, and how those brought up among Frenchmen were different from those brought up among the Germans (M. 6, D. 19).

Both, therefore, decided that they would not believe anything that was based on tradition, custom, or example (M. 5-6, D. 13), and both walked into every dark spot to discover the truth (M. 4, D. 19). Both held, for exactly the same reasons, that the senses cannot yield certain knowledge (M. 8-9, D. 36).

The language and the examples of the defects of sense-experience given by both of them were almost identical (M. 8-9, D. 36, 37). Both studied all the literature that came into their hands, and in the accounts of their studies both mentioned the same subjects: philosophy, mathematics, logic, theology, and physical sciences. After examining all these subjects and all creeds one by one both concluded that they all fell short of certain knowledge and so resolved to discard all authority (M. 17-62, D. 8-14); and, thus, both became extremely skeptical about all that had passed as knowledge up to their times and boldly rejected the opinions they had so far held (M. 12, D. 17). Both of them, considering that the very same experiences as they had in waking life might occur also while they slept without there being at that time any truth in them, decided to feign that everything that had entered their minds till then was no more than illusion of dreams (M. 10, D. 31).

Both withdrew from their places of work, wandered in search of truth for several years from place to place (M. 3, D. 28), and finally went to lands quieter and more congenial for their search after truth (Tus and finally Nishapur in the case of one and Holland in the case of the other) (M. 3, D. 30). Both devised a new method of discovering the truth and this method was exactly the same for both. It consisted in taking only that as true which was conceived very clearly and very distinctly without any possibility of doubt (M. 5, 20, D. 20).

Both thought that the clarity and distinction they demanded of every truth must be at least that found in mathematics, that which we see, for example, in apprehending that 10 is greater than 3 or that the sum of the three angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles (M. 7, D. 35). Both modestly declared that the purpose of their discourses was not that everybody should follow their example, but only to relate the story of their own method of finding the truth; others may find the truth in some other ways (M. 19, D. 36f).

This most amazing resemblance between the two works makes George Henry Lewis say in his *Biographical History of Philosophy* that “had any translation of it existed in the days of Descartes, everyone would have cried out against the plagiarism.”

If it were only a few facts of their autobiographies, their going, for example, to quieter places for contemplation, and a few other things common to these works of al-Ghazali and Descartes, they might be considered to have been due to mere coincidence, but when the entire plan of their respective works, the whole treatment of the subjects discussed, and the whole content of these subjects down to detailed arguments, examples, and relatively unimportant matters, culminating in skepticism and in ultimate discovery of the method of finding the truth, run parallel to each other, it becomes impossible to attribute all that to coincidence.

It might be that along with other masterpieces of al-Ghazali, al-Munqidh too had been translated into Latin and read by Descartes. Nowhere has the existence of a translation of this work been mentioned, but nowhere has it been expressly denied. Alfred Guillaume in his article in *The Legacy of*

Islam states, “His books on Logic, Metaphysics and Physics became known through the translators of Toledo in the sixth/twelfth century.”

He mentions no exception. It might have been one of the eighty-seven Arabic works translated by Gerard of Cremona or one of the works rendered into Latin by John of Seville and Dominic Gundisalvus. Or else it might have been the case that the text of al-Ghazali was orally translated for Descartes by some scholar of Arabic. Descartes himself refers to “the example of many fine intellects that had previously had this plan” (D. 29), but does not mention any by name. This may be a veiled reference to al-Ghazali who alone among his predecessors had followed exactly the same plan. In any- case, whatever the facts, in our opinion the influence of al-Ghazali on Descartes' Discours de la mkthode is indubitable.

The next great luminary of modern philosophy was Spinoza. As shown by Dunnin Borkowski, he was deeply influenced by al-Farabi, whose ideas had reached him through Jewish scholars like Maimonides. “Any one who reads Spinoza's De Emendatione Intellectus would be struck by the great similarity between this book and al-Farabi's book What Should Precede the Study of Philosophy.

The succession of ideas in the two books is the same ... Even the final aim of the two books is the same, namely, the knowledge of God, `in order to follow His example as much as lies in human capacity.’”⁶⁹

Ibn Sina's influence on Spinoza through Maimonides is noticeable in his (Spinoza's) view that in God intelligence, intelligent, and intelligible are identical, and so are essence and existence, while in created beings existence is an accident super-added to essence.

As mentioned before, the cosmological proof for the existence of God given by al-Farabi and ibn Sins, was accepted by Spinoza, as by Maimonides and St. Thomas before him, and al-Ghazali's distinction between the infinite and the indefinite was followed by him as it was done by Crescas, Bruno, Galileo, and Descartes. Besides, his idea of substance was the same as al-Ghazali's idea of God-simple, having no accidental qualities, no distinction of genus and species and no separation of essence from existence.

His idea of freedom was also identical with al-Ghazali's idea of necessity (non-dependence upon anything else) and that of necessity was identical with the latter's idea of pos-sibility (dependence upon a cause). Again, Spinoza's definition of the forms of imagination more or less conformed to the distinction between retentive memory and composite memory made by Maimonides following al-Ghazali In all these cases there is merely a difference of terminology.

The greatest name in modern philosophy after Spinoza is that of Leibniz But before we show his relation to Muslim thought, we should like to make a few remarks about the philosophy of another great thinker of the modern age, Kant, who claimed to be the Copernicus of philosophy.

Like al-Ghazali, Kant distinguished between phenomena and noumena and regarded the physical world of which alone the scientific knowledge is true as the world of phenomena, to which alone the categories, which to him are equally subjective, are applicable, causality, substance, and attribute

bein; excepted by al-Ghazali. Like him, he demonstrates that theoretical reason can analyse only what the senses yield, and that it cannot solve the basic and more important questions of philosophy and religion, such as the existence of God the nature of His attributes, the immortality of the soul, and the eternity of the universe. Kant found the key to the solution of these questions in the practical reason of man, while al-Ghazali discovered it in the religious experience of the Prophet and the mystic, which in its turn is to be tested by the moral certitude and moral influence which it exercises upon the soul. This comparison should make it clear as to who the Copernicus of philosophy was, al-Ghazali or Kant.

How are we to explain this close resemblance between the philosophic] ideas of al-Ghazali and Kant? We believe that this explanation can be found in the philosophy of Leibniz, for, as T. H. Green observed, the doctrines Leibniz formed a permanent atmosphere of Kant's mind, despite the inspiration he received from Hume in his youth.⁷⁰ The minds of both worked on the same lines.⁷¹ Kant was only a corrected and developed form of Leibniz, whereas Leibniz was an incorrect and undeveloped form of al-Ghazali combine with the Asharite atomism.⁷²

Leibniz, like al-Ghazali and Kant, regarded the world as phenomenal. For him, as for these others, human knowledge does not consist solely in the perception of universal truths, nor does it entirely depend upon the sense. Like both of them, he made a distinction between concepts and percept though he used different terms (relatively clear and confused perceptions) express this distinction.

Time and space for him, as for them, are not real characteristics of the real, though, like al-Ghazali and unlike Kant, he regards them not as intuitions but as ideas of relations. As for them, so for him, the categories-being, substance, unity, causality, identity, etc.-are supplied to experience not by the senses but by the mind.⁷³ Only their lists of these categories are in some details different.

Leibniz was a younger contemporary of Spinoza whose indebtedness to Muslim thought is undoubted. He could read Latin with the help of pictures at the age of eight; he wrote poetry in that language at the age of fourteen and read the scholastics during his youth. Therefore, he cannot be supposed to have been ignorant of al-Ghazali's views through Latin translations. In fact, the influence of Muslim thought on him is evident in some other respects as well.

Al-Farabi's proof of the existence of God from the concepts of necessity and contingency came down to him through ibn Sina, Maimonides, and St. Thomas, and his view that man's perfection comes from God and imperfection from his own nature is also traceable to Muslim scholastics. The same is true of his view of God as simple. Ibn Sina's influence on him can hardly be doubted for there is a curious parallelism in al-Shifa' and the Monadology of Leibniz in describing association and memory. The similarity is remarkable not only in the treatment of the subject but also in the example of the dog and the stick with which they illustrate their theory.⁷⁴

Without intensive research in the education that Locke and Berkeley received and the studies they pursued it is difficult to say whether al-Ghazali had any influence on their philosophy or not, but what we can say with certainty is that he anticipated much of their speculation. Like the empiricists from Locke to Hume, he bases knowledge on experience rather than on intellectual concepts, though he does not confine the meaning of the term “experience” to sensuous experience only, but extends it so as to include within it the intuitive experience of the Prophet, the mystic, and the saint, and thus escapes skepticism to which the European empirical thought inevitably led. This latter kind of experience is, according to him, far more important than sense-experience, since this alone yields the knowledge of Ultimate Reality.

Like Hume, al-Ghazali proclaims that we can have no knowledge of cause and effect in the realm of phenomena. All we know is that one event succeeds another. His description of induction is the same as Mill's. We perceive by the senses that the same thing repeatedly passes the same way (e.g., fire burns); we conclude that it will always pass the same way (fire will always burn); or we notice that certain things pass for the most part the same way (e.g., taking scammony is followed by diarrhoea or wine by intoxication); we judge that the one will probably follow the other in future cases as well.

But this explanation of induction is not based on the fallacy of *petitio principii* as Mill's. According to him, it is reason which judges that this sequence of events must come to pass by necessity, for if it came by mere chance could not have occurred always or in most cases in the past. It is, he says by this argument alone that induction of empirical laws can be rational justified.

Al-Ghazali anticipates Schopenhauer and other voluntarists in holding that not thought but will is the fundamental reality, but he steers clear Schopenhauer's pessimism. God, according to him, is Will and the words flow from Him like a river. Like Bergson, even more like Jacobi and Schleiermacher, he makes intuition or immediate consciousness the source of knowledge.

Al-Ghazali exerted great influence over the East and the West. It was the Protestant revolt that freed the West from the grip of this great medieval intellect, and in the East, having conquered all rival thought; it has even this day a hold too tight to allow any fresh movement.⁷⁵

Philosophical Influence in the Post Kantian Period

In the sixth/twelfth century some stir was created by another Muslim thinker ibn Tufail (Chapter XXVII) known in the Latin world for long as *Abentofal* or *Abubacer*. Most of his writings were lost probably during the destruction by Ximenez. But his fame is due to his *Hayy Ibn Yagzan*, a philosophical romance, in which he shows that even without the help of tradition and revelation man can attain to the knowledge of nature and through that the knowledge of God.

This remarkable work was first translated into Hebrew and Moses of Narbonne wrote an excellent interpretation of it. It was translated from Arabic into Latin by Edward Pococke Junior under the title *Philosophus autodidactus*

sive *Epistola Abi Jaafar ebn Tophail de Hai ebn Yokdh* and published together with the Arabic text at Oxford in 1082/1671, and then its translations appeared in most of the European languages.

It was first translated into English by George Keith in 1085/1674, then by Geot Ashwell in 1098/1686. Simon Ockley published its translation into Engli from the original Arabic in 1120/1708. Its Dutch version was first publish in Amsterdam in 1083/1672 and again in 1113/1701. It was translated in German twice. Finally, Gauthier published the French version of the be with an analytic summary in 1318/1900. In Paul Bromilc's words, "in comparatively short time it caught the fancy of the public--in fact it to the world by storm and for a long time it remained in vogue." The work interest in it has not yet ceased, for it was translated into Russian in 13. 1920, and into Spanish in 1353/1934.

The large number of these translations is indicative of the influence this philosophical novel on Western thought. After the appearance of translations, many books written in the West were inspired by this work. Among them may be Bacon's philosophical novel, *Atlantis*, and other Utopian novels, the last of which was *Robinson Crusoe* produced by Daniel Defoe in 1132/1719, eleven years after the publication of Simon Ockley's translation. It has, therefore, been justly concluded that, among others, Daniel Defoe was indebted to the great Muslim philosopher for the conception of his work.

In discussing the influence of Muslim philosophy on Western thought we cannot omit the reference to *ibn Khald0n*. He has been recognized by many to be the father of sociology and the first philosopher of history. He was the first to oppose Greek and early Muslim philosophers explicitly by asserting that human societies should not be studied from an idealist-rationalist point of view, but ought to be taken as natural phenomena.

This view is fully ex-pounded in his *Muqaddimah* (Introduction) to his historical work entitled *Kilab al-'Ibar*. The Introduction was first printed in Paris by Quatremere and then by Mustafa Fehmi at Bfilaq. Its first translation was made in Turkey by Pirizade Sahib Molla and Ahmet Jevdet Pasha.

Western people were not aware of this philosopher until the beginning of the twelfth/eighteenth century. At the end of the eleventh/seventeenth century, d'Hiberbelot merely referred to him in *Bibliotheca Orientalis*; Sylvestre de Sacy emphasized his importance at the beginning of the thirteenth/nineteenth century.

At the end of that century, Hammer Prugstall wrote articles about him and referred to him as the "Montesquieu of the Arabs." Some years later, Garcin de Quatremere published the original version of the "Introduction" under the title *Prolegomenes d'Ebn Khaldoun* and attempted a summarized translation of it but could not finish it. Baron de Slane succeeded in making a complete trans-lation between 1279/1862 and 1285/1868. In 1351/1938 this translation was reproduced in photoprints.

This translation made it possible for philosophers and sociologists to study the text. In the West since then, *ibn Khaldun* has been often referred to by Western thinkers and some have considered him the founder of a new

science. Some consider him a philosopher of history. Others think he pioneered sociology. For instance, Rappoport, R. Flint, N. Schmidt think he is a philosopher of history. Gumplovitz, R. Maunier, Findikoglu, Sati'u Bey al-Husri, and Schmidt consider him the pioneer of sociology.

According to Gaston Bouthoul, he had both these qualities. He regards him as the leader of the biological conception of society—a conception later worked out in their own way by Vico, Montesquieu, and Marx. F. Schulz wrote many articles on Ibn Khaldun in the *Journal Asiatique* (Paris, 1303/1885). Graberg of Hemso, Franz Rosenthal, von Kremer, Lewine, G. Bouthoul, Gabrieli, Stefano Colosio, Ferreiro, Carra de Vaux, T. J. de Boer, G. Richter, Gauthier, A. Bombaci, Charles Issawi, W. Fischel, D. B. MacDonald, Breisig, H. A. R. Gibb, R. Alte-mira, etc., have referred to him since the end of the last century. As a result of this strong interest shown by the Orientalists in him, his conceptions of history and society have had an influence on some contemporary philosophers of history such as Spengler and Breisig.

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Chapter 69: Influence of Muslim thought on the East

Introduction

Gibbon describes the rise and expansion of Islam as one of the most memor-able revolutions which has impressed a new and lasting character on the nations of the world. Beginning with a small following, ill-equipped financially and militarily, Islam turned out eventually a mighty force, wielding its scepter of authority over a world greater than that of Alexander the Great, greater than that of Rome, and that too acquired in a very much shorter period.

Hardly fifty years had passed since Prophet Muhammad was commissioned by God to spread His gospel of truth when the Muslims planted the banner of Islam on the confines of India on the one side, and on the shores of the Atlantic on the other. Islam began to spread after the migration (hijrah) of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina. Conversions took place on an un-precedented scale. The new ideology inspired the Arabs as no other ideology had done before; it filled their hearts with longings both mundane and supra-mundane and enabled them to accomplish in an incredibly short time what would have otherwise required centuries of well-planned and well-calculated strategy.

The amazing success of the Arab nation was due not only to their organiza-tion, zeal, and aspiration, but also and in a large measure to the unifying action of Islam and the inspiring and revolutionary nature of its social programme and its ability to lead the masses out of the hopeless situation created by the decay of the antique civilizations of Greece, Rome, Persia, China, and India,¹ and to the all-powerful influence of the Qur'an. None can deny the inherent faith of the early Muslims in the ultimate triumph of their cause, actuated as that faith was, not by the baser motives of power, but by the idea of establishing the Kingdom of God on earth.

In the opinion of Georges Rivoire² the objective of the Muslim conquests was the construction of a universal State which “recognized no distinctions of race, nor of social conditions, the only rule it insisted upon was equal justice and fraternity.” Naturally, the physically suffering and morally dis-jointed masses found in Islam a promise of liberation and salvation.

To the places they conquered the Muslims carried not only the flag of Islam but also culture, philosophy, and the study of nature all of which had their source in the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

In what follows, an attempt will be made to trace the course of intellectual revolution which Muslim thought brought about in Persia, Turkey, China, India, and Indonesia.

Persia

Islam was introduced to the land of Persia in 7/628 by the Prophet Muhammad himself, when through an epistle addressed to Khusrau Parviz, the then Persian monarch, he extended an invitation to him and his subjects to embrace Islam: to affirm the unity of God and the apostleship of Muhammad, to do good and to refrain from evil. In olden times no king, much less a Persian potentate, would receive a direct communication from

an unknown person without getting flared up, the act being regarded as an instance of insolence and sacrilege.

Accordingly, the Prophet's letter was torn to pieces and his emissary expelled with ignominy and disgrace. On hearing this, the Prophet felt sad and prophesied an early downfall of Khusrau's Empire. It was during the rule of the first Caliph that, as a response to this insult, the Muslim forces, under the leadership of General Sa'd, invaded Persia and inflicted a terrible defeat on the Persian army in the battle of Qadisiyyah.

This battle served as a prelude to a series of defeats which the Persians suffered at the hands of the Arabs and which sealed their fate in a short period of ten years after the delivery of the Prophet's letter. King Yazdigird, a lad of eighteen, was probably the last ruler to make a futile attempt against the Muslims. His Chinese and Turkish mercenaries deserted him on the first onslaught of the Arabs, while he was himself plundered and assassinated by a villager in whose hut he had taken refuge after fleeing from the battlefield.

In the first/seventh century the Persian Empire like the Byzantine Empire was tottering under the crushing weight of despotism. Persecutions born of religious dissensions were the order of the day. Zoroastrianism was the State religion and its priests, not content with the spiritual authority they enjoyed by virtue of their office, also held positions of trust and responsibility in the administration of the State. A campaign of vilification followed by persecutions started against the adherents of the older forms of religion in Persia, among which ranked Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Sabaeans, Gnostics, and Manichaeans.

All the older faiths and creeds longed to breathe freely and freshly in an atmosphere of toleration and comradeship which they eventually found in the teachings of Islam. Not only was it enjoined by Islam that the Christians and Jews must be treated with fairness and consideration because of their being the "People of the Book," but according to the clear directions of the Prophet the Zoroastrians were also to be treated at par with them, and hence entitled to the same privileges and concessions as enjoyed by the Muslims.

All that was required of the non-Muslims was payment of a nominal poll-tax for the security they enjoyed under the Muslim rule. In return they were exempted not only from the payment of zakat, the State tax which every Muslim had to pay, but also from military service. Those non-Muslims who entered the military service had not to pay the poll-tax.

The conquest of Persia by the Arabs brought relief to the Christians. Earlier, the Sassanid kings had fomented bitter struggles between the Jacobites and the Nestorians; they had also been persecuting the Christian sects within their domains because of the Christian aggression from abroad. King Khusrau II ordered a general persecution of the Christians as he had suffered a defeat at the hands of Heraclius, a Christian monarch. The masses also welcomed the new creed. The Zoroastrian priests held in contempt the working classes-artisans, mechanics, laborers, agriculturists-who defiled fire, earth, and water in pursuance of their trades and professions.

The laboring classes in the Zoroastrian society had the same miserable lot as the Sudras in the caste-ridden Hindu society. In the new faith of the conquerors, the common man found a panacea to most of the social ills from

which he had so terribly suffered. Islam recognizes no distinctions of caste and occupation; it gives no preference to one class of individuals over another save on the basis of merit; and advocates a theory of human brotherhood which transcends geographical and political limits.

With the downfall of the Sassanid dynasty, Zoroastrianism lost its powerful support. In the altered circumstances it found it extremely difficult to hold its own against the contending forces competing for supremacy. To its spiritual bankruptcy may be added the social confusion for which its priests were chiefly responsible. The Zoroastrian masses welcomed the new faith because of its liberalism, dynamism, and absence of parochialism.

They were also drawn towards it because of the many similarities between their faith and the new one. Instead of Ahura Mazda and Ahriman, they found Allah and Iblis; they also got their angels and demons, their stories about the creation of man and his resurrection, about heaven and hell and about sundry things similar to those they found in their own religion. Besides all this, they discovered that the ethics of Islam was not very different from theirs. Under the Muslim rule they began to enjoy a remarkable degree of toleration; their religious practices were respected and their fire-temples safeguarded.³

Besides the causes enumerated above for the spread of Islam in Persia mention may also be made of the marriage of Shahrbanu, a daughter of Yazdigird-the last monarch of the Sassanid dynasty-with Husain, the son of 'Ali. Consequently, in the descendants of Husain and Shahrbanu, the Persians could see the heirs to their ancient kings. This also accounts to some extent for the rise of Shi'ism as a separate sect in Persia and the devotion of the Persians to the 'Alids. Islam lost its alien character and appealed to the patriotic feelings of the average Persian, as he felt that, in addition to other advantages, he gained through the aforesaid marriage alliance a reassertion of his native values and traditions.

Persia had a remarkable culture and a highly developed civilization many centuries before the advent of Islam. In olden times, she was the cradle of thoughts and beliefs which supplied religion and philosophy to Persians and non-Persians. She was also the centre of a mighty political organization, and her theories of statecraft and administration became a model to the Turks.

The intellectual aspect of the pre-Muslim Persian culture was determined by the philosophies of Zoroaster, Mani, and Mazdak-more or less dualistic despite a tinge of monotheism. The pre-Sassanian thought indicated a tendency towards monotheism, especially in Zoroaster, but the tendency became a dominant feature of Persian thought, almost an indubitable truth, only after the Muslim conquest. The dualism of Good and Evil yielded place to the dualism of God and matter.

The 'Abbasid Caliphate provided the most congenial atmosphere to the development of philosophy. As a result of Muslim influence, the Persians became the leaders of thought. Among the names of the foremost Persian thinkers may be mentioned those of Ibn Miskawaih, Ibn Sina, al-ghazali, Fakhr al-Din Razi, Nasir al-Din Tasi, Mulla Sadra.

The encyclopedists, Ikhwan al-Safa, though not original in their contributions, are also worthy of mention. They had among them some good

scholars like Zaid, son of Rifa'a, abu SulAi-man Muhammad of Bust, 'Ali of Zanzan, abu Ahmad Mihrajani and 'Aufi.⁴ Persian Sufism also contains some very great names such as abu Saïd ibn abi al-Khair, 'Attar, Jalal al-Din Rilmi, Sa'di, Hafiz, al-Jili, and Jami.

From Persia, Islam spread to China, Turkey. Afghanistan, India, and Indonesia.

China, Turkey and Afghanistan

Islam was carried over to China by Muslim merchants. It was firmly planted there by Arab troops who fought for Su Tsung (139/756) and settled in China after the successful conclusion of the war.

Arnold thinks that there is no direct evidence of any proselytizing activity on the part of the Muslims in China. The entire Muslim population of the land consists of the descendants of the immigrants from Arabia, Persia, Turkey, and other Muslim territories as a result of Mongol conquests.⁵ The number of Muslims in China is estimated at about thirty million.⁶ The Chinese Muslims have, however, identified themselves with the rest of their country-men, in spite of their religious differences.

The Afghans believe that they were invited to Islam by Khalid bin Walid in the first/seventh century. But the earliest record of their conversion to Islam dates from the reign of al-Mamdn (198-218/813-833) when a king of Kabul was converted to Islam. His successors, however, reverted to Buddhism. Afghanistan was won for Islam in 258/871 by Ya'qub bin Laith, but Islamic ideas did not catch the imagination of the masses until after the conquest of the country by Subuktigin and Mahmfd of Chaznah.

The invasion of Chingiz Khan on Muslim Asia is regarded as the greatest calamity that has ever fallen on the human race. Like the huge waves of a mighty cyclone, it swept over the lands of Bukhara, Khiva, Khurasan, Iraq, and Russia. Not only did Chingiz Khan plunder whatever he laid his hands on, but he also destroyed seats of learning and the precincts of Islamic civilization.

After his death, his Empire was divided among his sons. Persia fell to the lot of Tuli, one of whose descendants, Hulagu, was destined to found a dynasty which lasted for about a century and a half. The official religion of the Mongols was Shamanism, which, being a primitive type of religion could not hold its own against the organized religions prevalent in the lands over which the Mongols ruled.

Islam had the least chance of success as the Mongols had established their kingdom on the ruins of the Muslim Empire. But it is one of the surprises of human history that the conquered became the con-querors. The Mongols eventually accepted Islam-a religion the annihilation of which they had planned. With the conversion of the Mongol king to Islam this religion got a chance of spreading to Turkestan, Siberia, and Russia.

The Turks originally inhabited certain parts of Central Asia, particularly Mongolia, Siberia, and Turkestan. They did not profess any of the Semitic or non-Semitic faiths. They worshipped, like most primitive tribes of Asia, the sky, the earth, and water. Their religion lay in deifying the forces of nature and propitiating them by offerings, magic, and incantations. Before

their acceptance of Islam they had come under the influence of Buddhism, Manichaeism, Judaism, and Christianity.

But none of these creeds could win them over permanently to its side. It was Islam which they accepted finally in the fourth/tenth century. Several reasons have been advanced for the triumph of Islam, but the most cogent one out of these, according to G. L. Lewis, “was the fact that acceptance of Islam automatically conferred citizen rights in a vast and flourishing civilization.”⁷

It was towards the middle of the seventh/thirteenth century that a small band of nomad Turks migrated from Khurasan under Sulaiman Shah. Driven by Mongols they hoped to find shelter in Asia Minor. In the rulers of this area they found people of a kindred race, the Saljuqian Turks, whose kingdom was disintegrating due to disputes of succession and invasions from Central Asia. Taking advantage of the decadent conditions, Ertoghrul and Dundar, two sons of Sulaiman, established themselves in a territory ceded by the Saljuqs in recognition of their military assistance. To `Uthman, the son of Ertoghrul, however, goes the credit of laying a secure foundation for the Turkish Empire.

Though the Saljuqs were nomad tribesmen, they evinced keen interest in the civilizations of the Persians and the Greeks with whom they came in contact. During the sixth/twelfth century, Anatolia, Qunyah, and Erzerum became covered with architectural designs inspired by the Persian and the Greek art, They also “encouraged religious thinkers and philosophers. The famous Jalal al-Din Riimi flourished under their auspices in Qunyah, and so did others of the Sufi school.”⁸

The Ottoman Turks who replaced the Saljuqs were no less ardent in furthering the cause of learning and literature. It is said about `Ut-hman that as he lay on his death-bed, he advised his sons to “promote the learned to honour ... and whatsoever place thou hearest of a learned man, let honour, magnificence, and clemency attend him.”⁹

Ottoman literature is very extensive, comprising every species of letters then current. Among the earlier poets may be mentioned Ghazi Fadil, Shaikhi, Mir 'Ali Shir Nawa'i, Abmad Pasha, Najati, Dhati, Zainab, Mihri, and ibn Kamal. They wrote lyrics, and also thoughtful poems explaining the knotty problems of life through allegories and stories of animals and birds. Among the later poets who give evidence of greater poise and balance may be mentioned Fudiili, Bagi, Nefi, Nabi, and Nadim. They introduced new strains and new modes of thinking in poetry. Among the prose-writers, the names of 'Ali Chalabi, Avliya Efendi, Katib Chalabi may be mentioned. They wrote on history, chronology, geography, travels, and other subjects.¹⁰

All this shows that, like other Muslim countries, Turkey espoused the cause of learning and literature. The incentive was, however, provided by the religion of Islam, which the Turks had finally accepted.

India

The impact of Islam on Hinduism is a phenomenon of remarkable significance. It is regretted that the Western writers as well as those of India (with the sole exception of Dr. Tara Chand) have in their works either ignored this fact altogether or assigned to it an insignificant place in the

history of Indian thought. In this section, it is intended to bring out the extent and significance of those ideas and beliefs which had their source in Muslim philosophy and religion and which in course of time, through personal contacts, religious disputations, discussions, and exchange of views, colored and changed to a very substantial degree the complexion of Hindu thought and gave it a new orientation and direction.

There is no denying the fact that the Muslims were also influenced by Hinduism in some very important respects. They borrowed from the Hindus some aspects of mysticism and some mores, especially their caste-system, funeral and birth rites, marriage customs, untouchability which they practised against sweepers, and a host of other things-good and bad-which it is needless to enumerate. But the main tenets of the Hindu creed had no influence on Muslim ideology and code of life. No Muslim thinker of any importance has ever accepted the doctrines of transmigration, incarnation, karma, and polytheism in any shape or form, and these doctrines constitute the very soul and spirit of Hinduism.

On the contrary, monotheistic ideas of the Muslims together with their belief in the universal brotherhood of mankind were adopted by the Hindus which they bandied about as of Hindu origin. Indian philosophy after the first/seventh century has evinced keener interest in monotheism and tasteless society; it has also laid less emphasis on ritualism and negativism in life. This change may be due to several sociological and technological forces among which the advent of Islam in India must be ranked as a major factor of great cultural and philosophical importance.

In the event of two cultures meeting together the dominant one pushes the weaker one to the periphery and occupies the centre itself. Something of the same sort happened in the case of Hindu culture and beliefs. In the ideological struggle which ensued Muslim infiltration into India, the native culture, finding itself unequal to the incoming one, had to relinquish the central position.

In what follows an attempt will be made to explain very briefly this remarkable phenomenon. After a short historical survey of the cultural contact, Muslim influence will be traced first up to Sankara, then from Sankara to Ramanuja, and lastly from Ramanuja down to the present times.

Cultural Contacts

The impact of Islam on Indian culture, thought, and religion was felt as early as the second/eighth century if not earlier. The writings of Muslim historians and travellers show that it was in South India, on the Malabar Coast, that the Muslims who were often preachers of their faith first settled as traders. Akbar Shah Khan¹¹ reports of the tomb of a Companion of the Prophet, named Tamim Ansari at Mylapur, twelve miles south of Madras. Islam also penetrated Ceylon, Ibn Battutah found the tombs of several preachers and saints in Ceylon during his travels. He mentions the names of Shaikh 'Abd Allah Hanif, Shaikh 'Uthman, and Baba Tahir among others.

Historical evidence proves unmistakably that the first Arab fleet appeared on Indian waters in 15/636 and was repulsed. But about the end of the first/ seventh century, says Rawlinson, the Muslim Arabs settled on the Malabar Coast, and this fact is corroborated by Francis Day in his Land o/

the Permals, and by Sturrock in his South Kanara and Madras Districts Manuals. Humayun Kabir writes, "Innes, in his Malabar and Anjangode District Gazetteer, quotes an inscription of a tomb from Kollam of one 'Ali who died there in 166/788.

Further circumstantial evidence is offered by the revolt in 141/ 758 of a colony of Muslims established at Canton in China. It is obvious that this colony could not have been founded without intermediate stations, of which the Malabar Coast was likely to be one. Caldwell picked up near Kayala-pattan in Tinnevely, near the mouth of the Tamraparni, a number of Arab coins bearing dates from 71/690."¹²

Mubammad bin Qasim invaded Sind in 94/712. The expedition was despatched by I,Iajjaj, the viceroy of Iraq and Iran of the Umayyad dynasty. As a result of the conquest of Sind, Islam came to exercise a potent influence on Indian thought and culture. This part of India remained the Far Eastern territory of the Caliphate till 267/880 when the Caliphate began to decline.

The kingdom of Ghhaznah founded by Subuktigin who conquered Peshawar in 380/990 was a direct result of the weakening of the Caliphate. The aggressive policy of Subuktigin was followed by his ambitious and energetic son Mahmud and by a series of Mughul, Tartar, Khurasani, and Afghan leaders. It was never the intention of the Muslim invaders to spread or work for their religion. A large number of the natives were converted to Islam not because of the political domination of the Muslims but for other reasons, among which may be ranked the missionary activities of the Sufi thinkers and the intolerable economic condition of the masses coupled with the ignorance of their own religion.

The most important cause of the conversion was, however, the simplicity of the Islamic doctrine: the brotherhood it proclaims, and the equal status it accords to Sudras and non-Sudras alike. Even at the early stages the influence was so great that Dr. Titus mentions eleven out of the several Hindu sects in which a definite mixture of Hindu and Muslim notions and practices prevailed¹³ K. A. Nilkanta admits monotheism and democratic spirit of Islam as potent factors in the evolution of religio-philosophic culture in India and traces in the strictly monotheistic doctrines of Nanak the influence of Islam.¹⁴

It has been observed that Sind formed an outlying province of the Caliphate till 267/880. During this period and particularly during the reigns of al-Mansur, al-Harun, and al-Mamiin attempts were made to understand Indian thought. From Sind, Hindu pundits came to the Court of al-Mansur and presented to him Brahmasiddhanta and Khandakhadyaka, famous astronomical works of Brahma-gupta. Both of these were translated into Arabic. A great impetus to this cultural understanding was afforded by the ministerial family of the Barmakids, who were patrons of Hindu learning in the Court of Harun al-Rashid.

According to al-Biruni, this family came from Balkh where an ancestor of theirs was an official in a Buddhist temple. Arab scholars were sent by this family to India to study Indian thought, while Indian scholars were invited to the Court of Baghdad to explain Hindu learning. In the

fifth/eleventh century al-Muwaffiq and al-Birdni visited India with the object of understanding Indian medicine, astronomy, and philosophy. Al-Biruni was the first to translate Sattkhya of Kapila into Arabic. He also translated Yoga Sutra by Patanjali and introduced Bhagvad-Gita to the Muslims.

The Hindus also evinced eagerness for understanding Muslim religion and thought. Baladhuri writes in the Futuh al-Buldan that during the reign of Harun al-Rashid, a Hindu rajah requested the Caliph to send a scholar to him to expound and discuss the fundamentals of Islam. Mas'udi, a historian, reports that when he arrived in India in 302/914 he found a Brahmani ruler supremely interested in religious discussions. Whenever this ruler heard of a Muslim arriving in his territory he would invite him and entered into religious discussion with him.¹⁵

From the First/Seventh Century to Sarikara

Inter-communication of such an active nature could not but influence the thoughts and beliefs of both the communities. Indian philosophy would have been substantially different from what it is today, had Islam with its “militant democracy,” “liberal rational-ism,” and “uncompromising monotheism” not entered the arena of Indian thought.

There would have been, in all probability, no proofs for the existence of God such as we find in Udavana's Kusumdnjli written in the fourth/tenth century, nor would there have been Sankara about whom Humayun Kabir observes, “Historical factors do not exclude the possibility Sankara's acquaintance with the elements of Islamic thought.”¹⁶ “It is necessary to repeat that most of the elements in the southern school of devotion and philosophy taken singly were derived from ancient systems, but the elements in their totality and in their peculiar emphasis betray a singular approximation to Muslim faith and therefore make the argument for Islamic influence prob-able.”¹⁷ Even today there is a group of Sainkara's followers who do not cremate but bury their dead in the Islamic way.

All the Mu'tazilites, with the solitary exception of al-Jabiz, had discussed philosophy and propounded their theories, before Sankara was born in the last quarter of the second/eighth century. Even al-Jabiz would have died before Sankara, had he not lived up to the age of ninety. The Mu'tazilites were Unitarians par excellence. They would not admit the attribution of eternal qualities to God, for that would mean the existence of other eternals besides the eternal God. Sankara too was an uncompromising monist, believing God to be one and the only reality, all else being illusion.

In the writings of Sankara one finds an increasing emphasis on the unity of God which some people have regarded as an extension of the ancient monotheism of the Upanisads. But this explanation has failed to satisfy a good many Orientalists who find in Sankara's works “something pertaining to the semitic religions especially.”¹⁸ Abu al-Hudhail, a prominent Mu'tazilite, appears to be a pre-cursor of those Hindu monists who maintained that God could be described only in negatives.

Abu al-Hudhail, however, admitted, quite contrary to his fundamental position, that God is knowing, loving, and powerful. The other Mu'tazilites were quick to discover the inconsistency and denied, therefore all positive

attributes to the Supreme Reality. In their hands God became unpredictable as well as unknowable, more of an abstract, impersonal, and absolute principle at the back of the universe than a God conceived as a person with whom any contact could be established. They did believe in the possibility of the beatific vision but strongly repudiated all forms of anthropomorphism.

The majority of the Mu'tazilites were atomists. The universe, they thought, was composed of atoms which were indivisible entities. They divided the physical world into substance and accidents or atoms and bodies. Strict determinism, according to them, governed physical phenomena, while freedom of action characterized human beings.

As we have shown in previous chapters, the Mu'tazilites believed in the cult of reason and endeavoured to reconcile the doctrines of Islam with rationalistic views then prevalent. Quite a good many of them enjoyed State patronage. Bishr, the son of Mu'ammār, was a favorite of the Caliph al-Mamun during whose reign efforts were made to understand Hindu thought and culture through discussions and translations of religious literature. In theological and philosophical discussions, the protagonists of different views had complete freedom to express themselves.

It is not unlikely that in this free exchange of ideas the Hindu participants returned to their homeland with quite a number of rationalistic doctrines having their origin in the Mu'tazilite mode of thought. Communication is rarely one-sided; in free and frank ex-change of ideas the traffic is more often than not two-sided.

The Mu'tazilites could not satisfy the masses because of their exclusive concern with reason and their seemingly unorthodox views. The Ash'arites protested against the religious rationalism of the Mu'tazilites and advocated a middle path between philosophy and orthodoxy. They refuted the Mu'tazilite views, even while they modified the orthodox doctrine. They rejected the Greek and Oriental philosophies, proved Islamic doctrines by the dialectical method, and refuted non-Islamic religions as well as some sects of Islam.

Al-Ash'ari, al-Bagillani, al-Juwaini, al-Ghazali. Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, and ibn Taimiyyah wrote in defence of Islamic theology and in refutation of Greek and particularly Aristotelian thought. Al-Ash'ari was born in c. 260/873, while al-Ghazali, in whose hands the Ash'arite theology reached its final triumph; was born in 450/1058. Al-Ghazali was convinced that the philosophical theory could not form the basis of religious thought and that it was by revelation alone that the essentials of religion could be known. Al-Ghazali asserted that revelation was quite enough and that its ultimate truth could be ascertained only by the experience of the individual. Through ecstasy one could become a knower and receive, so to say, direct communication from God.

In addition to the Mu'tazilites, Ash'arites, and al-Ghazali who touched almost on all problems of philosophical and religious interest and whose theories found a way to the Indian soil through various channels some of which we have mentioned above, there was a long, unbroken line of Sufis, beginning with the early Companions of the Prophet who, like the Prophet

himself, set a model for the Sufis by their intense zeal and enthusiasm for the cause of Islam, by their piety, and by the austere life they led.

The Sufis, among whom may be counted Ibrahim bin Adham (d. 160/783), Fad[bin 'Iyad (d. 185/901), Rabi'ah al-Adwiyah (d. 185/802), were orthodox Muslims with no pantheistic bias; they revelled, however, in self-abandonment, fervent piety, and quietism, carried to the extreme. Rabi'ah conceived of prayer as a free and intimate intercourse with God. Her prayers indicate spontaneous out-pouring of her heart to God. Says she, in one of her prayers, "O my Lord, if I worship Thee from fear of hell, burn me in hell, and if I worship Thee from hope of paradise, exclude me thence, but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, then withhold not from me Thine Eternal Beauty."

From Sanikara to Ramanuja.-By the time of Ramanuja, who was born in 407/1016, a host of Muslim thinkers and Sufis-some of the best philosophers that Islam has ever produced-had expounded and elaborated their thoughts in fine systems. It is very unlikely that their thoughts and theories should have failed to influence Indian thought through religious discussions and philosophical disputations which, as we have seen, took place on a wide scale both on the Indian soil and in the Courts of the Caliphs.

Evidence is not wanting to show that some of the controversies which figured so prominently in Indian philosophy, after Islam had firmly entrenched it-self on the Indian soil, were nothing more than echoes of Muslim thought, in some cases well in others more blatantly expressed.

Sufism now entered a new phase of its development. Asceticism still remained important but it was subordinated to theosophical and gnostic speculations. This position is discernible in the sayings of Ma'riif al-Karkhi (d. 200/815), abu Sulaiman al-Darani (d. 236/850), and Dhu al-Nun Misri. According to Nicholson, Dhu al-Nun is the source of Neo-Platonic elements in Islamic thought. Abu Yazid al-Bistami (d. 260/874) was the first Sufi to propound the doctrine of 'and', and in his teaching Sufism became practically identified with pantheism.

Husain bin Mansur, commonly known as al-Hallaj (b. 244/857), famous for his saying, "I am the Truth," had travelled in East Iran, Gujerat (India), and Central Asia. He maintained that the soul which is immaterial and immortal suffers from its alignment with the body, that the Supreme Being is incomprehensible by the human intellect and imagination, and that union with the Ultimate Reality is possible through suffering. Mansur was not appreciated by his contemporaries owing to some of his unorthodox utterances as a result of which he was executed. It was al-'Dhazali, however, who won recognition for Sufism in Islam.

Apart from the fact that Sufi doctrines and practices must have found their way to India along with other ideas of Muslim origin, there is irrefutable historical evidence to show that Muslim Sufis came in the wake of Muslim conquerors and traders and attracted the people of India by the purity and sublimity of their lives. They transmitted, by their personal contacts and discussions, their whole ideology and the way of life as understood by them and their counterparts in other parts of the Muslim

world. Ibn Hajar 'Asgalani mentions in his *al-Isabah ft Tamyiz al-Sahdbah* a certain Baba Rattan who accepted Islam and visited Mecca twice. He was perhaps the earliest Indian Sufi.

A little later came 'Abd Allah known as Baba Khaki, who died in 101/719 and was buried in Pakdaman cemetery in Lahore. Another saint was Sayyid Salar Mas'ud~,hazi Mian who, in 425/1033, met a martyr's death at the age of nineteen and was buried in Bharaich in the United Provinces. In the same century there came to India another saint of very great eminence and of far greater historical significance than any of his predecessors. He was 'Ali al-Hujwiri, popularly known as Data Ganj Bakhsh, the writer of the well-known work, *Katb/ al-Mahjtb*.

Amongst the Muslim thinkers who flourished between the second/eighth and fifth/eleventh centuries may be mentioned al-Kindi (c. 185/830-260/873), the first philosopher of the Arabs, more renowned as a mathematician and astrologer; al-Farabi (258/870-339/950), who adopted the Neo-Platonic doctrine of emanation; al-Razi (251/865-313/925), the celebrated Muslim physician, physicist, chemist, and philosopher; Miskawaih (d. 421/1030), a Persian moral-ist, philosopher, and physicist; and ibn Sina (370/980-428/1037), the repre-sentative of purer Aristotelianism.

The philosophical thought that had developed from al-Kindi to ibn Sina, that is, before Ramanuja's time, was transplanted in India by the early Muslims, who, in the opinion of Tara Chand, "were men of high rank ... who lived and labored in India, and through their personal contact and influence spread the ideas of Islamic philosophy and mysticism through the length and breadth of India."¹⁹ As a result of this impact, theism became pronounced in Indian philosophy; one comes across proofs for the existence of God for the first time in Udayana's *Kusmaijali*.

The *Kusumanjali* or the Hindu proof of the existence of God was written in the fourth/tenth century.²⁰ Keith says, "To Udayana doubtless belongs the credit of making theism a principal tenet of the school, though we have no reason to suppose him the inventor of the doctrine."²¹ The same is true of the *Vaisesika*. Radha-krishnan observes, "The *Vaisesika* has been regarded as non-theistic. Kanada... the author of the *Vaisesika* Sutras ... does not mention God, but later com-mentators felt that the immutable atoms could not by themselves produce an ordered universe unless a presiding God regulated their activities.

The authorship of the Vedas and the convention of the meaning of words require us to postulate a prime mover. The world cannot be explained by the activities of the atoms alone or by the operation of karma. The system, therefore, adopts the view of God which is found in *Nyaya*."²²

In Indian philosophy the *Nyaya* and the *Vaisesika* are generally treated together, but these systems in fact never formed a single unitary doctrine before the middle of the third/ninth century. Keith puts the date of the syncretism of these two systems in the year 285/898 when Vaeaspati composed his *Nyayasucini-bandhu*.²³ A clear exposition of the combined doctrine is, however, to be found in Udayana "whose date, after many vicissitudes of opinion, is definitely fixed at 374/984 by his own statement

in the Laksnavli.... Much more famous is his Kusumdnjali which is the classic exposition of the proof of God.”²⁴

It is worth remembering that the Nyaya and the Vaisieska were combined together to form a single system, after Islam had penetrated deep into the Indian sub-continent. Both the systems were atheistic and atomistic to begin with, but later they took a theistic turn as a result of Muslim influence.

From Ramanuja up to Date.-Ramanuja (b. 407/1016), a Hindu reformer of southern India, advocated the worship of God with devotion and faith. He recognized love as the guiding principle for the relation not only between man and God but also between man and man. Consequently, all man-made barriers including those of caste were to be discarded and the doors of religion thrown open to all, irrespective of social position arising from caste or color.

Ramanuja admitted Sudras to temples, emphasized self-surrender (prapatti), and adoration of the guru (guru bhakti). His emphasis on self surrender and love of the guru can be traced to Buddhism and Upanisadism but his acceptance of monotheism and the stress he laid upon it was entirely due to the inspiration he received from the new faith which was then being preached to the people by Muslim saints like Nathad Wali, for the erection of whose mosques land was granted by the Hindu king Kun-Pandya ²⁵

While not denying the influence of Buddhism and Upanisadism on the philosophy of Ramanuja, it can be maintained that Islam could have supplied to the Bhakti leader both the idea of submission to the will of God and that of adoration of the spiritual guide. As for adoration of the guru, Ramanuja could have got the clue from the writings of the Sufis and also from his personal contacts with them.

The objective of bhakti, according to Ramanuja, is not the realization of nirvana, but eternal blessedness in the presence of God-a Sufistic belief and not a Buddhistic view. His recommendation of a tasteless society in which Sudras should suffer no indignity because of their birth and his throwing the doors of temples open to the low-caste are a clear evidence of profiting by Muslim religion and Muslim practices.

In the sixth/twelfth century there arose two sects in the South which clearly revealed the influence of Islam. They were the Lingayats and the Siddharis. The Lingayats worshipped one God, who, according to them, reveals Himself, as the world-teacher (Allamah Prabhu). The leader of the movement, Basava, was regarded as an incarnation of Shiva, an Altdmah Prabhu, whose divinity passed on to his successors and representatives. As

love was considered to be the first creation of God, bhakti or devotion was taken to be the ideal of life. This ideal was attainable through treading a path of austerity, resignation, and concentration on God. The Lingayats made no sacrifices, kept no fasts, did not go on pilgrimages, and discarded purification ceremonies. There was no caste and no differences based on birth or sex. Marriage was voluntary, widows were permitted to remarry, the dead were buried, and the doctrine of transmigration of the soul was not believed in.

Siddharis, a group of philosophical rhymists, were more uncompromising in their monotheistic beliefs than the Lingayats. They rejected the authority

of the Vedas and Ssastras and also the theory of metempsychosis. Like the Sufis, they described the Ultimate Reality as Light and conceived of the end of life to be an absorption in God. The Siddharis were also alchemists, and followed Phu al-Nun Misri in this respect.²⁶

The religious reform movement started in the South spread to the North from the eighth/fourteenth century onward. The Muslim conquest of Northern India by the end of seventh/thirteenth century ushered in an era of unpre-cedented revolution in traditional Hindu thought, from the eighth/fourteenth century onward, we find the religious leaders of the North rejecting certain elements of the ancient creed and exhibiting a strong tendency to imbibe new ideas and theories.

Indian architectural designs show a borrowing of certain features from the Arab and Persian styles of architecture; Indian paintings are influenced by the Central Asian and Persian techniques; in Indian literature a common medium arises in the form of Urdu, while Indian technical and scientific disciplines give evidence of a considerable use of terminology and information contained in Muslim works.

In the realm of thought the same phenomenon is evident. Ramananda, who flourished in the first half of the ninth/fifteenth century, is by many regarded as a bridge between the Bhakti movement of the South and that of the North. He travelled far and wide in search of knowledge and had teachers from the various sects of Hinduism, but his soul remained discon-tented till he came in contact with Muslims in Benares.²⁷ Followers of all religions were welcome to his creed. He admitted to his sect disciples from both sexes.

From the teachings of Ramananda arose two schools, one represented by Tulsidasa and the other by Kabir, the former being conservative and the latter radical, but each was concerned in its own way with the evolution of a religion acceptable to the Hindus and Muslims alike. Both lay stress upon devotion; condemned externalia of religion, rituals, and ceremonies; protested against dogma and authority; and maintained that “the divine disclosed it-self in the human race as a whole.”²⁸

Kabir was introduced to Hindu philo-sophy and religion by Ramananda, but he spent a considerable part of his time in the company of the Sufis. Kabir hated caste distinctions, rejected the authority of the six schools of the Indian philosophy, pooh-poohed the theory of the transmigration of souls, and repudiated the doctrine of reincarnation.

In his teachings Kabir was indebted to the Sufis. His central theme was that God cannot be comprehended through intellect but that He can be approached only through bhakti, i. e. to say, through devotion and ecstatic trance. He held that the essence of God is light and thus came close to the fundamental position of the Sufis. Nicholson finds many points of resemblance between his views about the universe expounded in his first Ramaini and the notions of al-Jili and Badr al-Din hid.²⁹

According to Tara Chand, Kabir made an attempt to reproduce, as in Muslim philosophy, the scheme of nine spheres through which the whole creation develops.³⁰ The goal of human life is the realization of union with God for which purpose the services of a guru are absolutely essential.

Consequently, utmost care is to be exercised in the selection of a guru. The guru directs the soul of the disciple along the right path, disciplines his self, and brings him in the living presence of God.

Kabir never recommended renunciation, in spite of his concern with God, and remained till the end of his life a weaver. No doubt, he prescribed a rigorous path of self-discipline, even prophesied disappointments and frustration for the pilgrims, but nowhere did he teach complete withdrawal from the world.

In the latter half of the ninth/fifteenth century was born a redoubtable champion of monotheism in a small village of the Punjab. His parents gave him the name of Nanak and the subsequent generations remember him as Guru Nanak for his piety, cosmopolitanism, and spiritual leadership. He laid the foundation of Sikhism on principles which show clearly and unmistakably the influence of Islamic ideology, beliefs, and practices.

Guru Nanak felt that he was commissioned by the Almighty to launch a campaign for monotheism and a life of righteousness. He condemned polytheistic beliefs and practices, preached non-sectarianism, and admitted no caste distinctions. His ethics, unlike that of the Hindus, was life-affirming, practical, and to some extent puritanical. He recommended righteous living, fear of God, and the obedience of a guru—all Muslim principles—in order to attain salvation which to him was the blending of the light of the soul with that of God.

Nanak realized like the Sufis that God, being incomprehensible through the intellect, can be approached through humility and through understanding one's worthlessness and inadequacies. Despite his love for God, he would allow no anthropomorphic characterization of the Deity, though he remembered Him lovingly sometimes as a husband and sometimes as a bride to relate Him intimately to his own soul.³¹ Guru Nanak did believe in the transmigration of souls and also in hell. Not satisfied with the punishment which the sinners were destined to suffer through repeated births in lower forms, he threatened them with dire punishments as described in the Qur'an in the parable of hell.

Guru Nanak's debt to Islam was so great and his teachings so well steeped in Sufi lore that, according to Tara Chand, "the fact of the matter is that it is much harder to find how much exactly he drew from the Hindu scriptures.

His rare references to them lead one to imagine that Nanak was only superficially acquainted with the Vedic and the Puranic literature."³² In his insistence on the unity and brotherhood of mankind and in his condemnation of idol-worship, caste distinctions, and ritualism, Guru Nanak was as good a Muslim as any other Muslim. It is a pity that the later Gurus were drawn into a whirlpool of politics as a result of which a peace-loving Church was converted into a militant society.

Kabir, Tulsidasa, and Guru Nanak were followed by a host of Hindu thinkers and reformers in the tenth/sixteenth and eleventh/seventeenth centuries who promoted and furthered what in essence were the fundamental principles of Islam. Tuka Ram, a Maratha saint, conceived of God on lines identical with those of Kabir, rejected Vedic sacrifices, idol-worship, and

caste,³³ while Chaitanya, a Brahman by caste, loved the Muslims so much that he had several Muslim disciples. Caitanya preached the unity of God, insisted on love and devotion, song and dance and ecstatic trance for union with God.³³ It can be easily seen that Chaitanya's teachings bore a close resemblance to those of the Sufis.

Coming to modern times, we notice two important movements of the Arya Samaj and the Brahmo Samaj. The former, despite its opposition to Islam, preaches what in reality is the essence of Islam. Swami Dayanand (vide his Satydrath Parkash), the founder of the Arya Samaj movement, denounced idol-worship and ritualism as a corruption of the pure Hindu religion. He also condemned hereditary caste-system and instead favored functional castes.

What is remarkable about him is that he indefatigably preached the doctrine of monotheism which in his opinion could be derived from the Vedas and other sacred books of the Hindus. That monotheism is deducible from the Vedas, may be true. It does not, however, contradict Islam; rather, it ratifies the basic standpoint of Islam that God has been revealing Himself to different nations. Hence if monotheism is found in the Vedas, it would not be surprising to a Muslim. What is, however, surprising is Swami Dayanand's emphasis on this doctrine which is lacking in the pre-Islamic literature of India.

The Brahmo-Samajists have discarded the theory of rebirths. They are also opposed to ritualism, image-worship, and caste-system.

In addition to these two movements in modern Hinduism, there is the Rama-Krishna religious reconstruction movement and the Theosophical Society following a religious and social programme; each of these bears close resemblance to Muslim faith and practice. From India Islam goes to Indonesia.

Indonesia

Before the advent of Islam, the Indonesian Archipelago, the biggest country after China in the Far East and the seventh among the great countries of the world, was ruled over for about a thousand years by the Hindus, who went there as traders in the first or second century A.D. and eventually became rulers through their effective diplomacy and practical common sense. According to Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru,³⁴ the first Hindu immigrants to Indonesia belonged to Southern India.

Being traders they settled on coasts and traded with different lands in sundry articles of daily use. They also brought with them their religion which, because of its superiority, could not fail to influence the natives. There is, however, no historical evidence to show whether it was Buddhism or Hinduism that first came to Indonesia. The Hindus never cultivated the art of history in the early centuries, nor did they devise canons for sifting recorded or oral evidence, with the result that their early history is nothing but a mass of fairy tales founded upon imagination, make believe, or hearsay with no solid rock of facts to stand upon.

The early Hindu settlers in Indonesia have left no record of theirs; consequently, it is difficult to determine the chronological order of Hindu cults and beliefs as they found their way into this new land. It is, however,

conjectured that the form of Buddhism first to enter the Archipelago was Hinayana and that after a considerable period of time the other form of Buddhism, Mahayana, was also introduced.

In the Majaphit period when Hindu culture and Hindu domination were at their highest a new religion arose, which was the result of the fusion of Brahmanism and Buddhism, incorporating in itself some strands of indigenous thoughts and feelings.

In spite of the political and commercial domination of the Hindus, the country as a whole was never converted to Hinduism. In Java, Hinduism had its strongest centre, while Buddhism had the greatest number of its adherents in Sumatra, Malaya, and a few other adjoining and adjacent islands. A large part of the Archipelago, however, remained untouched by Hinduism and continued to revel in idolatry and nature-worship.

In a large majority of the islands, life went on as usual-the same round of festivals, customary observances, and rituals, showing no sign of foreign influence or changed socio-political conditions. Life in these areas was hemmed in by countless superstitions and irrational fears-the products of ignorance and idol-worship. Multiplicity of superstitions led to the creation of innumerable deities, each deity being held responsible for a particular phase of human life or nature. Homage was paid to gods and goddesses out of fear, for their displeasure could bring about disaster, infertility, epidemics, floods, death, and what not.

Consequently, an elaborate ritual, performed meticulously, was required to keep the deities on the right side. Often the ritual was so complicated that a specially trained agency was called for to perform it strictly in accordance with set practices and established laws. There arose thus a priestly class whose function it was to help invoke the sympathy of gods and goddesses through incantations, charms, sacrifices, and offerings-all of these practiced and performed in a characteristic manner and style.

Wherever Hinduism was in ascendancy the Brahmins assumed the functions of priests and arrogated to themselves the power which none else but a person endowed with supernatural powers could have. The priestly class came to wield, in course of time, not only spiritual but also temporal power through their association with Courts and princes, for the kings needed divine help as much as ordinary mortals.

Anxious to keep their power intact, the priests transmitted their knowledge only to their kith and kin. Very often the recipient of the information was the son of the priest who was initiated into the art of performing ceremonies and trained in them with the utmost exactitude and care, for a slight error or omission would bring about the wrath of a god instead of pleasing him. Thus, the priestly class became hereditary, enjoying special privileges and prerogatives.

The society was split up into two classes, with the priestly class at the top, dominating and exploiting the other by its cleverness, sophistry, and chicanery. Because of his colossal ignorance, political servitude, and economic insufficiency, the common man contented himself with the life and fortunes of a serf or an underling.

Hinduism accentuated the prejudice of class distinction; it gave a fillip to idol worship; it augmented rather than diminished the number of deities; and above all it introduced ahirisa, a life-negating ethics and a life-renouncing philosophy. The natural outcome of this attitude was extension in the field of super-stition, an acute sense of individual and collective insecurity together with moral and spiritual bankruptcy on a wide scale.

Islam entered the arena when Hinduism was at the zenith of its glory. The latter was armed with the might of political domination; it had its missionaries all over the Archipelago, who had converted thousands of the natives to their faith; and it had firmly entrenched itself on the soil by its cultural superiority, commercial leadership, and marital relationships. Islam had to fight against heavy odds.

There was no political power to launch a campaign against the Indonesian Hindu rulers. In the middle of the seventh/ thirteenth century when Islam got a foothold in Sumatra, the Muslims all over the world had fallen on evil days. The Fatimids who ruled over the Arab countries, Egypt, and Africa were in a process of disintegration; the `Abbasids were on their last legs; Persia was the vantage ground for self interested upstarts; while Spain, once the pride of Muslim culture and philo-sophy, had forgotten its traditions and was in the throes of death, surrounded as it was by the Christian hordes who were bent upon giving it a short shrift.

In India the Slave dynasty was replaced by the Khaljis, who were busy at that time setting their own house in order and had little time to look to other peoples' affairs. It is evident that under these circumstances no Muslim power was in a position to lend a helping hand to any campaign, much less to one which had no connection with territorial aggrandizement or imperialistic expansionist program.

On the Indonesian soil no gun was fired, nor any sword drawn for the propagation of Islam. Arnold says, "The history of the Malay Archipelago during the last six hundred years furnishes us with one of the most interesting chapters in the story of the spread of Islam by missionary efforts.... In every instance, in the beginning, their work had to be carried on without any patronage or assistance from the rulers of the country, but solely by the force of persuasion, and in many cases in the face of severe opposition, especially on the part of the Spaniards.." ³⁵

Several causes have been listed by historians for the slow and spontaneous spread of Islam throughout Indonesia, but it must be admitted that there is yet no established theory to account for this remarkable phenomenon-unique in the annals of history for its methodology and success.

A common explanation for the religious conquest of Indonesia by Islam is offered in terms of the commercial relations which the Muslim merchants from India established in the middle of the seventh/thirteenth century with the Indonesians. These merchants, it is said, married Indonesian women and secured thereby a respectable position for themselves. In course of time the Indonesian wives together with the slaves of their household furnished a nucleus for the acceptance and spread of Islam.

A little reflection will, however, show that this explanation is no better than a myth and needs to be exploded in the interest of truth. Before exhibiting the hollowness of the explanation, it is interesting to note that even so great an authority as Arnold³⁶ seems to subscribe to it. He quotes approvingly from Padre Gainza who says, “The better to introduce their religion into the country, the Muhammadans adopted the language and many of the customs of the natives, married their women, purchased slaves in order to increase their personal importance, and succeeded finally in incorporating themselves among the chiefs who held the foremost rank in the state.

Since they worked together with greater ability and harmony than the natives, they gradually increased their power more and more, as having numbers of slaves in their possession, they formed a kind of confederacy among themselves and established a sort of monarchy, which they made hereditary in one family.

Though such a confederacy gave them great power, yet they felt the necessity of keeping on friendly terms with the old aristocracy, and of ensuring their freedom to those classes whose support they could not afford to dispense with.” To this quotation Arnold adds, “It must have been in some such way as this that the different Muhammadan settlements in the Malay Archipelago laid a firm political and social basis for their proselytizing efforts.

They did not come as conquerors, like the Spanish in the sixteenth century, or use the sword as an instrument of conversion; nor did they arrogate to them-selves the privileges of a superior and dominant race so as to degrade and oppress the original inhabitants, but coming simply in the guise of traders they employed all their superior intelligence and civilization in the service of their religion. ...”³⁷

This explanation along social lines founded on respect and prosperity is invalidated, according to C. A. O. van Nieuwenhuijze, by the fact “that the type of trade which the foreign Muslims conducted was by no means alien or new to the Indonesian society.”³⁸ The same point of view is presented with much rigour and empirical data by Comp. J. C. van Lour³⁹ to whom the inquisitive reader may turn for further elucidation and clarification.

The object of the refutation is not to deny the role of the early Muslim traders in the dissemination of Islamic beliefs and practices; it is rather to assign to them a proper place in the situation which was extremely complex and comprised far more potent factors than trade and marital relationships. The traders were no better than carriers of a culture or a world-view which could not have gained ground in spite of their zeal and fervor, had it not the strength to stand on its own legs.

Another explanation for the peaceful penetration of Islam into Indonesia is to be found in the socio-political conditions of the urban society which was powerfully influenced by the caste-system that had been introduced by Hinduism. Priesthood had divided the society into two watertight compartments. This and like differences were supported and in a way accentuated by the caste-system which the Hindus had brought with them and introduced.

Hinduism not only ratified bifurcation in the Indonesian society, it also multiplied the then existing divisions, for Hinduism admits of four classes and not only two in society. These divisions based originally on professions became hereditary so that no person, howsoever talented he might be, could change his caste.

A person born Sudra home could by no means shed the social stigma attached to him for having been born in a low-caste home. Intelligence, integrity, talent, and hard work were of no avail in face of the inflexibility of the caste-system. The worst to suffer in this system were those who stood at the lowest rung; they were the most oppressed and the most exploited, but the others too with the exception of the priestly and the Brahmanical class had to suffer different kinds of social indignities and disabilities.

The non-priestly classes, particularly the lower ones, found in Islam a panacea to the ills which like a miasma were eating up the very fabric of the society. Since Islam recognizes no distinctions which divide man from man and recommends a classless and tasteless society, it captured the imagination of the Indonesians, who embraced the new religion to reassert their dignity as human beings and to re-acquire democratic rights to live as free individuals unhampered by artificial man-made restrictions.

The conception of the uni-versal brotherhood of mankind together with the basic equality of all human beings, which Islam advocates so vehemently, proved a dynamite for the foundations of the social structure of Hinduism. Accordingly, Hinduism crum-bled like a house of cards and the Indonesian masses, particularly those living in the urban areas, accepted the new faith in large numbers. From the harbor towns and coastal areas, where the grip of the caste-system was the strongest and the most pinching, Islam spread inland.

Another reason for the success of Islam is to be discovered in the simplicity of the creed that it preaches. It makes no metaphysical presuppositions as is done, for instance, by Buddhism, nor does it demand credence in too many transcendental beings as is the case with Hinduism. Islam is unencumbered by theological subtleties. It simply asserts the godhead of one God and the prophethood of Muhammad and that of others.

The fundamental tenets of Islam are, thus, the fundamental demands of the human intellect. Professor Montet says, "Islam is a religion that is essentially rationalistic in the widest sense of this term considered etymologically and historically.... This fidelity to the fun-damental dogma of the religion, the elemental simplicity of the formula in which it is enunciated ... are so many causes to explain the success of Muhammadan missionary efforts. A creed so precise, so stripped of all theological complexities and consequently so accessible to the ordinary understanding, might be expected to possess and does indeed possess a marvelous power of winning its way into the consciences of men."⁴⁰

Hinduism never accorded with the genius of the Indonesians in spite of the Hindus' long cultural contact with them and their equally long political domination. The average Hindu Indonesian wore his creed like a veneer which left his soul as well as his body almost naked. He yearned for a creed more in line with his natural cravings and intellectual demands. When Islam

presented itself as a rival to Hinduism and heathenism, it quickly acquired victory by the force of its logic and the rationality of its demands.

Another factor which may have contributed to the success of Islam is its theory of human society which releases man from his narrow geographical grooves and makes him a member of the community (ummale) of Islam. National loyalties and political affiliations are subordinated to the larger interests of the Muslim community as a whole.

Not only does this conception emancipate an individual from the prison of self-interest and parochialism, it also provides an anchor-sheet for the forlorn and the neglected. A convert, after having lost his kinship with his clan, can save himself from the pangs of loneliness by conjuring up his association with a bigger whole which recognizes neither territorial limits nor clannish bonds. A thing of this kind is not to be found in other religions, much less in Hinduism, torn as it is by its caste-system, family distinctions, and the practice of untouchability.

Islam has not only the idea of ummah to put an individual in a wider perspective, it has still another idea nobler and richer in content for the rehabilitation and re-establishment of the lonely and the forsaken. This idea is to be found in mysticism which promises to place man in the lap of Infinity. It is said that in the beginning the Indonesians were attracted by the mysticism of Islam rather than by any of its other aspects.

In addition to the reasons enumerated above, one very potent reason for the propagation and success of Islam in foreign lands, particularly in Indonesia, Malay, Indo-China, and the Philippine Islands, was the enthusiasm and sincerity with which Islam was presented by the early Muslim mystics who migrated to these islands of their own accord and settled there temporarily or permanently. Generally, they accompanied the Muslim traders or came in their wake. The first thing they did was to acquaint themselves with the local dialect; this was necessary for transmission and exchange of ideas.

After acquiring proficiency in the native language, the Sufis started propa-gating Islam among the influential and the rich, believing that reform of these would rid the society of most of the ills from which it suffered, and that their conversion would be followed by those of the masses. The unlettered and the unsophisticated people which formed the bulk of the society looked up to their chiefs and nobles for guidance and inspiration. Not able to make a decision themselves, they imitated the high-ups in all matters. Hence the success of a religious ideology among the upper classes, the Sufis thought, would work for the spiritual regeneration.

The Sufis built mosques which often had schools attached to them. From these centers of learning were delivered courses of lectures on Muslim theology, culture, philosophy, and history. Mysticism has a philosophy of a very high order. It replaces the cold formalism of the Shari'ah by an intense and passion-ate longing for the all-loving God and ensures the purification of the heart by treading a well-regulated Path.

The Subs regarded prayers, fasting, and pilgrim-age as means and not ends to be cultivated and pursued for their own sake. But they knew that the means were as much necessary for the spiritual uplift of a person as the

attainment of the end. And, therefore, the early mystics who took upon themselves the burden of carrying the message of God to the four corners of the world stressed the performance of religious duties, such as offering prayers, fasting, going on a pilgrimage, etc., along with acts of super-erogation for winning the pleasure of God.

A brief historical sketch of the growth and development of mysticism in Islam has been provided in an earlier chapter and, therefore, need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that by the end of the seventh/thirteenth century when Islam was imported to Indonesia and other adjacent islands, the theory of mysticism had received its final touches at the hands of the leading Muslim thinkers and divines. According to a number of Orientalists, the best of Muslim religion is to be found in its mysticism.

Maulana Burhan al-Din is said to have been the first Muslim to preach his faith to the islanders. He belonged to the Qadiriyyah order of Sufism which is named after 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (470/1077-561/1166), a saint whose writings, generally orthodox in content, have a tendency to mystical inter-pretation of the Qur'an.

The Maulana also belonged to the Shafi'iyyah sect-one of the four legal schools of Muslim theology named after Imam al-Shafi'i who effected a synthesis of the strict adherence to Tradition of the Maliki with the Hanafi method of *qiyas*, that is to say, with the analogical deduction. Abu Hanifah, the founder of the Hanafi legal school, made free use of his own judgment in deciding between traditions, while Malik ibn Anas maintained the exclusive validity of the accepted traditions. Al-Shafi'i carved a *via media* between these two modes of approach and attempted a synthesis.

Maulana Burhan al-Din was, thus, steeped in the best traditions of Islam. He followed the Shari'ah and was affiliated to the most tolerant and progressive school of Sufism, a school which was neither too liberal nor yet too conservative. The Muslims of the Archipelago at present belong predominantly to the Shafi'iyyah sect and this is due to the teachings of the Maulana.

It is interesting to note that the Shafi'iyyah sect was predominant on the Coromandel and the Malabar Coasts of India when the Muslim traders from these areas first landed in Sumatra and introduced their culture and religion. It may be conjectured in the absence of any historical record that the Maulana belonged to India and travelled with or came in the wake of the Indian Muslim traders who also belonged mostly to the Shafi'iyyah sect as well as to the Qadiriyyah school of mysticism.

Among the Muslim rulers of Sumatra, Sultan Alimad worked ceaselessly for the glory of Islam. During his reign as well as during that of his descendants Muslim missionaries were sent far and wide. Wherever they went, they built mosques and schools to provide permanent centres of devotion and learning. The schools also served as community centres where matters of common interest were discussed.

The King al-Malik al-Zahir, a descendant of Sultan Ahmad, was fond of holding discussions with theologians, and his Court was thronged with men of learning and letters. We have it on the authority of ibn Battutah that the

king had summoned two jurisconsults from Persia for discussion and clarification of some religio-legal issues.

Next to come under the influence of Islam was the Molucca. There is no knowing of the fact how the new religion was introduced, but this much can be inferred from the present cultural condition of the islands that there existed strong traces of Indian and Arabian influence in the life and literature of the inhabitants. Their religion is predominantly Shaf'iyyah, but their culture is steeped in Arabian lore and learning.

The Muslim kings of the Moluccas rendered yeoman's service to the cause of Islam by instituting centres of Muslim culture, literature, history, and philosophy. During the reign of Mansur, the Malayan language adopted the Arabic script. Ancient Indian Muslim literature was transliterated into Malayan Arabic script. Mansur also introduced Islamic constitution in the country, though not completely, for he kept intact the old system of taxation, general administration, and fishing; yet in all other matters he made an attempt to follow the Shafi'iyyah jurisprudence, social polity, and details of administration.

Islam spread to Java through the efforts of the trading mystics of Malay, particularly of Maulana Malik Ibrahim, an Indian national of Gujerat district. The Maulana was not only a Sufi of high order but also a scholar of the first rank and a Hakim of no mean repute. He cured a Hindu dignitary who subsequently embraced Islam and is counted among the nine saints of Java. He is known as Raden Rahmat. The other saints belonged either to the rich Hindu families or to the defunct Majaphit dynasty.

All of them without exception led a life of simplicity, piety, and high religious fervor. They converted thousands to Islam by their example and teaching. A mosque was built where the nine saints met occasionally to discuss matters of common interest. The converts also congregated there to discuss their problems and difficulties. Deputations from foreign lands were also received in this mosque. This shows that the mosque was not only a centre of devotion but also a community centre dedicated to multipurpose activities. So great was the religious ardor that the Muslim converts of Java entertained a keen desire to visit the holy places of Islam; one of them, Sunan Gunang by name, went for pilgrimage to Mecca where he learnt the principles of Islam from Arab teachers, and came back to Java full of enthusiasm for the new faith.

It will take several pages to recount the story of the spread of Islam in other islands of Indonesia. Suffice it to say that its propagation was nothing but a peaceful penetration through the efforts of traders, mystics, and preachers-both native and foreign.⁴¹

Before the advent of Islam, Java had been ruled by Majaphit, a Hindu dynasty, which had fallen on evil days; as a result, the country had become divided into a number of principalities, each owing allegiance to its own chieftain. The people followed either Hinduism or Buddhism, but very often their religion was an admixture of both with a strong overtone of animism and belief in magic and sorcery.

The condition of other islands was no better. The Hindus whose early contacts with the Archipelago were of purely commercial nature⁴² soon

developed colonial and imperialistic designs in the land⁴³ and started a process of "Hinduization," which gave birth to a caste-system as rigid as that in India and provided in addition an appeal to the deification of kings and the ruling class.⁴⁴

After the downfall of the Majaphit dynasty in the ninth/fifteenth century the Muslim rule was firmly established in Java and other islands till the conquest of the Archipelago by the Dutch towards the end of the tenth/sixteenth century. For about two hundred years the Muslims remained at the helm of affairs and contributed substantially to the cultural development of the country.

They tried to rid literature of absurd and obscene stories about gods and goddesses; they worked for the amelioration of the society, and introduced, through translation of Arabic and Persian books, a system of philosophy, mysticism, jurisprudence, and ethics, which had its roots in Muslim thought and religion. That the Indonesian literature of the pre--Muslim period was utterly nonsensical, superstitious, and obscene, has been testified by Crawford⁴⁵ and also by Dr. Richards.⁴⁶ The latter maintains that the purpose of such literature was simply to humor the princely class by its esoteric and fictitious nature.

The Muslim rulers replaced it by healthy literature. Sultan Agung, a ruler of Mataram (1022/1613-1055/1645), wrote a treatise on philosophy, morals, and statecraft; the eldest son of an Egyptian scholar, 'Allamah ibn Hajar al-Hutami, wrote a monumental book on mysticism entitled *Sirat al-Mushlaqin*; ⁴⁷ 'Allamah Nur al-Din compiled a historical work called *Bustan al-Salatin*,⁴⁸ while Tan Muhammad, a premier of Malaya during the reign of Sultan 'Abd al-Jalil, wrote a historical account of the rulers of Malaya and Sumatra.

Besides original publications, a host of Persian and Arabic works were translated. Al-Gbazali's *al-Israr* was translated by 'Abd al-Samad. Sikandar Nanaeh and Mathnatoi of Maulana Rum and *Tuhtat al-Ahrar* of Jami were also rendered into the Malayan language.⁴⁹

The impact of translations and original works on theology, morals, philosophy, and culture of the Indonesians was tremendous. It paved the way to a new type of literature which attempted to deduce morals from stories in which the principal actors and characters were birds, animals, and trees. These anecdotes were written on the pattern of the aforesaid *Malhnawi* of Maulana Rum and *Mantiq al-Tair* of 'Attar, and helped to inculcate a healthy attitude towards world and its affairs.

Instead of ahimsa and life-negating ethics, emphasis was now laid upon effort, struggle, and achievement. Renunciation was eschewed in favor of community living, and a tasteless society was preached for in place of a caste-ridden one. Spiritual values were extolled as against the commercial ones. All this led to a great awakening among the masses. The Indonesians realized as never before that they were connected with one another by ties which transcend caste, creed, and color.

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**A History of Muslim Philosophy Volume 2, Book 7:
The Dark Age (1111/1700-1266/1850)**

Chapter 70: Decline In The Muslim World

The second decline of the Muslim world, its Dark Age, dates roughly from the beginning of the twelfth/eighteenth century to the middle of the thirteenth/ nineteenth century. With the exception of Indonesia where decadence started earlier, all the Muslim countries witnessed a terrible decline not only in their political status but also in their intellectual and cultural life soon after the awakening of Europe from a long slumber, an awakening which was the result of her intellectual, scientific, and philosophical movements.

While the Otto-mans lost their glory after Sulaiman the Magnificent, the Safawids after Shah `Abbas the Great, and the Mughuls in India after Aurangzib, the European nations went from strength to strength, acquiring more and more territories and trade centers from the Muslim rulers, defeating them on land and sea, and finally pronouncing the Muslim empires to be suffering from incurable diseases.

Several reasons have been assigned to this catastrophe, some of which will be discussed in the course of this chapter. Broadly speaking, the reasons are either political or non-political; hence our discussion of them has been divided into two parts-the first dealing with political causes, and the second with the non-political ones. Since the political causes were a little different in each case, the great Muslim empires of this period have been treated separately. Non-political causes, however, have been discussed together.

A. Political Causes of the Catastrophic Decline

1. Turkey

Sulaiman the Magnificent was the last and the greatest of the first ten Ottoman Sultans who together in a period of three centuries raised Turkey from nothing to one of the most dreaded and powerful empires of the world. But climax is generally followed by decline, so we find signs of decadence appearing in the later part of Sulaiman's reign. According to Kotchi Bey, a Turkish historian, the decline or at least the signs of decline are visible towards the end of Sulaiman's reign can be attributed to the following causes.

Sulaiman did not participate regularly in the deliberations of the Council of State but listened to the discussions only from behind a veil. His successors dispensed even with this formality. The result was that the king, instead of profiting from the mature and seasoned advice of the councilors, acted arbitrarily or was in most cases swayed by the opinion of his harem and the prejudiced views of flatterers and fortune-seekers.

Sulaiman would appoint men to offices of trust and responsibility without their having them pass through the grades of lower offices, e.g., Ibrahim was promoted from the post of Master of the Pages to that of Grand Vizier. The criterion of appointments to high offices of the State was friendship, flattery, and the recommendation of the harem and not merit, experience, or intelligence. Sulaiman permitted his favorite viziers to amass wealth. Rustam Pasha, a son-in-law of Sulaiman, remained Grand Vizier for fifteen years. He was skilled, in the art of filling the Government treasury

through exactions of large amounts of money from persons appointed to State offices.

These exactions fixed during Sulaiman's own time became arbitrary and exorbitant later in the hands of his successors, so much so that the office of tax-collector went to the highest bidder. State officials whether high or low tried their utmost to amass as much wealth as possible by fair or foul means.

This tendency to grow richer and richer through corruption, nepotism, and exploitation, though immediately beneficial, often led the officials concerned into troubles. The bare fact that an officer was enormously rich was a sufficient proof of his being dishonest and corrupt, and, therefore, a sufficient ground for his being exposed to condemnation. Many rich officers lost their lives on charges of corruption, and their property was confiscated by the Government.

The immediate effect of these malpractices was not great, but in course of time, especially when the Turkish Empire fell on evil days, they assumed enormous importance and became potent causes for its downfall.

A brief mention may be made of the Janissaries who revolted against Sulaiman the Magnificent when he withdrew from Vienna in 936/1529 realizing the futility of his campaign. The Janissaries were a military force recruited from the Christian youth. They came into being during the reign of Murad I (760/1359-790/1389). They not only proved a weapon of rare strength in wars against the enemies of the Ottoman Empire, but also, because of their loyalty and devotion, helped the Sultans in keeping turbulent forces under control.

The Janissaries were a useful instrument in the hands of strong Sultans, but in the times of degenerate Sultans they became a kind of Praetorian Guard, dictating the deposition of Sultans and the nomination of their successors. In the eleventh/seventeenth and the twelfth/eighteenth centuries, they became a menace to the State and were given short shrift by Mahmud II in 1242/1826.

Another important event which took place during the reign of Sulaiman the Magnificent was his granting of preferential treatment to France in matters of trade and commerce, and also his allowing her to establish consular courts and exercise judicial rights over the French subjects in the Ottoman Empire. This was done to counteract, through alliance with France, the power of the Holy Roman Empire in South-East Europe. After Sulaiman, when the Sultans lost their prestige, other Christian powers demanded the same political and commercial concessions as were accorded to the French and obtained them as a matter of fact.

This proved very dangerous. It not only led the foreign Christian powers to foment troubles on the plea that discrimination was practiced against the Christians but it also made the Christian subjects look to anti-Ottoman powers for help and survival. The loyalty of the Christian subjects thus became divided; indeed, their loyalty to outside powers exceeded their loyalty to the Ottoman Sultans. To every subsequent reform that the young Turks aimed at, "capitulations" served as a major handicap.

It was not possible to weld the Christians into the body politic, so they were jealous of their separate entity. Their separatist feelings were fanned

partly by the agents of foreign Christian powers and partly by the mishandling of the situation by the unintelligent and unimaginative Sultans of the later period.

The Sultans who succeeded Sulaiman possessed neither the imagination nor the political acumen necessary to keep a vast empire intact. They frittered away their energies in petty squabbles, meaningless intrigues, and frivolous avocations. Little did they realize that in an age of technology and science their old weapons would prove worse than useless. Their defeat in 1094/1683 sealed their fate in Europe. But for the mutual bickering of the European powers, the Ottoman Empire could not have maintained its frontiers for any length of time. Then there was the growth of Western imperialism and also the emergence of Russia as a strong centralized State, both of which turned the scales against the Turks.

In the twelfth/eighteenth century the Muslim empires all over the world began to show signs of weakness and decay. This synchronized with the rapid strides of the European powers in technology and industry. These powers had developed superior naval military equipment as well as war strategy. The Muslim powers, quarrelling as they were among themselves, sought for the latest weapons from the Europeans who found thus a splendid chance to enter into the complexities of Oriental political intrigues and turn them to their advantage.

They meddled in the affairs of the Mughul Empire in India, the Mamluk rulers of Egypt, the Safawid monarchs of Persia, and, last but not least, the Sultans of the Ottoman Empire. The interfering powers were the English, the French, the German, the Dutch, the Spaniards, the Portuguese, and the Russians. This will show that practically every European power, impelled by her superior technical skill and actuated by commercial and imperialistic ambitions, set out to bring under their dominance as much of the Muslim world as they possibly could. The Muslim powers were no match for them.

During this period, the Turks made several attempts to reform the army and the administration of the Ottoman Empire. These reforms go by the name of tanzimat. They were undertaken to save the Empire which had been enfeebled externally and internally, but for one reason or another they all failed.

After the Crimean War, the Turkish Empire continued to decline so much so that it came to be known as the "sick man of Europe"-a sick man whose days were numbered.

The question then is, why did Turkey suffer so miserably that her condition was declared to be incurable, not only by her foes but also by her friends? Many causes have been pointed out in answer to this question. It is said that the in-conclusive wars between the Ottoman and Persian Empires during the tenth/sixteenth to twelfth/eighteenth century weakened and exposed them both to European commercial penetration; that the Ottoman principles of administration were actuated by a desire for the well-being not of the State but of the sovereign; that the tenure of the Pashas was very short and that their high office could be purchased by bribery; and that the authority of the Sultans was weakening as the brief noontide of the Ottoman Empire passed.

It is also alleged that the Ottomans had been in Europe for over two hundred years-an extremely long time for an Oriental dynasty to retain its aggressive-ness. Moreover, the tactics which had sufficed against the lions of Hungary had become hopelessly antiquated by the middle of the eleventh/seventeenth century. Coupled with these causes was the degeneracy of the Sultans. The supreme power of the State had fallen into the hands of the viziers or those of the harem-the centers of intrigues and corruption.

More explicitly, the allegation is that it was neither the Sultan who governed, nor the viziers who administered; the power was actually in the hands of necromancers and purchased slave-girls. Moreover, there were outrageous taxes and general corruption in the army, in which promotions were likewise made through bribery and not on merit.

Even after all this has been admitted, it remains a fact that the explanation in terms of external and internal factors would be incomplete unless one keeps in view the machinations of foreign powers which finally destroyed the Empire. "It was not corruption, not misgovernment, not inefficiency-that spelt the ruin of the Ottoman Empire. These things had always been present, but the Empire had remained. What destroyed it in the end was the pressure of European ambitions.... The Ottoman Empire died of Europe. "¹

2. Persia

Two powers, the Uzbeks (Uzbegs) in Turkestan and the Safawids in Iran, arose after the break-up of the Timurid power. It was at the hands of Shaibani Khan, the first ruler of the Uzbeks, that Babur, the founder of Mughul dynasty in India, suffered defeat. Because of his discomfiture, Babur turned his attention to India and laid the foundation of an empire which lasted till 1274/1857.

The Safawids began as leaders of a Shi'ite dervish-order in Azharbaijan and turned to politics after the collapse of the Timurid Empire when every chieftain took advantage of the chaotic conditions and tried to establish himself. In 904/1499 their leader Isma'il proclaimed himself the leader of all Shi'ites, and three years later he took the title of Shah. To the Safawids belongs the credit of making Persia a nation once again. The rise of the Safawid dynasty marks the restoration of the Persian Empire and the re-creation of Persian nationality.

The Safawid State reached its peak during the reign of Shah 'Abbas the Great. With a few exceptions, the successors of Shah 'Abbas were a band of incompetent persons who reveled in atrocities, and exhibited utter indifference to serious matters of the State. The major cause of the misfortune of the Persians is associated with the interference of the Europeans in the internal affairs of Muslim countries on one pretext or another.

The Napoleonic invasion of Egypt in 1213/1798 marks the beginning of modern history in Iran. Napo-leon's plan to reach India through Iran was taken seriously by the English. Hence they advanced from the east. With Russia on the north and the English on the east Persia was virtually encircled. It was only on the Turkish side that her frontiers remained

undisputed. Due to encirclement, Persia could do nothing but promote the cause of Britain and Russia in turn.

Many wars were fought between Persia and Afghanistan at the instance of Britain or Russia. Both these powers, however, extended their sphere of influence to consolidate and protect their respective interests. There was nothing to choose between the Russians and the British; both vied with each other in the matter of exploitation and territorial aggrandizement.

The intrigues of the West in Iran should not be made a ground for putting the responsibility of Iranian decline on the shoulders of the West alone. The Iranians themselves were mainly responsible for it. If one's own house is in disorder, one should not blame others for making capital out of it. In a country where political cohesion is lacking, where there is intellectual stagnation, religious intolerance, despotism, and authoritarianism, and where there is sloth, apathy, and indifference, it would not be surprising if it sinks. During this period Iran did not produce a single thinker of repute in any branch of knowledge. With the exception of a few poets, prose-writers, and historians there was no person worth mentioning.

3. India

The third great Muslim empire, i.e., that of the Mughuls in India, was at its zenith during the times of Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzib. After Aurangzib, who died in 1119/1707, there was a rapid decline. The causes of the decline of the Mughul Empire were many. The Ottoman Empire reached its peak during the regime of Sulaiman the Magnificent, the Safawids' in the reign of Shah 'Abbas the Great, and the Mughul Empire in the time of Aurangzib. As Sulaiman the Magnificent and Shah 'Abbas the Great were followed by a long line of incompetent successors, so was Aurangzib.

In the authoritarian type of society, if kingship becomes hereditary, it is inevitable that many kings should be found with little or no initiative. And once rot sets in, it is very difficult to check it. In Muslim Empires one weakling was followed by another and that by still another and thus what had been achieved by the personal valor of a few great persons disappeared in no time. All the successors of Aurangzib, without exception, were persons of low worth.

They reveled in sensuous pleasures neglecting the onerous duties of the State. Instead of remedying the evils that had crept into the Mughul body politic, they kept themselves busy in luxuries and petty intrigues.

The Mughul nobility was in no better condition. They were also corrupted by a life of affluence, ease, and indolence. Along with the Mughul nobility, the army also deteriorated.

The foreign powers were quick to perceive the incapacity and rottenness of the Mughul army and also of the persons who presided over the destiny of the Mughul Empire.

In 1152/1739, Nadir Shah invaded India. By his orders not only were the inhabitants of Delhi massacred but also the entire wealth of the Mughuls was taken away. Nadir's invasion left the Mughul Empire "bleeding and prostrate." And then it was given no time to recuperate as Nadir Shah's

invasion was followed by a wave of invasions conducted by an Afghan chief of the Abdali clan, known as Ahmad Shah Abdali.

From 1161/1748 to 1181/1767, Ahmad Shah led several expeditions and inflicted a series of defeats on the Mughuls, leaving them, after each invasion, very much weaker than before. His invasions not only broke the back of the Mughul army, but also left the country financially crippled. Like Nadir Shah he took away everything he could lay his hands on, leaving the country destitute. These invasions hastened the dismemberment of the tottering Empire.

During the reign of Aurangzib, Hindus had started raising their heads here and there, taking advantage of the unwieldiness of the Empire and the long absence of the monarch from the capital. They were also dreaming of reviving their past by establishing a Hindu Empire like that of Asoka or Harsha. Hence the Rajputs, the Satnamis, the Bundels, the Sikhs, and the Jats of Mathura revolted against Aurangzib and kept him busy till his end. After his death the turbulent elements grew stronger. A few new Muslim States-the 'Deccan, Oudh, and the Bengal Subah-which were practically independent of the titular Delhi Emperor, though outwardly avowing allegiance to his nominal authority, also arose and added to this confusion.

Neither the Muslims nor the Hindus were destined to build lasting king-doms on the ruins of the Mughul Empire. The nation which ultimately succeed-ed to found a mighty empire greater than any which India had witnessed hitherto entered the portals of India in the guise of traders, seeking commercial privileges and concessions. Having secured a foothold, they began interfering in the internal affairs of the State in one pretext or another. Ultimately, because of their cleverness, superior military strategy, and latest war materials, they wiped off all the forces contending for supremacy on the Indian soil and became the undisputed masters of the sub-continent for one century and a half.

These were the British who, acting on the maxim "flag follows trade," took advantage of the military weakness, intellectual stagnation, and mutual differences of the rulers, both Hindu and Muslim. True, there were other European powers like the Dutch, the Portuguese, and the French fighting for supremacy, but none of them succeeded against British diplomacy and naval strength and also perhaps against the Britons' superior knowledge of the Eastern mind.

The British, like the Dutch in Indonesia, and like themselves and the Rus-sians in Persia and the Ottoman dominions, played off one ruling power in India against another till these were exhausted and the British became the masters of the land. The War of Independence in 1273/1857 was the last effort on the part of the masses to throw off the foreign yoke.

But it failed miserably and, on the charge of engineering the revolt, the last Mughul ruler was exiled by the British to Rangoon where he died in extreme penury. That sounded the death-knell of the great Mughul Empire. After the War of In-dependence the Indian Muslims were almost dead politically, intellectually, and socially. It was the darkest period for the Muslims of India.

As it always happens when a great culture is at its zenith, the symptoms of its decline begin to reappear, even so it is during its darkest periods that the faint rays of light appear, unless its spark of life is dead and it is destined to speedy extinction. This period of decadence was not a period of unmitigated gloom. One good thing that happened was the development of the Urdu language--a mixture of Persian, Arabic, Hindi, and Sanskrit words, but altogether a new language with infinite capacity to develop and to expand. Another good thing was the birth of Shah Wali Allah whose teachings and contributions to the culture and thought of the Indian Muslims will be found in another chapter of this work.

4. Indonesia

Among the causes which led to the break-up of the Muslim rule in Indonesia the most important was the intrusion of the foreign powers, the Portuguese, the Spaniards, the English, and the Dutch. The first to arrive in the country were the Portuguese, who at the end of the middle ages had built up a formidable naval power and had gained valuable experience of sea-warfare through a long series of exploration and piratical adventures. They were, moreover, charged with a strong crusading spirit which impelled them to destroy Islam.²

To the religious motive was added, in course of time, an intense economic urge to wrest the trade monopoly from the Arabs. "Happily it was possible to serve God and Mammon at the same time, for by striking at Arab trade in the Indian Ocean, Portugal aimed a blow at the Ottoman Empire, which drew the major part of its revenue from the spice monopoly."³

Because of their superior war strategy, the Portuguese, notwithstanding the opposition of the Arabs and other Muslim traders, could expand their power and influence in no time. Their first viceroy, Francis de Almeida, had no desire to extend his sphere of influence beyond the Malabar Coast and was anxious to remain contented with the commercial gains of that area. His successor, Don Affonso Albuquerque, however, realized that, in order to increase revenue resources to maintain the growing power of the Portuguese, and also to curb the maritime activities of the Muslim traders, who could collect the produce of the Spice Islands, Bengal, Siam, and China from Malacca, it was necessary that the policy of his predecessor should be given up. Accordingly he invaded Malacca on July 1, 1511, under his expansionist program. In the opinion of Crawford, his main motive was to spread Christianity⁴ and to crush the growing power of Islam through the extension of the Portuguese power and blockading of the Muslims' economic resources.

It was during the tenure of Don Affonso Albuquerque that Francis Xavier, a Portuguese Christian evangelist of outstanding merit and ability, was invited to Malacca in 1542/1545 with the express object of spreading Christianity among the natives.⁵ Francis Xavier was well known for his proselytizing activity, which was financially and militarily backed by the Portuguese Government. If the Europeans of those days acted on the principle that the flag followed the trade, they also realized that the perpetuation or stabilization of their imperialistic and colonial program required a vigorous policy of conversions to their faith.

The primary object of Portuguese infiltration in these islands was indeed commercial exploitation, but to this purpose nothing was more helpful than the creation of a solid block among the natives who, because of their religious affinities, would support the foreign government in all matters. As a result of Francis Xavier's missionary efforts, the Portuguese language, culture, and religion came to the notice of the Indonesians. The Portuguese sphere of influence increased and a few nature-worshippers renounced their tribal religion and embraced Christianity. On the whole, the Christian missionary program met a grand failure in Malacca and elsewhere, for nowhere could Christianity supplant Islam. The Spice Islands had been converted to Islam and no amount of coercion or persuasion could lead the inhabitants away from it. .

After their conquest, the Portuguese promulgated laws to crush the commercial activities of Muslim and Indian traders. In this mission Albuquerque had the support of an exiled Muslim Jaja Utimutis and a non-Muslim officer, Ninachetuen. A reign of terror started in Malacca. All anti-Portuguese activities were put down with a strong hand.

The Portuguese exploited the internal differences and the mutual jealousies of the native rulers. Ambassadors came to Malacca from the Sultans of Siam, Annam, Java, and Sumatra to seek the goodwill of the Portuguese and to obtain from them modern weapons of warfare which they could use against their rivals. All this helped the Portuguese to establish themselves firmly on the Indonesian soil. Military alliance with some of the important rulers of the islands encouraged Albuquerque to dispatch his fleet to weaker and less organized islands.

It was not difficult for the Portuguese to subjugate small principalities scattered here and there over the islands, for where their military strategy failed, their political diplomacy succeeded. The annals of the Spice Islands are replete with tales of Portuguese atrocities, horror, and deceit. Sir Hugue Clifford describes the Portuguese as swarming into Asia in a spirit of brigandage.⁶ Their cruel and capricious behavior was stimulated by their crusading zeal.

The Spaniards were the second foreign power to exploit the Indonesians; they were drawn towards these islands by the enormous profits which the Portuguese had made out of their monopoly of the spices. Thus, war ensued between the two, which continued for three years. In 936/1529, a treaty was concluded between the contending powers, according to which both Spaniards and Portuguese could rule over different parts of Malacca. Till 937/1530, the Spaniards and the Portuguese were the only two foreign powers contending for supremacy in political domination and commercial exploitation of the Indonesians. They were helped in their designs by the internal differences and mutual jealousies of the ruling chiefs who frequently sought the help of the foreigners to overthrow their rivals.

As in India the English took advantage of the mutual quarrels of the rajahs of the Deccan and Karnatak, so did the Portuguese and the Spaniards exploit the dissensions of the ruling chiefs of Indonesia. Acting on the policy of "divide and rule," the foreign powers conspired to break up the unity of the Muslim Sultans of the islands and later used them as an

instrument in the furtherance of their commercial designs. The natives were struck by the superior strategy and war technology of the foreigners and carried favor with them to obtain their expert advice and the latest war instruments.

Despite their agreement on their respective sphere of influence in the island of Malacca, the Portuguese and the Spaniards could not desist from waging war against each other. Finally, the Spaniards suffered reverses and were expelled from the Spice Islands in 1540. For forty-five years after the expulsion of the Spaniards the Portuguese ruled over the Islands. Their death-knell was sounded by the arrival of the Dutch in 1603/1595. Thus, the third foreign power which was destined to rule over Indonesia for about four hundred years, that is from June 2, 1595, to December 27, 1949-a period of colonialism longer than that vouchsafed to any power so far-was the Dutch.

The Dutch could claim superior war technology and also better war strategy in their struggle against the local potentates, but what helped those most was disintegration prevailing in Indonesia in the eleventh/seventeenth and twelfth/eighteenth centuries and even earlier. The rulers were weakened by internecine wars and were often compelled to contract disadvantageous pacts of military and commercial nature to obtain the latest military weapons from the Dutch and secure their support and blessings in their own designs.

The harmful nature of these pacts can be gauged from the fact that in about a hundred years, that is to say, between 1088/1677 and 1191/1777, the whole of Java lay at the feet of the intruders and what was worse its "merchants and ship-builders lost their occupations and the fisheries and forests were no longer profitable. The Javanese became a people of cultivators and the economic content of their social life was stunted."⁷

The Dutch introduced a system of indirect administration through which they utilized the native aristocracy for the furtherance of their own designs.

The decadent elements of the Indonesian society were supported by the arms of the Dutch so long as they helped them in the commercial exploitation of the populace, that is to say, so long as they deposited in the Dutch coffers whatever amount the Dutch wanted from the different sections of the society. The result was appalling. While the utterly rotten aristocracy acquired great powers with regard to the populace, it degenerated into a pliable tool in the hands of the Dutch and lost its independence.

Before the arrival of the Dutch, the Chinese had their trading concerns in Java, though much limited in scope. The Dutch looked on them with a favorable eye, as it was felt by them that there were no people in the world that served them better than the Chinese; too many of them could not be brought to Batavia.⁸

Consequently, the Chinese were increasingly absorbed in the country's economy. Not only did they retain imports as originally planned but they also took part in the exports of the Dutch East India Company. Because of the privileges and powers which the Chinese enjoyed, their relations with the natives resembled those of the appointed aristocrats.

At the beginning of the twelfth/eighteenth century the Company stood at the zenith of its power. But it collapsed in 1213/1798 and the Indonesian territory was placed under the direct authority of the Dutch Government. The aristocratic members of the Indonesian society, however, continued to occupy the topmost positions. To strengthen their positions, the offices which they held were made hereditary, and they were allowed to retain a certain percentage of the crop collected from the natives.

The aristocratic nominee of the Dutch Government was answerable to the Dutch officer above him and not to the peasantry whom he kept under strict bondage. The peasants were required not only to pay fixed land-tax, but also to sow crops needed by the Government and to put in labor to the amount desired by his foreign and local bosses. The result of this tyrannous system was that Indonesia was often visited by widespread famines which took a heavy toll of human and animal life.

As the entire trade was in the hands of the Dutch and the Chinese, the Indonesians could acquire neither trading experience nor contact with the market economy. In the words of Van der Kolff, the cultivation system "caused a gap between the producer and the market whereby there was no knowledge of the market, no outlet for enterprise, and no possibility of develop-ing a native trading class."⁹

Moreover, the Dutch-Chinese monopolists fleeced the peasant to such a degree that it killed all his creative qualities and initiative as a farmer. The taxes were so heavy that the peasant was forced to borrow money from the Chinese, the only source of credit, who lent money at ex-orbitant rates of interest. The peasant could pay back the money in kind only; consequently, he was forced to sow the crop acceptable to the creditor and to sell the same at the rate fixed by him.

The Dutch paid no attention to the education of the native inhabitants of the colonies except that they allowed a few families to benefit from learning. According to governmental records, public primary schools were instituted in 1266/1850. There were no secondary schools. No library worth the name was to be found in Indonesia before 1235/1819. Officially, a library with about 20,000 books came into existence in 1262/1846, but no native was allowed to enter its precincts till 1313/1895. It contained Dutch books mostly. The number of Arabic books was negligible.

Politically and intellectually, the Muslim civilization could not sink lower than it did in Indonesia by the middle of the thirteenth/nineteenth century.

B. Non-Political Causes

Several non-political causes can be assigned to the general decay of the Muslim society during the period under review. As these causes operate in all parts of the Muslim world with varying degrees of intensity, it would be better to discuss them all at one place. The political fall of the Muslims was conditioned by factors both external and internal.

As the external factors were almost in all cases due to the interference of the Europeans, so the internal factors were in almost all cases due to the intellectual, moral, and spiritual bankruptcy of the Muslims themselves. Thus, primarily the Muslims them-selves were responsible for their

decadence. The machinations of the imperial-istic nations were helped, or shall we say abetted, by the inefficiency of Muslim rulers and the colossal ignorance of the masses.

So long as the Muslims were in the vanguard of knowledge, they led the civilized world in culture, science, and philosophy. But as soon as they lost interest in free and independent inquiry, they ceased to exist as a dynamic force. Not only in Indonesia which was ruled and exploited by a colonial power for a long time, but also in Persia, Turkey, and India where the semblance of Muslim power existed for some time, one finds absence of interest in scientific pursuit or genuine philosophical quest.

No one can deny the great urge for inductive study that existed among the Muslims in the first few centuries of their era. Nor can one deny the priceless contributions of the Muslims to the world of scientific and cultural thought. Islam can boast of its splendid thinkers in every discipline and in every department of human life. There are great names in the field of physics, medicine, geography, mathematics, astronomy, history, and linguistics-to mention only a few out of the several branches of human knowledge wherein the Muslims scored triumph by virtue of their painstaking study and inductive methods of investigation.

But it is surprising as well as regrettable to note that not a single scientist of any repute existed in the entire Muslim world from the beginning of the twelfth/eighteenth century to the middle of the thirteenth/nineteenth century. On the other hand, what one finds in this period is a condemnation of the modern scientific knowledge because of its supposedly anti-religious tendencies.

While the Muslims gloried in the achievements of the past, they neglected the new weapons of inquiry which the West had discovered with the progress of science and technology. The result was a terrible catastrophe. Whereas the other nations progressed, imbued as they were with modern spirit of inquiry, the Muslims frittered away their energies in fruitless controversies of a theological and trans-empirical nature. Instead of imbibing the results of modern science and conducting inductive inquiries, what they did was to question the compatibility of modern knowledge with their mistaken views of religion and to pooh-pooh it because of its materialistic import.

None really understood the meaning of materialism or for that matter the meaning of spiritualism. What was done, however, was that a dichotomy was created between the two and in all discussions spiritual-ism was overweighed, and materialism run down with all the force that ignorance could muster.

Since the Muslims in the four countries mentioned above lacked the capacity to cope with the demands of the modern scientific world, they regressed as it were to the past and took refuge in the long exploded myths and dreams- which were very good for the time for which these were conceived and nurtured but quite out of date in the modern world. Little did they realize that a passionate clinging to the past is an indication of mental morbidity which lead eventually to death and destruction. As individuals regress or get fixated under the stress of life, so do nations. When the

realities of life are hard and unpalatable, decadent communities like neurotic individuals take refuge in the past and find solace in their earlier achievements.

Generally speaking, the Muslims of this period evinced no knowledge of that great principle of movement in the social structure of Islam, technically called *ijtihad*. This principle has been variously interpreted by jurists, but all seem to agree, despite their differences, that a reinterpretation of the Qur'anic injunctions for legalistic and extra-legalistic needs of a society is not at all forbidden by Islam. On the other hand, there are *ahadith* of the Prophet which strongly commend the exercise of independent and free inquiry in the domain of jurisprudence and the enactment of laws for the welfare of the community.¹⁰

No doubt, there are differences among the jurists as regards the nature and scope of *ijtihad*. But the existence of this principle and its operation in the early stages of Muslim society is a clear proof of the fact that Islam never accepted a static view of human society. The present is never a replica of the past, nor is future a copy of the present. If exact duplication and identity is abhorred by the course of historical events, how can socio-political enactments of one age apply in totality to the socio-political requirements of another age?

The Muslims of all the four countries under review preferred to rest on their oars and blindly accepted the interpretations of the past. Acceptance of freedom is not an easy task; it involves great dangers as Eric Fromm has amply shown. The human mind flees from freedom, especially if it entails fresh responsibilities and new ventures in the domain of thought. The Muslims miserably lacked the courage to think for themselves and consequently flew to the past for shelter. But the inevitable result of mental procrastination was the creation of a society extremely rigid and immobile in outlook and intellectual framework.

Blind imitation of the past became the hallmark of the Muslims. The verdicts of Imams and jurists were accepted more in letter than in spirit. While the jurists and other religious thinkers never claimed infallibility or finality for their legal and theological decisions, the Muslims thought that the last word had been said on the subject and that amendment or departure amounted to sacrilege. The early thinkers interpreted and applied the tenets of Islam according to the needs and requirements of their time. But to suppose, as the Muslims did, that their solutions were true for all times indicated incapacity to think afresh in accordance with the changing needs of society.

Not only were the early jurists quoted in support of legal and social pronouncements, but also the sayings of the Prophet, quite a good many of which lacked authenticity. No one can deny the relevance of *Hadith*, provided its authenticity is guaranteed by unimpeachable evidence and criteria of sound historical criticism. Some *ahadith* do certainly meet these requirements, but not all.

Unfortunately, the religious divines of this period were not mentally equipped to sift the fabricated and cooked *ahadith* from the genuine ones. Hence all sorts of *ahadith* were dug up to lend authority and weight to what-

ever the divines wanted. As most of them had no acquaintance with old or contemporary scholarship, they relied on cheap commentaries and second-rate catechism. In this way what passed for authority was not the Qur'an or Hadith or the decisions of jurists, but the presentation of them by ignorant and bigoted persons.

As a result of reactionary tendencies, reason became the target of attack and even an object of ridicule. It was contended that reason was foreign to religious truths and led only to their distortion and misrepresentation. Consequently, all domains of knowledge were given scant attention and their findings were not properly appreciated. Science was discredited on the plea that it led to materialism, and philosophy was opposed as intellect was debarred from entering the portals of divine knowledge. Science and philosophy con-demned, what remained was a fairy tale, very comforting to the ignoramus but extremely injurious to the nation as a whole.

The Muslim mind continued to be fed, for a century and a half, on fiction and myths. The result can be well imagined. Not only was there a dearth of scientific thinking in this period but also an absence of genuine philosophical activity. In the heyday of Islam there existed thinkers of great repute; they built their philosophies on the teachings of the ancients but they also made splendid contributions of their own to the storehouse of human knowledge. The States created the proper atmosphere for intellectual pursuits.

Throughout the length and breadth of the Islamic world as it existed during the period under review, one misses freshness and originality of thought. Philosophy requires a soil and a climate to grow and develop and where the conditions of a society are such that neither the proper soil nor the appropriate climate is available; it is hard to find any activity which can be characterized as critical or intellectual.

Another force which worked negatively for the Muslims was mysticism. There is nothing basically wrong with mysticism as such. Every great religion has a mystic strain and so has every great philosophy, for mysticism is the assertion of a trans-empirical reality which is one and ineffable, bears resemblance to the human self, and can be realized through intuition and self-abnegation.

Mysticism records its strong protest against the intellectualization of philosophy. It maintains that the Ultimate Reality, union with which is sought by the mystics in their moment of contemplation, is attainable not through the exercise of ratiocinative processes or logico-mathematical techniques but through the operation of intuitive faculty which enables one to see face to face.

As the preceding chapters have amply shown, among the Muslims there had been great mystics who delved deep into the realm of the spirit and had moments of great insight. They enriched the literature of mysticism by their valuable experiences and observations. In the Dark Age, however, with which we are concerned here, mysticism ceased to exist as a live force and, instead, degenerated into a mode of escape from the hard facts of life. According to Karl Mannheim, absorption in transcendental problems is a characteristic of decadent and retrogressive societies.¹¹

Instead of grappling with problems that face them, they retreat to the world of transcendence and waste their time in discussing vague and nebulous questions. All mystics in Islam, how-ever, were not escapists. Some of them, at least, indeed the very best of them, did realize the urgency and the imperativeness of the problems facing the society of their time.

But to a large majority of mystics, unfortunately, interest in worldly affairs was of secondary importance; what interested them primarily was their preoccupation with the external form of mystical practices. They decried the ordinary criteria of knowledge, much as the ignorant mullas did. The mystics of earlier periods had described the mystic state as the direct experience of Reality, but now the so-called mystics even preached that ignorance was an advantage in the pursuit of holiness. The cumulative effect of this doctrine was that the masses lost their faith in the exercise of reason and regarded it as a Satanic force leading to heresy and atheism.

But the baneful effect of the degenerate type of mysticism was not confined simply to the indictment of intellectual inquiry. It had far-reaching consequences, for as Iqbal says, "The emphasis that it laid on the distinction of zahir and batin (appearance and reality) created an attitude of indifference to all that applies to Appearance and not to Reality."¹² is The spirit of total other worldliness, Iqbal observes further, "obscured men's vision of a very important aspect of Islam as a social policy."

A one-sided concern with transcendentalism indicates, according to psychoanalysts, a state of mental infantilism. In so far as the path generally adopted by the so-called mystics of this dark period and their followers ceased to be that of deep contemplation of or of wrestling with problems through scientific understanding and experimental control, it was at best the path of least resistance; it de-generated into a path of controlling supernatural agencies through the recita-tion of certain liturgical formulas or by wearing certain amulets and practicing certain charms.

As the percentage of literacy became appallingly low in the Muslim world, the credulous masses troubled by want and privations could be easily deluded into thinking that the recitation of certain words could rid them instantaneously of all their ills. These short-cuts were offered by the Sufis to the disciples who avowed solemn faith in them. In nearly all Muslim countries there arose a long line of hereditary pirs who claimed direct and immediate contact with eternal verities and professed to ensure the spiritual uplift of their votaries provided they had unshakable faith in them.

Thus, along with unquestioning obedience to the divine Law as embodied in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, there arose the need for implicit faith in the spiritual leadership of the pir one chose for oneself. Thus the simple folks were saddled with an authority more terrible and tyrannous in nature than that of the traditions of a degenerate society.

Mystic ideas were transmitted to the disciples only after having induced in their minds a high state of receptivity. What was thus accepted under stress of emotions took firm roots in their souls and could not be dislodged by any amount of logic or re-education. Consequently, there arose among the masses a cult of saint-worship. The unwary and credulous people did obeisance to the pirs as if they were the incarnations of God on earth.

Offerings were made to them in all sincerity; they were required by the disciples to get their desires granted, to ensure their salvation, and to secure their union with God. The practice of saint-worship soon developed into the habit of shrine-worship. Annual pilgrimages to the shrines of saints became the occasions to celebrate their death anniversaries as national fairs. The saints would be haloed in mists of lore and legend, and the oft-told tales of their marvels were bathed in glory of their spiritual effulgence. Little wonder if superstition flourished and reason remained an outcast.

Pre-deterministic and fatalistic ideas became an essential part of the creed of the masses. Hence epidemics, floods, famines, and deaths happened at the appointed hours and nothing could be done to avoid them. This tendency was encouraged amongst the Muslims by their appalling ignorance of science and the cheap methods of faith-healing placed at their disposal by the clever pirs and the so-called Sufis. Fatalism flourishes in darkness and there was enough of it to spare in the Dark Age of Islam. The occurrence of an epidemic, poverty, flood, or drought presents a challenge to a scientist's ingenuity and technological skill. To a fatalist nothing comes as a challenge, for he is safely enwrapped in his acquiescence and resignation.

Mysticism not only bred fatalistic tendencies, it also encouraged indifference to social morality. As the pir was supremely concerned with the betterment of his soul, so was his protege. For the spiritual uplift of the soul the culti-vation of another-worldly attitude, asceticism, and renunciation came as necessary prescriptions. Self-denial and detachment were deemed the highest virtues.

The prevalence of saint-worship and adherence to the mystic cult left no scope for the development of practical ethics. The masses could be easily aroused to a high pitch of indignation if one uttered a word against a so-called saint, but they would not be stirred if sanitation was neglected or if delinquency prevailed. In this period it was not noticed that for self-realiza-tion the performance of civic duties was as essential as the performance of the spiritual duties. The neglect of social and practical ethics cancelled all pro-grammes of humanitarian activity and left the Muslims far behind in the task of social and political reconstruction.

No Muslim country seriously thought of a social welfare programme for the regeneration of the masses. If anything happened in that direction, it was just by chance and not as a result of some well-planned scheme. The society was left to drift-to sink or to swim as it may. The chances of its sinking exceeded those of swimming, and it actually did sink under the severe demands of life and the world around. The decline was all round. The Muslims lost their empires; the Muslim society went to pieces; science and philosophy disappeared. Even fine arts and minor arts which were the distinguishing features of the second period of revival languished painfully.

The excellent traditions of the early painting were lost; most of the artistic activity confined itself to producing bad copies of the paintings of the early masters. The same degeneration appeared in minor arts. In lite-rature too there was all-round deterioration; traditional poetry encouraged by the princes retained its charm, but created no new forms. The greatest poet in the Indian sub-continent before Ghalib was a weeping poet.

Prose became a string of long-drawn-out phrases, cumbersome and involved on the whole.

The Muslims were at the lowest ebb in about 1266/1850. The kings and the nobles took to a life of lewdness and lasciviousness; the masses were ignorant and apathetic; the administration was bureaucratic and autocratic; and what is worse, no attempt was made to appreciate and profit by the scientific and technological developments taking place around them. The West took advantage of the incompetence of the rulers and the hollowness of the Muslim society. They had superior weapons, better ships, more effective techniques, strategy, and diplomacy. In addition, they had qualities of character which the Muslims ceased to possess.

If the strength of a nation is to be measured in terms of the awareness of a challenge and its acceptance, it can be said that during the second decline, the Muslim nations all over the world excelled one another in their lack of understanding of the Western challenge. The West regarded the solidarity and expansion of the Muslim dominions a serious threat to its imperialistic and colonial programme. Hence it was out to throw off the Muslims by whom the challenge was hardly understood. Accordingly, their response was as weak as their understanding of the challenge.

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Chapter 71: The Silver Lining, Development Of The Urdu Language, Grammar, And Literature

A

Rekiiah, Hindi, Hindwi, Zuban-i Dilhi, Gujri, Zuban-i Urdi-i Mu'alla- all these names¹ were given to Urdu at the various stages of its progress by the Muslim rulers of and other settlers in India. It was also called "the language of the Moors."² The name Hindustanis³ popularized by the Euro-peans was also used by some writers in the early period.

Here, it would be interesting to trace the origin of the word "Urdu" and briefly give its history. Urdu is a word of Turkish origin, found in the earlier literature in various forms, such as Ourda, Ourdah, Ourdou, and Urdu, and means "camp," "alighting place," "army post," "an army," or a "part thereof." It also means tent, camp bazaar, fort, or a royal place (cf. Nur al-Absar, MS. in the library of Dr. Mubammad Shafi', Lahore). After under-going several changes the word filtered into Persian books after the Mongol invasion of Iran. After the invasion of Eastern Europe by Batu Khan it also entered into the languages of Europe.

It was, perhaps, Babur who introduced the word "Urdu" into India, and during the reign of Akbar it was used as a term for the royal camp or the royal mint. During the subsequent periods, we find the usage of Urdi-i Mu'alla for the residential quarters belonging to Government officers (civil area) and Urdu Bazar (the market attached to this area).

It is generally admitted that the word "Urdu" as the name of a particular language is associated with one of these two later expressions. That is to say, Urdu meant the language of the royal camp. But it would be wrong to assume on the basis of this fact that the Urdu language took its origin during the period of Shah Jahan. The term "Urdu" in this special sense appears to have been in vogue since the time of Aurangzeb. Actually it came into being soon after the invasion of India by Muslims from the North. Shah Murad of Lahore was perhaps the first writer who used the word "Urdu" for the language itself in one of his letters written in 1196/1782. The other early writers who used this word for the language were Mushafi (1211/1796) and Gilchrist (1194/1780).

In a way, Urdu is not exclusively the creation of the Muslims. Its birth is the direct result of their contact with the Hindus, who jointly with the former have developed it down to recent times. The contribution of the Muslims to its development is, however, more substantial, rather monumental, as compared with that of the Hindus or the Europeans⁴ who also played a creditable role in its advancement. Considered from the point of view of quantity as well as quality, spirit as well as atmosphere, Urdu is predominantly a language of the Muslims, although the services of the other co-workers in the field can in no case be under-rated.

Urdu was popularized by Muslim mystics and saints and patronized by Muslim kings and rulers. Some of the Muslim emperors, kings and princess⁵ themselves composed Urdu verses and compiled diwans of Urdu poems. Its literature was enriched from Islamic sources. The Muslims,

therefore, were mainly, though not exclusively, the architects of this language.

Let us now assess and determine the nature and extent of Muslim contribution to the creation and development of Urdu. Urdu took its shape first in the Punjab and Delhi during the Ghaznawid and the early Sultanate period⁶ when the first powerful commingling of Hindu-Muslim cultures occurred, causing a productive intermixture of Muslim (i.e., Persian, Turkish, and Arabic) languages with Padkrits (the Apabhraṅsa of the Punjab and the Khari Boli of Delhi, Meerut⁷ and the adjoining areas) of Northern India.

This situation had its effect in two directions. First, it created a hybrid form of speech used by Hindus and Muslims in the bazaars with a sprinkling of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish words; subsequently, it developed into a crude vehicle of lyrical utterances (cf. Amir Khusrau's *Rekhtahs*). Secondly, it caused an infiltration of Hindi words into Arabic and Persian books on the one side and of Persian and Turkish words into Hindi books on the other. The *Kitab al-Saidanah* of al-Biruni and the early lexicographical works in Persian written in India contain a large number of Hindi words and idioms, and Chand's *Prithvi Raj Rasa*⁸ and, later, *Ad Granth* of Nanak embody large materials drawn from Muslim sources.⁹

But, apart from this linguistic fusion, a distinct language came into being with the passage of time as an admixture of Persian and Arabic words and expressions in use more in Muslim circles, with a clear bias towards Muslim cultural modes and attitudes. Persian enjoyed the status of the Court language, but side by side with it this new language too kept on progressing from one stage to another.

From Delhi, this new language reached Gujarat and the Deccan where its growth and initial popularity awakened the first serious literary activities under the `Adilshahi and Qutbshahi rulers,¹⁰ some of whom were themselves good poets of Urdu. Earlier, the Sufis¹¹ employed this polyglot for their missionary work and wrote religious and mystic treatises in it.

Gradually, it attained a literary status in the South before it was employed by writers in the North, where in due course it became popular during the post-Aurangzeb period, during which Hatim, Mir, Sauda, Dard, and others wrote excellent poetry in it. Then the centre shifted to Lucknow and other places, till in 1215/1800, the Fort William College was established by the British at Calcutta where deliberate efforts were made to simplify Urdu style under the name of Hindustani, which encouraged a revival of interest in secular, non-communal, and local aspects of its literature.

These efforts, however, did not succeed fully because Urdu had already assumed a specific shape and complexion more akin to Persian and other Muslim literatures, and it was not then possible to divest it of its predominantly Muslim stamp. They, in a way, encouraged parting of the ways, and led to the creation of the modern Hindi with a distinct Hindu spirit drifting largely away from Urdu and the "lingua franca" Hindustani.

So, by 1303/1885, Urdu, which was hitherto a common language of the Hindu-Muslim intelligent-sia, came to be claimed as a language, more or less, of the Muslims. About the same time, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan

advocated this claim simultaneously with the declaration of the Muslims to exist as a separate politico-cultural group in India and the issue was thus decided once for all. Later, the protection and preservation of Urdu became one of the basic grounds for demanding a separate homeland for the Muslims.

B

This brief history would prove the fact of active association of the Muslims with Urdu since its origin, though not to the exclusion of other communities (Hindus and Europeans) whose contribution to its progress is certainly creditable. For a considerable time the Hindus took keen interest in the advancement of Urdu as if it were their own language.

It attracted their enthusiasm due to the spirit of catholicity existing in its mystic poetry, taste for which had already been cultivated by them through Persian which had become a part of their education ever since the reign of Akbar.¹²² With the intensification of the communal consciousness, however, certain sections of the Hindus created a gulf between Hindi and Urdu which went on increasing till the country was partitioned and the shape of things changed altogether.

The Europeans played their role a bit differently. They used Urdu for official purposes, simplified it for common use, compiled dictionaries and grammars¹³³ and patronized it so long as it served their ends.

Principally, therefore, Urdu has been a concern and creation of the Muslims; but from another point of view it is positively a joint production of the Hindus and the Muslims (although its distinct bias towards Islamic culture can never be denied).

C

Lets discuss about Urdu composition and grammar now. It is agreed that whatever form Urdu took ultimately, it is essentially an Indian language which developed on the grammatical pattern of Sureseni Prakrits. Therefore, it follows the same rules of grammar as any other branch of this group, and its basic alphabet is also the same. But the complete Urdu alphabet is richer and is a combination of Hindi and Arabic-Persian sounds. In certain cases the Hindi sounds have been softened and in certain others amplified according to the phonetic rules of Persian and Urdu.¹⁴⁴

Urdu is, therefore, a more advanced language than the Prakrits so far as sounds and vocabulary are concerned. It has borrowed a large number of nouns and adjectives from other Muslim languages, in addition to the recent borrowings from European languages. Most of the verbs, pronouns, and prepositions belong to Hindi but the structure of the sentence has been very much determined by Persian.

The main Muslim contributions to Urdu grammar are: adoption of Arabic terminology, application of the rules of word formation (in plurals and adjectival compounds), and introduction of the Persian *kasrah-i idafat* (vowel mark "i" to denote possession) instead of its Hindi form *ka, ki, ke*.

During certain periods of strong Persian influences, even the sentence scheme was made to follow the Persian sentence arrangement. Conversely, however, certain Arabic and Persian plurals (like many other words) also

underwent change according to the Hindi usage,¹⁵⁵ particularly in the early Urdu literature.

These modifications in the grammatical structure of Urdu have been of benefit to it in several ways. The *kasrah-i idafat* has the advantage of economy over Hindi *ka, ki, ke*. The Persian compounds (*murakkabat*) also have the same value, with additional rich rhythmic properties, so useful in paragraphs and stanzas. Conciseness in lyrical utterances too has always been a favorite mode of expression with the Muslims—accomplished mostly by the use of *kasrah-i idafat* and "concise compounds," although these features have some-times been misused in the form of "dead" adjectival compounds or unnecessary "Arabicized" plurals. And it is a relief to find that the Persianized sentence structure of Urdu composition has particularly vanished with the advent of the Western literary influences.

In the course of centuries, Urdu borrowed¹⁶⁶ thousands of words and phrases (nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and conjunctive prepositions) from Arabic, Per-sian, Turkish, and Pashtu,¹⁷⁷ as it did also from European languages¹⁸⁸ on a limited scale. The *Farhang-i Asliyyah* contains 7,584 Arabic, 6,041 Persian, 17,505 Urdu, and 21,644 Hindi (plus European) words. These figures have further changed due to the recent coinage of terms¹⁹⁹ (technical and literary) and infiltration of more Arabic (religious) words under the influence of the revivalist movement of Pakistan.

It may be noted that this Persian-Arabic vocabulary in Urdu is not merely a "dead" equivalence; it represents an extension and enrichment of ex-perience. It reflects a new attitude to life and a peculiar tone and color, not present in other Indian languages.

The Urdu language combines the virility and vigor of Turkish, the grandeur and dignity of Arabic, the polish and grace of Persian, in addition to the original homeliness of Hindi expressions. This has made Urdu richer in tone-, color and literary effects, so very important for a perfectly expressive style.

The incorporated Arabic-Turkish-Persian vocabulary in Urdu belongs to the various departments of life: administration, social activity, agriculture, art, religion.²⁰⁰ Literature, etc., and represents a gradual expansion of culture in India caused by the fresh wave of life awakened by the vigorous Muslim spirit, following in the wake of immigrations from Iran and Turan.

Urdu also borrowed in literary artistry. It adopted the Arabic-Persian prosody for metrical scansion, but rarely did it employ the Hindi *Pingal*, except during the recent periods when 'Azmat Allah Khan and other song-writers have attempted to revive Hindi meters.

We may now refer to the development of literary style, first in accordance with the Persian patterns, and afterwards based on the European (mostly English) models. All the reform movements in Urdu literature (before 1857) were invariably directed to achieve, first, the closest approximation of Urdu to the Persian literary forms of expression, and, secondly, the effective adjustment of the language to the *riiz marrah* and *muhawarah* (i.e., the natural speech of men).

Thus, although the reformers insisted on every-day spoken language and discarded phonetically and rhetorically incongruous words, yet in order to

achieve true literary beauty they always advocated the adoption of pictorially, musically, and emotionally proper Persian and Arabic words. From Wali and Hatim down to Nasikh and Dhauq, the same process of assimilation continued. The literary ideals of Persians became the main goals to be reached by Urdu writers, and they remained so till the literary taste changed in modern times.

The distinctive characteristics of the Persianized form of literary expression were: a tendency towards elaboration, affectation and floridity; sumptuousness of detail in the narrative; love of grandeur and grotesqueness; imaginativeness even when realistic delineation was required; preponderance of wit; and fondness for metaphor, allegory, and symbolism in poetry. Conciseness in lyrical poetry is another distinctive feature borrowed from the Persian ghazal. Simplicity and directness in style were later introduced by writers at the Fort William College and also by the poet Ghalib and the reformer Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan.

Sometimes, there is a touch of insincerity in the literary style of the Persian models, but these models when reformed have helped Urdu literary expression, to gain in force, vigor, and dignity of tone, rarely found in the sister languages of India.

D

In classical poetry, the chief forms- ghazal, qasidah, ruba'i, mathnawi, etc.-were borrowed from Persian. Ghazal, a short poem of a few verses (commonly between seven and twelve), mainly devoted to love themes, interspersed with other subjects of philosophical and mystical nature, is essentially a lyrical form, insisting on conciseness, economy, and beauty of diction.

In this form, each couplet is complete in itself but is interwoven into the whole, by means of a common rhyme and a common metre, and sometimes by an undercurrent of a common mood apparent in the tone though not necessarily in the subject. In Urdu as in Persian, g/azal attracted to its fold several great poets such as Wali, Mir, Dard, Sauda, Mushafi, Atish, Momin, Ghalib, and later Hali, Iqbal, Hasrat, and some of the prominent modern poets like Hafiz, Firaq, and Faiz (Faiz) who have adapted it to the changed mental atmosphere of the modern age.

Qasidah (panegyric or praise-poem), a form more lengthy in size and more complex in structure and content, requires an unusual command over language and also great constructive ability. It may be noted that qasidah is not confined to praise and that it has also been employed successfully for subjects of descriptive, narrative, dramatic, and subjective nature. The chief qasidah-writers in Urdu are Nuzrati, Sauda, Insha', and Dhauq, whose art in this particular branch can compete with that of the best qasidah-writers in Persian, at least, in their care for the externalities of technique, if not for internal beauties. To this list, one may add Ghalib, who introduced some changes in the structure of qasidah.

Another form is mathnawi which is originally meant for narration of a longer chain of events of historical or fictional nature, and is distinguished from other forms in that each couplet in it has a separate rhyme in consonance with a uniformity in the metre scheme. The most outstanding

maLknawis in Urdu are those written by Mir Taqi Mir (Darya-i 'Ishq), Mir Hasan (Sehr al-Bayan), Daya Shankar Nasim (Gulzar-i Nasim), and Shauq Lakhnawi (Zehr-i 'Ishq).

Out of the remaining poetical forms, special reference seems necessary to shehr ashob-a form used by Persian and Turkish writers, more or less for humorous themes but employed by the Urdu poets such as Mir and Sauda for serious subjects of social and political import. Another very important branch of Urdu poetry is marthiyah, which derived its name from Arabic ritha' (elegy) and took a peculiar narrative shape in Urdu. It has some resemblance to epic forms and deals with the tragic events of Karbala (a place in Iraq where Imam Husain, the grandson of the Holy Prophet, and a small party of his kinsmen and followers, courageously fought against a much larger army deputed by Yazid, an Umayyad ruler, and lost their lives). The prominent marthiyah-writers were Anis and Dabir whose marthiyahs are the best representatives of this art. Mirza Rafi' Sauda and Dabir had also contributed to its progress earlier.

Rekti (poems, as though, written by women, with peculiar female attitudes towards love and with characteristically female ways of speech) means, literally, "the feminine form of rekhtah" (one of the names for Urdu, and later for Urdu poetry as a whole, or for Urdu ghazal alone). It is more or less in the nature of a "feminine" burlesque or parody of love-poems written by men. In most of such poems, the tone is non-serious, rather comic, sometimes bordering on license and obscenity. The chief representative poets of this literary form are Rangin and Jan Sahib, although its earliest specimens are also found in the Deccani period of Urdu poetry.

We may mention in passing the ruba'i (quatrain), the musaddas (Hali's Musaddas being the most prominent), wasukht (ironical love-poems), qit'al (the fragmentary and episodic poems written more or less on the model of shorter qasidahs or quatrains), and a few other forms such as mukhammas (quintet), mustazad, etc. These forms were adopted from Persian and were employed by almost all the famous poets. Recently, the Hindi git and doha forms have been revived in Urdu by poets such as Hafiz, Maqbul Ahmadpuri, Mukhtar Siddiqi, Jamil 'Ali, and others, while some of the European forms have been given currency by 'Azmat Allah Khan, Faid, Rashid among many others whose poems deserve a high place in Urdu poetry for perfection of technique and construction.

In its emotional moods Urdu poetry differs from Hindi poetry despite the fact that some of its attitudes (e.g., towards the sex of the lover) and imagery in it were borrowed by Urdu poets in the Deccani period, and also to some extent in recent times, but the general atmosphere of Urdu poetry has been throughout Persian, except in the part produced under Western influences.

The most important poets of Urdu (Wali, Mir, Sauda, Dard, Mushafi, Atish, Mir Hasan, Nazir, Ghalib, Isma'i1, Hali, Iqbal, and others) are Muslims, but the contribution by Daya Shankar Nasim, Shafiq Aurangabadi, Chakbast, Surur, Mahrum, Firaq, Anand Narain Mulla, and others who are Hindus is equally creditable and cannot be ignored in any history of Urdu poetry.

The spirit of Urdu poetry like that of Persian poetry, when serious, is passionately lyrical; when mystical, deeply reflective; when humorous, intensely witty and at times ironical. Muslim narrative poetry in the classical period has rarely been realistic and its descriptions are more imaginative than real and objective.

The poetry of the Hindu poets of Urdu could be some-what different but they too followed in most cases the general spirit of Urdu poetry. In recent times, Firaq has tried to infuse a Hindu devotional spirit in it but his is a solitary instance. The modern Urdu poets have copied some Western models as well, but most of the original Persian forms still persist. Iqbal, a unique literary figure in the Muslim world, has given a new meaning to the old forms and symbols, but the aura of his poetry is also patently Per-sian. Iqbal is also responsible for giving Urdu poetry a deeply Islamic and philosophical color.

Some Europeans too have written good Urdu poetry but none of them can be considered a first-rate poet, and none of them has introduced the European spirit into it. Nevertheless, Urdu poetry has recently received much inspiration from European (particularly English) models, and has accepted changes in content and tone, and, to a limited extent, in form. For instance, some attempts have been made, especially in most recent times, to employ free verse and blank verse for long and short-long poems, and to write sonnets and cantoes.

It is, however, in content that European influences are markedly noticeable. One might refer here to the national as well as the "nature" themes in modern Urdu poetry which clearly bear the European stamp both in attitude and in diction. The chief representatives of the national or political poetry are Hali, Mibli, Akbar, Z, afar 'Ali Khan, Chakbast, Iqbal, Josh, Faid, and certain other modern poets, while Isma'il Merathi, Mebs_har, Be-Nazir, and some others who wrote for children, may be called the nature poets of Urdu. The classical Urdu poetry has in its own way dealt with nature also. Nazir Akbar-abadi may be cited as the most prominent poet of this line.

The case of Urdu prose is the same as that of Urdu poetry so far as forms employed in the classical period are concerned. But the share of non-Muslims in prose is more noteworthy especially in literary history, tadhkirah-writing (biographical dictionaries of poets), and fiction. Saksena's History of Urdu Literature has so far been the best, and Siri Ram's Khumkanah-a dictionary of poets-is a monumental work of considerable worth. In fiction, Sarshar. Prem Chand, and Krishn Chandr (among the moderns) and Nihal Chand (among the old) occupy a conspicuous place. The vast "fiction literature" (dastan and hikayat) has borrowed largely from Sanskrit sources, as also from European channels so far as the novel and the short story are concerned.

E

Comparatively speaking, Urdu prose is of recent growth and most of the prose literature of old Persian atmosphere is rather undeveloped and is in a crude literary shape. From Sab-Ras (All-Juice), a mystical allegory translated from Persian by Wajhi (c. 1045/1635), up to Bagh-o Bahar (The

Flower Garden and the Flower Season), a tale of the four dervishes by Mir Amman (c. 1217/1802), there is a big gap, except for Nau Tarz-i Murassa' which is an outstanding work of the Persian model and Dastan-i Rani Kaitki by Insha' representing a new model. Then came Ghalib and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Hali, Shibli, and the modern prose-writers who enriched Urdu prose drawing much from European sources and wrote biographies, histories, essays, novels, stories, theological and philosophical works, and books of literary criticism and science. In Osmania University, quite a large number of European books have been translated into Urdu.

Here, it would be proper to bring out prominently the role of Ghalib and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan in the development of Urdu prose style. It may be noted that the credit of simplifying the literary Urdu language for the first time, after it had become laborious, affected, and merely decorative under the influence of high-flown Persian style current in India during the earlier periods, goes to the prose-writers of the Fort William College, Calcutta (founded by the British East India Company in 1215/1800), such as Mir Amman, Sher Ali Afsos, Haidar Bakhsh Haidari, and others.

Yet the personal emotive prose of Ghalib with touches of wit and delightful irony (as reflected in his Urdu letters) and the natural style of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, reflected in all of his works particularly in his "Essays," broadened the possibilities of Urdu prose enabling it to become an effective vehicle, not only for literary expression but also for the expression of emotional, philosophical, or scientific content.

Sir Sayyid Ahmad insisted, not only on simplicity, naturalness, and ease, but also on the purpose, truth, sincerity, and earnestness of the author. Again, while Ghalib is inimitable, Sir Sayyid tremendously influenced his age, especial-ly the group of his associates in the Aligarh movement, such as Hali, Shibli, Nadhir Ahmad Dhaka' Allah and others who enriched Urdu literature abundant-ly by producing works of unusual merit on various subjects.

Side by side with these prose-writers, we find Muhammad Husain Azad, once Professor at the Government College and the Oriental College, Lahore. He was with Hali a co-founder of the Natural School of Urdu poetry and was perhaps the most popular stylist of Urdu, even though he did not belong to the immediate circle of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan. He chose to write in a manner which, though not simple and direct, was yet expressive, rich, and graceful. The three main qualities of his prose are its beauty, artistry, and grandeur, and so far none has surpassed him in excellence. Some of his notable works are Ab-i Hayat (a history of Urdu poetry), Sakhundan-i Faris (a history of Persian literature), Nairang-i Khayal (a collection of essays), and Darbar-i Akbari (a history of the Emperor Akbar).

Drama is the weakest spot in Urdu literature and whatever exists in this branch has been borrowed from and inspired by the European models. Ahsan Lakhnawi, Agha Hashr, and Sayyid Imtiaz 'Ali Taj are the most outstanding figures in this field.

Most of the writers of Urdu prose are Muslims. Hence, the general stylistic atmosphere is also the same as is associated with the Muslim genius.

The works on biography and Islamic history produced at Dar al-Musannifin, Azamgarh (now in India), reflect an intensely Islamic spirit. Similarly, most of the works on socio-political subjects embody Muslim inclinations.

In the field of fiction, i.e., romances (dastan-I adab), novels and short stories, we witness a variety of tastes, because in these branches Muslims and non-Muslims have taken almost equal part, introducing new elements drawn from different sources, beautifully fused together.

The romances (or dastan-I adab)²¹¹ should naturally come first. This kind of literature is based on or adopted and borrowed from Arabic and Persian as well as from Hindi sources, and manifests a mixture of various racial and cultural elements. For instance, there is emphasis on nature and phantasy in stories of Sanskrit origin, on action and sensuality in stories of Arabic origin, on adventure and extravagance in stories associated with Turan and Khurasan, on occultism and on fabulous and imaginative pleasure in those associated with Iran. The Hindu element in the dastans is also conspicuous, although the number of Hindu writers of dastan is not so very large.

The atmosphere in earlier novels of Urdu, as represented by Nadhir Ahmad, Sharar, Tabib, and Rashid al-Khairi is predominantly Islamic, while local life has been depicted in the more modern novels (for instance, in the novels of Prem Chand) and in Urdu short stories, as represented by Manto, Krishn Chandr, Rajindar Bedi, 'Ismat Chaghta'i and others, who under the influence of the Progressive Writers' movement have manifested the spirit of realism as fostered in European, particularly Russian, literature, and adapted it to the circumstances of indigenous life.

F

The recent trends in Urdu literary criticism are also directly inspired by the European critical theory and practice. The modern Urdu criticism manifests a clear departure from the old practical criticism, largely based on old rhetorics and stylistics, specimens of which are to be found mostly in tadhkirahs (bio-graphical dictionaries of poets) and other stray writings.

Shibli, Hali, Azad, and Imdad Imam Athar were the first to reorient Urdu criticism along new lines. They tried to apply the principles of European criticism to classical Urdu and Persian literature, in a somewhat imperfect manner, for they could not get rid of their old inclinations and in practice had to rely on old standards.

The Muqaddimah (Introduction) to poetry by Hali, the Shi'r al-'Ajam, a history of Persian poetry by Shibli, Ab-i Hayat (a history of Urdu poetry) by Muhammad Husain Azad, and Kashif al-Haqai'iq (The Revealer of Critical Principles) by Imdad Imam Athar are some of the note-worthy books on criticism belonging to the earlier period of modern influences. Later on, however, Urdu criticism made tremendous progress and fell in line with the more modern criteria of literary judgment. The notable figures in this field are Qadri, Zor, Athar, Niaz, Majnun, Firaq, Al-I Ahmad Surur, Ihtisham Husain, Kalim al-Din Ahmad, and a few others.

G

To summarize, Urdu is a joint achievement of several communities, but Muslim contribution to its creation and development is outstanding. The language is basically Indian but it developed largely in accordance with the Muslim (particularly Persian) genius and taste. The attitudes in the classical Urdu literature are mostly in tune with those existing in all Muslim literatures.

Urdu is decidedly a wonderful manifestation of the synthetic capacity of the Muslims which succeeded in evolving out of heterogeneous elements a language which can now be regarded as one of the most powerful languages of the Indo- Pakistan sub-continent and one of the two official languages of Pakistan.

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Notes

1. Mahmnd Khan Shairani, Pan jab men Urdu, 1st edition, pp. 1-23
2. Hobson Jobson, 1903, p. 417.
3. Wajhi in his prose book Sab-Ras (c. 1040/1630) calls it Zuban-i Hindustani. Cf. Sab-Ras, Anjuman Taraqqi-i Urdu, 1932, pp. 11, 16.
4. Ram Babu Saksena, History of Urdu Literature, 1927, p. 4.
5. For instance Muhammad Quli Qutub Shah, heh `Alam Aftab, Babadur Sh5h Zafar, Wajid 'Ali Shah Akhtar, etc.
6. Mahmud Khan Shairani, op. cit. (Mu'in al-Adab edition), p. 3; Mas`ud Husain Khan, Tarikh-i Zubkn-i Urdu, p. 139.
7. Sabzwari, Urdu Zuban ka Irtiqa', 1956, p. 87, says: "Urdu and Pali come from common source." He asserts that Urdu does not come from Suraseni Apabhhransa, or Braj, or Haryani, or Bundeli, nor from Punjabi (ibid., p. 86). Pundit Kaifi, Kaifiyyal, p. 31, thinks that Amir Khusrau's Rekhtahs were in Apabhhransa of Suraseni Prakrit: also see Saksena, op. cit., pp. 2 sqq. Al-Biruni visited the Punjab during the early Ghaznawid period. The "local" words used by him in his Kitab al-Saidanah are called by him al-Hindiyyah- apparently synonymous with the "Punjab" Apabhhransa; cf. S. M. Abdullah, "Arabi Tasanif men Hindustani Alfazz," Oriental College Magazine, May 1943.

8. Shairani doubts its period, op. cit., p. 121. Also see Mas`fid Husain Khan, op. cit., pp. 115 sqq., who thinks that some parts of it must have been written during the early Ghulaman period.
9. S. M. Abdullah, Farsi men Hindu'on ka Hissah, Anjuman Taraqqi-i Urdu, pp. 277-89.
10. 0 Nasir al-Din Has_hmi, Deccan mein Urdu, 1926, pp. 16, 40 seq.
11. 1 Abd al-Hagq, Urdu ki Taraqqi men Sufiya' ka Hissah, 1939, pp. 4 seq
12. 2 S. M. Abdullah, Farsi men Hindu'on ka Hissah, pp. 4 seq.
13. 3 The first grammar of Urdu was written perhaps by J. J. Koetler ('Abd al-Hagq, Qaw'id-i Urdu, 1951, Preface, pp. 11 seq.) and Insha' was the first "local" writer who dealt with problems of Urdu grammar in Darya-i Latafat. It may, however, be noted that some preliminary discussions are also found in the Muthmir (MS. University of the Panjab) of Khan Arzu (a writer of Muhammad Shah period). Among several European writers and poets, Dr. Gilchrist, John Shakespeare, Fallen, Fransu, and Hederly Azad were the notable scholars who produced books in Urdu; Garcin de Tassy may also be considered to be among those who wrote about Urdu.
14. 4 Sabzwari, op. cit., pp. 105 sqq. and 'Abd al-Hagq, Qawa'id-i Urdu, pp. 4-9
15. 5 Shairani's article: "Sab-Ras," Oriental College Magazine, November 1934, and "Introduction to Diwanzadah Hatim" (MS. University of the Panjab).
16. 6 Muhammad Husain Azad, Ab-i Hayat, 14th edition, pp. 27 sqq., and Ahmad Din's Sargudhas_ht-i Aijaz, 1932, pp. 137 8qq., and 236 8qq.; also see 'Abd al-Majid Salik's Muslim Thaga/at Hindustan Men, 1st edition, pp. 515 sqq
17. 7 Imtiaz 'Ali 'Arshi, Oriental College Magazine, May 1948, pp. 28.
18. 8 'Abd al-Hagq, "Dakhil Alfaz," Urdu, July 1949, pp. 15 sqq
19. 9 Wahid al-Din Salim, Wadi' Istilahat-i 'Ilmiyyah, 1931, pp. 7 sqq.
20. 0 For the influence of Islam on Urdu poetry, see I'jaz Husain, Madhhab-o Sha'iri, 1955, pp. 66 sqq. Also see Azad, op. cit., pp. 16 sqq.
21. 1 Cf. Giyan Chand, Urdu ki Natbri Dastanen. 1954, p. 37.

**A History of Muslim Philosophy Volume 2, Book 8:
Modern Renaissance (Covering both the Early and
the Later Centuries)**

Part 1. Renaissance in the Near and Middle East

Chapter 72: Renaissance in Arabia, Yemen, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon

Chapter 73: Renaissance in North Africa: The Sanusiyyah Movement

Chapter 74: Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani

Chapter 75: Renaissance in Egypt: Muhammad Abduh and His School

Chapter 76: Renaissance in Turkey: Zia Gokalp and His School

Chapter 77: Renaissance in Iran: General

Chapter 78: Renaissance in Iran: Haji Mulla Hadi Sabziwari

Chapter 72: Renaissance in Arabia, Yemen, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon

Muhammad Bin Abd Al-Wahhab and His Movement

A

The continuity of efforts for revival amongst the Muslims is a subject of profound interest. During the very early years of the period of decadence two leaders of thought rose to combat the forces of ignorance (jahiliyyah) and tried their best to bring back the Muslims to the fountainhead of Islam. The first of these was Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab of Arabia whose spiritual influence spread far and wide in the Islamic world, particularly in the Arab countries: Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon.

B

Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab was born about 1111/1700 in the heart of the Arabian Desert, the region known as Najd. This puritan reformer kindled a fire that soon spread to the remotest corners of the Muslim world, purging it of its sloth and reviving the fervour of the olden days. As a religious reformer, as a standard-bearer of freedom, as an orator, he not only won and retained undisputed eminence but also left in all these fields a deep and lasting imprint of his pioneering individuality.

There was none amongst his con-temporaries in Arabia who could lash and sooth, plead and urge, preach and move from pulpit and platform with the same fire and eloquence as he had perennially at his command.

The Shaikh studied at Madinah, travelled as far as Persia, and ultimately settled in his native place in the Najd. Amongst his teachers Shaikh Abd Allah bin Ibrahim Najdi, Shaikh Muhammad Hayat Sindhi, and Shaikh Muhammad Majmui are well known.

The Shaikh displayed from his childhood a studious and religious bent of mind and thus acquired a reputation for his learning and piety even at the threshold of his life. During his period of study he developed intense love for the Quran and the Sunnah, and decided that he should strain every nerve to bring his people back to the pristine glory of Islam.

For the attainment of this objective he wandered up and down Arabia and raised the slogan "Back to Islam." His utterances, characterized by directness and candour brought fresh life and courage wherever he went and as such served a much-needed tonic to the people disgusted with sham and cant. He persuaded them to abandon all such practices as were antagonistic to the spirit of Islam.

After some time it dawned upon him that mere persuasion unaided by political power might prove effective in the case of an individual, but it was difficult to bring about any radical change in a people's outlook without the backing of a political force. He, therefore, decided to rally under one banner, the different tribes of Arabia.

For the achievement of this objective he ap-proached, through Uthman bin Hamad bin Mamar, the Amir of Uvainah. The Amir at the very outset responded enthusiastically to the call of the Shaikh, but did not keep his word.¹ The Shaikh left Uvainah and proceeded to Dariyyah where he continued his preaching despite opposition from the ignorant 'ulama'.

In the long run, he not only succeeded in converting the people to his point of view, but also won the heart of Muhammad, the head of the great clan of Saud and the most powerful chieftain in the whole of the Najd. Thus, the moral prestige and material strength of the Shaikh were considerably enhanced.

“Gradually the desert Arabs were wedded into politico-religious unity like that effected by the Prophet of Islam. Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab was, in truth, a faithful counterpart of the first two Caliphs, abu Bakr and Umar. When he died in 1201/1787, his disciple Saud proved a worthy successor. The new Wahhabi State was a close counterpart of the Meccan Caliphate.”²

A great change was brought about in the political and administrative set-up of the country. “Though possessing great military power, Saud always considered himself responsible to public opinion and never encroached upon the legitimate freedom of his subjects. His government, though stern, was able and just. The Wahhabi judges were competent and honest. Robbery became almost unknown, so well was the public peace maintained.”³

Having consolidated the Najd politically, Saud was ready to undertake the greater task of purifying Islam from all those un-Islamic influences that had been slowly creeping into it for the last few centuries. A campaign was thus set on foot to eradicate from the society all those superstitious practices that had been eating into the vitals of the faith. An honest attempt was made to return to pure Islam.

All later accretions-monstrous, many-sided edifices of scholastic interpretations of the medieval theologians, and ceremonial or mystical innovations like saint-worship-in short, all those practices which have no sanction from Islam were condemned and the masses were exhorted to abandon them. The austere monotheism of the Prophet was preached in all its uncompromising simplicity and the Quran and the Sunnah were taken to be the sole guide for human action. The doctrinal simplification was accompanied by a most rigid code of morals.

Many critics of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab condemn this movement as retrogressive. But this is an absolutely baseless charge. Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab stood up with determination to bring his people back to true Islam. He, therefore, tried to purge Muslim life of all innovations and declared a “holy war” against them.

The feeling that he voiced was rather one of rationalistic dissatisfaction with the outworn palimpsest of cults than of the destruction of everything that he found before him. He wanted to separate grain from chaff and this work he performed with admirable courage and alertness of mind. He tried to demolish all those things that he found alien to the spirit of Islam and weeded out all those practices from Muslim society that he considered antagonistic to the spirit of the faith.

He rightly believed that a certain amount of change is always essential in a living civilization, but the change should be organic, that is to say, it should come from within that civilization in response to the genuine needs of the society which claims to own it and should not be a mere imitation of

another civilization. Imitation of another civilization implies the surrender of all creative powers that are essential for the life of a progressive society. The Shaikh was, therefore, very cautious about his decisions. He persuaded the people to discard only those things that he found un-Islamic, while he readily accepted the ideas and practices that could be fitted into the structure of Islam.

The Wahhabi movement is, therefore, not essentially retrograde and con-servative in its nature. It is progressive in the sense that it not only awakened the Arabs to the most urgent need of heart-searching and broke the com-placency to which they had been accustomed for years, but also gave the reformers a definite line of action.

It taught them that for the revival of Islam it was necessary to give up reliance on second-hand formulas and sterile conventions, and that it was equally essential to come back to the realities of Islam and build only on the bases of these solid rocks new modes of thought and action. An attempt to slip away from the cultural forms and aims connected with Islam, and to accept aims of non-Islamic (often anti-Islamic) social organizations, would not spell regeneration but degenera-tion for Islamic culture.

In order to set his movement on the right lines and to perpetuate the in-fluence of his teaching on future generations, the Shaikh made an elaborate programme of fostering education amongst the masses. As a result of his efforts every oasis was given its own maktab, and teachers who could both teach and preach were sent to the Bedouin tribes.

The disciples of the Shaikh pursued learning with great ardour. Ibn Bashr says that so many were the students attracted to his classes that if somebody were to attempt to give their number nobody would believe him. All his sons, Husain, Abd Allah, Ali, and Ibrahim, had their own maktab in their houses where students from distant places came to master Islamic learning. Their expenses were borne by the Bait al-Maal.⁴

Although the Shaikh was a follower of the Hanbalite school of Fiqh, yet he did not follow it rigidly. In his book Hadyat al-Saniyyah, he makes a frank confession of this. "Imam ibn Qayyim and his illustrious teacher ibn Taimiyyah," observes he, "were both righteous leaders according to the Sunni school of thought and their writings are dear to my heart, but I do not follow them rigidly in all matters."

As a matter of fact, the puritan beginnings of Islamic revival were combined with an elaborate programme of mass education and a reaction against taqlid (blind following) broadened along more constructive lines. The teachings of Mutazilism that had long faded away were revived and the liberal-minded reformers were delighted to find such striking confirmation of their ideas, both in the writings of the Mutazilite doctors and in the sacred texts them-selves.

The principle that reason and not blind prescription was to be the test of truth opened the door to the possibility of reforms that they had most at heart.⁵ They embarked on a process of introspection and self-examination.

These are the main characteristics of the Islamic revival in Arabia as every-where in the world.

The leaders of thought began to sift the whole of Islamic literature handed down to them by their ancestors and with admirable skill purified Islam of all those un-Islamic practices which had nothing to do with the teachings of Islam but had unfortunately become parts of Islamic culture. Thus, as a result of the efforts of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab a critical attitude was developed amongst Muslim scholars; they would not accept anything that came down from the past without testing its validity on the basis of the Quran and the Sunnah.

Thus, the first change that was visible in society was an urge for stock-taking of Fiqh. It was felt that the pristine simplicity and reasonableness of the Shariah had almost been buried in a forest of subjective deductions propounded by scholars several years ago. These deductions, however valuable, could not be held final for all times.

New problems had cropped up with the march of time, and these demanded new solutions in the light of the Quran and the Sunnah. Thus, with the development of the critical attitude, which in itself was the direct result of Islamic revival, the gates of ijtihad sealed for six hundred years were opened again. The whole of Muslim society was awaken-ed to the need of a fresh approach towards Fiqh.

There was a general feeling of unrest towards everything that did not have the sanction of the Quran and the Sunnah, and the educated people began to feel that no finality and definiteness could be legitimately attributed to any interpretation or con-clusion regarding any problem not justified by the nass of either of the two sources. In other words, they began to believe that the ijtihad of even the greatest Muslim scholar could not be binding on them.

It was the logical consequence of this critical attitude that the commenta-tors of Hadith like Hafiz ibn Hajar, Dar Qutni, Imam Nawawi, Imam Dhahabi, Imam Shaukani became popular with the people. Their writings attracted the attention of scholars and they began to devote themselves to the study of the Quran and the Sunnah. The emphasis was, thus, shifted from Fiqh and logic to the study of the two main sources of Islamic teachings.

This change can also be observed in the attitude of Muslim scholars towards social philosophers. Al-Farabi (d. 339/950) who had derived his theory of the State from abstract philosophical speculation was relegated to the background and scholars began to be attracted by the writings of ibn Khaldun who based his theory of State on demonstrable facts and laid the foundations of a scientific theory of history.

It was the study of ibn Khaldun's writings that paved the way for pan-Islamism. He had argued that since the power of the Quraish had gone, there was no other alternative but to accept the most powerful man in the country as Imam. "Thus Ibn Khaldun," observes Iqbal, "realizing that hard logic of the facts, suggests a view which may be regarded as the first dim vision of an international Islam fairly in sight today."⁶

Such is the attitude of the modern Arab inspired as he is by the realities of experience, and not by the scholastic reasoning of jurists who lived and thought under different conditions.

The dazzling achievements of the West in the realm of science and the material benefits which the Western people have derived from them have also moved the people of Arabia freely to participate in them. They are trying to achieve this end by adjusting their own pattern of life to that of the West and adopting some of its outer forms.

But they are also anxiously jealous to guard their cherished customs and values inherent in their own cultural pattern. Although there are visible changes in their political and social structures, yet the speed of change is extremely slow at the present time. The spread of the liberal principles and the Western means of progress go side by side with conservative forces. It can be said that of all the Muslim countries Arabia is the greatest country that is anchored in the traditional pattern of her past.

C

Role of the Arab Academy of Damascus in Syria

In 1336/1918, Muhammad Kurd Ali (1293/1876-1372/1953), a devoted scholar, founded the Arab Academy in Damascus (al-Majma al-Ilm al-Arabi). The Academy was endowed by King Faisal. It assumed charge of al-Zahiriyyah Library with 3,000 works, for the most part manuscripts. The Academy consisted of:

(a) A literary linguistic committee (lajnah lughawiyah) in charge of investigating linguistic problems, literature, and the ways and means of improving the Arabic language in order to make it an effective instrument for the expression of modern thought

(b) A scientific committee (lajnah ilmiyyah fanniyyah) in charge of enriching the language and broadening its scope for the expression of the various branches of science.⁷

In 1339/1921, the Academy started the publication of the journal Majallah al-Majma al-Ilm al-Arabi, which welcomed contributions from Eastern and Western writers. The most important task that the Academy undertook at the outset was to establish a linguistic academy and initiate the compilation of an up-to-date dictionary after the pattern of the La Rousse or the Oxford dictionary.

It continued its work with great vigour and zeal, surmounting various obstacles, and has achieved a good deal of success in the problems of language. The Syrian Government has always relied on the Academy for coining equivalents to foreign technical terms. Agricultural, medical, philo-sophical, and scientific terms have been coined, and published in the above journal.⁸

American University of Beirut

The nationalist movement of the Arabs received its strongest impulse from the literary revivalism which was itself the result of so many forces. The impact of the French and the Americans enthused the younger generation of the Arab lands to take stock of their literary treasures and enrich them so as to suit modern conditions.

“The Presbyterian College in Beirut (established in 1283/1866) which eventually became the American University was the first modern

educational centre in the Near East where young Arabs could gain a scholarly knowledge of their great cultural and national past.⁹

Thus, out of these many and variegated threads: the spread of Western ideas, the rediscovery and publication of the Arab classics by the Orientalists, the introduction of the printing press, and the establishment of newspapers and periodicals, was woven the rainbow-colored web of literary revivalism in Arab lands.

This movement implied a revolution against the artificial poetic diction of the twelfth/eighteenth century. In the literary field, the artist began to strengthen and reassert his individuality. It was thought that there was no artistic tradition to which he was forced to submit except one of his own choosing. All the canons of art, established by the generations of predecessors, existed only to guide him, not to enslave him or impose a check upon his genius. This implied an interest in the artist's own self and in the natural emotional environment in which he had his being.

At the same time another group, similar to the Beirut group in many ways, was being created in Cairo by means of schools, educational missions, and translations initiated or encouraged by Muhammad Ali and his successors. This group differed from the former in its greater concern with the question of Islam and modern civilization, and its greater caution in accepting ideas and innovations from Europe. These two groups, and similar but less important groups in other towns, laid the foundations of a new Arabic literature.¹⁰

As a result of the efforts of these groups, the scope of Arabic language has been broadened. Western ideas have been popularized through translations and new literary forms; the poetic drama, the novel, the romantic autobiography, have been introduced. At the same time old literature is also being revived. The Arab children are now asked to memorize al-Mutanabbi. The books of ibn Rushd and ibn Sina are again becoming popular in colleges, and ideas put forward by ibn Khaldun and al-Fakhri on the problems of culture and State are being popularized.

The speeches of Tariq ibn Ziyad and other generals of Arabia are repeated on the platform in order to infuse the spirit of nationalism amongst the younger generation. The recent celebrations of the millenaries of the great figures of the past indicate the zeal for revivalism. The glorious past of the Arabs is used as a stimulus for the present revival, and the achievements of the present are utilized to promote future development.

As a consequence there have arisen on the horizon of Arab lands some of the best brains, for example, the religious thinker Muhammad Abduh, the social reformer Qasim Amin, the essayists Muhammad Husain Haikal and al-Manfaluti, the poets Ahmad Shauqi and Hafiz Ibrahim, the playwright and novelist Taufiq al-Hakim, and the scholar Taha Husain.

All these are Egyptian names. But there have also been very important Syrian and Lebanese writers, many of whom worked for most of their life in Egypt, while others remained in their own country. They include the scholars and poets of Bustani and Yaziji families; the religious reformer Rashid Rida, the learned disciple of Muhammad Abduh; the leaders of Arabic journalism, Shidiaq, Nimr, Sarruf, Zaidan, and Taqla; the poet Khalil

Matran; the best of women writers in Arabic, May Ziadah; the traveller Amin Raihani; and the mystic Khalil Jibran.¹¹

Since the rapid progress of the literary movement during the past few years one has been impressed by the practical results of the efforts of Arab writers in adapting the classical Arabic language to the conditions of modern life, creating scientific terminology, and producing scientific works in Arabic, e.g., the various lexica of technical terms published by modern scholars, like Muhammad Sharaf, Ahmad Isa Bey, Maluf Pasha, Mazhar Said, and the scientific works of Yaqub Sarruf, Fuad Sarruf, al-Ghamrawaih, Musharrafah, etc.¹²

Role of the Arab League in Unifying the Arab World

The most recent attempt to consolidate the Arab world and give its endeavour concentration and direction was that of the Arab League. It was on March 22, 1945, that seven independent Arab States signed the pact of the Arab League.

“Unity and independence had from the first been the double aim of the Arab national movement. The two are inseparable in the mind of the Arab nationalist. Developments at first took another course when, after World War I, Arabia was split up into a number of States. But the farther the national idea spread among the peoples of these States, the stronger became their effort for unity. Arab nationalism never accepted the fact of partition. It was inevitable that within the independent Arab countries special interests of dynastic, economic, or of some other nature should develop and gain strength-interests with which the public movement for unity has to reckon.”¹³

Regional particularism and dynastic jealousies were indeed there. But despite these, there was a general desire amongst the Arabs to form a union of their countries. It was in response to this general need that Egypt, Libya, the Sudan, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and the Yemen joined their hands together. The formation of the League was then considered to be a major and positive step towards the fulfil-ment of Arab hopes and aspirations.¹⁴

In many respects the League was one of the most eloquent expressions of the spirit of pan-Arabism. It was acclaimed a good beginning, even though it was established on shaky foundations, and weakened by the half-hearted attitude and mental reservations of some of its members.

The role of the Arab League was further enhanced by the concerted participation of the Arab States in the United Nations as a “Political Block” and by their express and written pledges to defend Palestine at all cost. Palestine soon proved to be an acid test for the Arab States, the result of which was disheartening to all concerned. The defeat in Palestine not only meant the loss of a good part of Palestine, but was also the greatest blow within living memory to Arab unity, Arab pride, and Arab life.

This created a feeling of general dissatisfaction amongst the Arabs about the leadership of the League. More-over, with the failure of Arab League on the Palestine question, the parti-cularizing aims and interests of its member States began to counteract its unifying trends and tendencies. Even attempts at co-ordination of their efforts in the economic and cultural spheres, in spite

of some slight success, were overpowered by the stronger centrifugal forces of their political aspira-tions.

The Arab League had united the Arabs in their fight against Western domination; it had been called into play whenever a constellation of power politics threatened some vital interests of all or some of the Arab States. But negative attitudes and impulses proved uncreative, even destructive. Signifi-cantly, the Arab League was declared all but dead by the Arabs themselves in March 1956, when its member States again rallied to an Arab cause in the Suez crisis-once more against a threat from without, not for a constructive purpose within.

The recent unification of Egypt and Syria and the federation between Iraq and Jordan in 1377/1958 were also defensive reactions against political pressures. Neither their effect on the movement towards Arab unity, be it favourable or adverse, nor their impact on the development of Islam can as yet be assessed.¹⁵

What does the future hold for the Arab movement? Its future depends on the dissemination on a large scale of some factors of unity. The factors of language, history, geography, similarity of problems, the zeal for the maintenance of independence and sovereignty, quest for a respectable place among the comity of nations, common interests and aspira-tions are solid bases for Arab co-operation, if not for Arab unity.

There have been many failings on the part of the Arab League. But, in spite of all in-adequacies, in spite of all disappointments and frustrated hopes due to inde-cision and indiscipline, Arab nationalism is entitled to recognition for its stimulation of a general intellectual and political renaissance. Its work is not yet complete; the last word has not been spoken about the new Arab world, because the Arab peoples and States are still in the midst of a transition.¹⁶

D

1. In general all movements mentioned in the preceding sections show a deep influence of Western liberalism, as a result of which there has been a continuous attempt to interpret Islam “freely.”

2. In general, again all these movements share a common feature not purely religious. Because of the dual nature of Islam as a religion and State, and because of the pressure to which Muslim society has been subjected in almost every field, these movements resent and resist Western penetration and influence, with methods almost modern.

3. Impressive strides have been taken throughout the Arab world towards Muslim revival. “The rapid multiplication of newspapers, periodicals, books and pamphlets, the great increase in the number of literary societies and intellectual organizations along modern lines, the exchange of academic visits of professors and students, as well as of scientific research missions, are phenomena that are witnessed today in Arab countries.

The appointment of Egyptian teachers and experts in educational centres of Iraq, Arabia, the Yemen; the exchange of students; the organization of universities and the increase of new colleges; the dissemination of the wireless and its utilization for the propagation of cultural activities; the rising and surging tide of new thought; the flourishing movement of

translation of foreign literature, all indicate a noble intellectual awakening.”¹⁷

4. Intellectual renaissance in these countries is going hand in hand with national awakening and interest in language. Thus, for more than fifty years, Arab intellectuals have viewed intellectual revival and national consciousness from the standpoint of language and historical traditions. As a result, there is an agreement amounting to consensus that Arabic is not only the faithful register of Arab cultural achievements, but the pillar of politico-intellectual revival throughout the length and breadth of the Arab world. This awareness of the importance of language has been practically universal in most Arab countries.

Father Kirmili (d. 1366/1947) of Iraq, who had a passion for Arabic from his early youth, devoted most of his energy to linguistic problems. He, on the strength of very strong arguments, proved that Arabic has a unique gift of adaptability and adjustment to new situations; it has the power to assimilate new words and phrases and coin its own when the need arises. But he at the same time warned the Arabic-speaking world against the danger of the un-limited use of foreign words since this would lead to the abandonment of Arabism and the loss of nationalism.

Salim al-Jundi (1297/1880-1374/1955), while discussing the importance of Arabic language, said, “Language is the model that represents the long-standing nobility of a community. It is the guide that points to the extent of its civilization and progress.”¹⁸

Similarly, Munir al-Ajlani of Iraq in one of his addresses remarks that Arabic is the earth; in it we have eternal poetry, eternal prose, and the Quran. It is like the flag behind which soldiers (the Arabs) march.

To the great majority of Arab writers on nationalism, Arabic is the life-blood and soul of the community, it is the strongest bond of unity; the main-stay and the strongest pillar of Arab nationalism, the main deterrent against internal and external dividing forces, the instrument of thought and emotions, and a link between the past and the present. It is the faithful guardian of Arab cultural heritage, the register of the Arabs' deeds and accomplishments, and of their triumphs and pitfalls, and is the most important factor in their unity.¹⁹

As a matter of fact, the Arabic language has marvellously developed in the hands of modern Arab writers. It has been proved that this flexible and expressively powerful language is capable of depicting every manifestation of modern life without recourse to loanwords.

5. Industrialization is advancing in these countries at a notable speed and the standard of living of the people is slowly and steadily rising. The old prejudices against technical knowledge and scientific inventions are gradually withering away. The industrialization of the Arab countries has led to the transformation of labour that is being organized along modern lines; this is likely to have its effect in the whole Arab East, and even beyond. In the field of agriculture too “evolution in the Near East is witnessing a new state of affairs, by the gradual transformation from nomadism into sedentarism.”

In this respect, the improvement and multiplication of means of communication in their modern form have made a large contribution. The major and pressing problems of combating illiteracy and infant mortality, improving sanitation and applying the principles of preventive medicine, and educating women are being given serious attention.

6. Another feature of this movement is that the effervescent young men and the enlightened women are playing an important part everywhere. As a consequence of internal evolution in the realm of family life, the Oriental youth has become, within a remarkably short time, the hope of the old generation which has neither the possibilities of organizing a State, nor the scientific and administrative knowledge necessary for the comprehension and conduct of modern political movements.²⁰

7. There is going on everywhere a movement for the reconstruction of Islamic philosophy and theology to satisfy the reflective and inquisitive minds of those trained in the philosophical traditions of Plato and Aristotle. Thus, an Islamic system of thought is being created which can adequately meet the intellectual doubts to which the modern world is prone.

The leaders of Islamic renaissance have fully realized the need of an affirmation of Islam against the onslaught of modern scepticism that has come in the wake of modern science. This is how the door of ijihad, sealed for centuries, has been re-opened. In their efforts to harmonize the scientific and social discoveries of the modern age with the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah, they sometimes make a departure even from the fundamentals of Islam. Such a trend is rightly considered dangerous by the ulama and the masses.

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Chapter 73: Renaissance in North Africa: The Sanusiyyah Movement

A: Rise of the Sanusiyyah Order

The rise of the Sanusiyyah Order is closely bound up with that of other revivalist movements in Islam during the thirteenth/nineteenth century. For this reason it is not possible nor indeed advisable to discuss the rise and impact of this Order without first touching upon the nature of the events preceding and accompanying it; consideration must also be given to the forces which played a considerable role in preparing the way for shaping and directing the trend of thought and action of the Sanusiyyah movement.

The second half of the twelfth/eighteenth century was a period of dormancy in the history of modern Islam, and the beginning of the thirteenth/nineteenth century proved to be a grave time for the Muslim peoples. The Ottoman Empire, once an edifice of glory and achievement, began to weaken both politically and spiritually. The world of Islam, to which the Ottomans had for centuries stood as guardians and to which they had claimed the right of primacy, started to disintegrate.

Soon, therefore, the call for political and spiritual reforms began to be heard; attempts were now being actively made to resuscitate the Empire and to turn it once more into a vigorous and superior institution along the lines of the advancing European nations.

In the spiritual field the need was particularly felt for a rejuvenation of the Islamic faith, the source of inspiration and the very backbone of the Islamo--Arab Empire from the first/seventh to the seventh/thirteenth century. By the beginning of the twelfth/eighteenth century Islam had been practically forgotten, and a great many alien ideas and practices had crept into it. The original purity of the doctrine of Islam was to be found nowhere; abuse of its rites was increasing day by day.

The feeling that reform was necessary was, thus, a natural phenomenon of the time. And when the Ottoman Sultan, who was also the Caliph of Islam and, therefore, the de facto ruler of the three holy cities of Islam, could no longer command the confidence and allegiance of the Muslims and demonstrate his willingness and ability to restore to Islam its purity and its vigour, his position as protector and defender of the faith weakened. Opposition to his authority began to rear its head.

Besides this internal strain in the Ottoman Empire itself, there was the external threat, both political and economic. By the turn of the thirteenth/nineteenth century the leading European powers had started coveting the lucrative territories of the Ottoman Empire both in Asia and in Africa. Accordingly, it was these two motive forces combined; the desire to ameliorate the condition of the Muslims and the determination to resist foreign danger, which led Muslim thinkers and leaders at that time to rise and call for reforms in the Muslim world, and later to make plans for overcoming the obstacles in the way of an Islamic renaissance.

It was against this background that the Sanusiyyah Order was founded and began to grow. Its rise was indeed a reaction to both the spiritual dis-integration of and the external political threat to the very existence of

Islam. Its aim was three fold: first, to work for the restoration of the original purity of Islam and the advancement of Islamic society; secondly, to bring about the solidarity and unity of the Muslim countries and, thus, revive the “com-munity of Islam”; and, thirdly, to combat the growing encroachments of European imperialism upon the Muslim homeland.

The founder of the Sanusiyyah Order, Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Sanusi (known as the Grand Sanusi), was born in 1202/1787¹ in the village of al-Wasita, near Mustaghanem, in Algeria. Politically, socially, and economic-ally, this was a time of great instability and discontent in Algeria. The Ottoman governors, the beys, as they were called, had misruled the country and inflicted so many hardships on the people that resentment had reached a high degree, and the very authority of the Sultan had become exceedingly unpopular in the country.

By the time Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali reached his twentieth year and was able to think rationally and to analyse the state of affairs into which the Algerians had drifted, he became exceedingly bitter about the disintegration of Algerian society as well as about the oppressive rule of the Ottoman gover-nors.

Indeed, in his earlier years, while still receiving instruction at the hands of Muslim Shaikhs in Algeria, he showed a keen interest in the welfare of the Algerian Muslims as well as enthusiasm for the unity of Muslim territories all over the world. From the trade caravans that used to pass frequently through Algeria, he used to hear about the backwardness of Muslims in other Muslim lands.

Once he told his father, expressing his feelings about the debacle of Muslims at the time, “[the Muslims] are vanquished everywhere; [Muslim] territories and policies are being abandoned by the Muslims constantly and with the speed of lightning, and Islam is, thus, in a state of fearful decline. This is [indeed] what I am thinking of, O father!”²

The Grand Sanusi received his early education from a number of Shaikhs in Algeria, at Mustaghanem and later at Mazun. His instructors included abu Talib al-Mazuni, abu al-Mahl, ibn al-Qanduz al-Mustaghanemi, abu Ras al-Muaskari, ibn Ajibah, and Muhammad bin Abd al-Qadir abu Ruwainah. Under these Shaikhs he studied the Quran, the Hadith, and Muslim juris-prudence in general.

Then he moved to Fez, where for eight years he studied in its grand mosque school, generally known as Jami al-Qurawiyyin, to which innumerable students of Muslim theology used to come from all parts of North Africa. There he studied under a number of learned Shaikhs, including Hammud bin al-Hajj, Sidi al-Tayyib al-Kirani, Sidi Muhammad bin Amir al-Miwani, Sidi abu Bakr al-Idrisi, and Sidi al-Arabi bin Abmad al-Dirqawi.³

But he did not seem to have been happy in Fez. This was not only because of the pathetic state of morals and the lack of security and stability in the place, but also on account of the discouraging attitude which seems to have been taken by the authorities towards his teachings.⁴

Accordingly, while still in his early thirties, he left Fez for Egypt. There he studied under Shaikhs al-Mili al-Tunisiyy, Thuailib, al-Sawi, al-Attar, al-

Quwaisini, and al-Najjar. From there he went to the Hijaz, where he studied under Shaikhs Sulaiman al-Ajami, abu Hafs bin Abd al-Karim al-Attar, and Imam abu al-Abbas Abmad bin Abd Allah bin Idris.

While studying under all these Shaikhs, Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali seems to have fallen under the influence of their Sufi teachings, particularly those of the Tijaniyyah Order in Morocco. Later, however, he became a member of other Sufi Orders, including the Shadhiliyyah, Nasiriyyah and Qadiriyyah. But he does not seem to have been wholeheartedly in favour of their teachings.⁵

His purpose in joining them appears, as we shall see later, to be to make himself acquainted with their rites and teachings and to choose the best from every order so as to be able later to combine them in a new Order which would, thus, be “the crown of Sufi thought and practice.”⁶

In pursuing his studies in Algeria, Morocco, and Egypt, Sayyid Muhammad had ample opportunity to examine the state of affairs into which the Muslims had drifted, particularly the state of decadence prevailing in North Africa at the time. Comparison between the glorious past of the Muslims and their condition in his time seems to have occupied his mind greatly, and the thought that the Muslims were in a state of material and spiritual degeneracy haunted him constantly.⁷

In trying to discover the cause of this backwardness and find the remedy for it, he came to the conclusion that only by the restoration of the original purity of Islam and the unity of the Muslims the world over, could the future of Islam be made secure. This he now made the mission of his life and the object of all his efforts and preaching.

And, in order to obtain further spiritual strength, he decided to pay a visit to the Hijaz, the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad and the original springboard of the Muslims in the establishment of their empire in the first/seventh and second/eighth centuries. The ostensible reason for his journey was to perform the pilgrimage, but his actual motive was much more than that, namely, to invigorate his yearning spirit by the additional spiritual stamina which he wished to obtain during his visit to the holy cities of Islam.

Moreover, there seems to have been a political reason for his departure. While teaching at Fez, he appears to have shown a critical attitude towards the Ottoman authorities there, in a manner now mild and admonitory, now severe and remonstrative; he drew their attention to their maladministration and to the sorry conditions then prevail-ing in Fez.

As a consequence, his presence in Morocco was considered dangerous; the authorities considered him a threat to their prestige, fearing that his religious teachings would develop into a political challenge and, thus, lead to the end of the Ottoman rule in Morocco. In order, therefore, to avoid further friction with the authorities, Sayyid Muhammad decided to leave for Laghouat, in Algeria. This place lay in a highly strategic situation for the purpose of trade caravans to and from the Sudan in addition to holding a key position in the Atlas Sahara.⁸

One of Sayyid Muhammad's main objectives in his choice of Laghouat was his desire to preach his ideas in that area and to carry on with his

preaching for the reform of Islam and the unity of the Muslim world. Soon, however, he realized he could not accomplish this to the full, for he found himself shut away in the Sahara, far from all useful activity.

He, therefore, left for Gabis in Tunisia, and then went on to Tripoli, Misurata and Benghazi in Libya, as well as to Egypt and the Hijaz. It was indeed at this stage of his life that he began to exercise his influence successfully on the people of North Africa, preparing thereby the way for the founding of the Sanusiyyah Order.

He had already succeeded in converting to his viewpoint a considerable number of Algerians and other "Brethren" (Ikhwan). These were now his disciples, and a few of them accompanied him on his journey eastward through Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and the Hijaz, and helped him in the dissemination of his teachings.

Sayyid Muhammad's stay in Tunisia and Libya was relatively short, but even during this short period he remained actively engaged in the preaching of his ideas. Similarly, his stay in Egypt was brief, lasting only for a few weeks. He had originally intended to study at al-Azhar University in Cairo in order to improve his education, but he was soon defeated in his plans.

The Shaikhs of al-Azhar decided to combat his influence, perhaps out of jealousy of the success of his movement, or perhaps genuinely thinking that his teachings were not in accordance with the prevailing docile attitude taken by them towards the authoritarian rule of Muhammad Ali, then Governor of Egypt. In addition, seeing that the Sayyid and his followers viewed his autocratic rule with more than suspicion, if not actual hostility, Governor Muhammad Ali decided for his part to stifle the rapid advance of the Sanusi teachings.

He is, in fact, said to have suggested to the Shaikhs of al-Azhar to oppose the very presence in Cairo of the Sayyid and his disciples and even encouraged them to do so. This hostile attitude of the Shaikhs of al-Azhar and the authorities in Egypt, coupled with the persistent desire of the Sayyid to perform the pilgrimage, soon made him leave Egypt for the Hijaz.⁹

But his studies in Egypt left a deep impression on his mind. There Muhammad Ali had succeeded in shaking the authority of the Ottoman Sultan and establishing his own rule instead. Accordingly, Egypt, although nominally a vassal State and subject to Turkish suzerainty, had in fact declared its independence of the Turkish Sultan and was beginning to emerge as an autonomous entity among the States of the world.

Already the inability of the Ottoman Empire to repulse the French invasion of his own country, Algeria, had pointed to the weakness of that Empire. To the Sayyid all this provided a concrete example of the growing decadence of the Ottoman Empire and of the actual feasibility of a rising in the face of the Sultan. It was, indeed, an incentive to him to redouble his efforts in order to end the pathetic state of affairs into which the Muslims had drifted.

And yet the Sayyid felt he was hardly ready for such a move. Although he was encouraged by the example of Muhammad Ali, he seems to have felt that the kind of political triumph of the latter over the authority of the Sultan

was not the real victory he would wish for himself. He wanted political victory to be coupled with a real movement for reform and advance-ment.

He, thus, concluded that his aim might be better served by his own superior education, by his striving to combat the influence of sectarianism and authoritarian regimes, and by the dissemination of knowledge that would include the teaching of technical subjects to all classes of Muslims. Moreover, he advocated the popularization of sports, particularly the use of arms and horsemanship, and resolved, above all, to realize these aims without delay.¹⁰

It was with this in mind that the Sayyid set out for the Hijaz. There he stayed for six years, mostly at Makkah, where he resumed his studies and preaching. He developed close relations with many prominent Shaikhs in the Hijaz, but was particularly influenced by Shaikh Ahmad bin Idris al-Fasi, the fourth head of the Moroccan Order of the Qadiriyyah dervishes and later the founder of the Idrisiyyah or Qadiriyyah-Idrisiyyah Order.¹¹

In addition, through his contacts with the pilgrims, flocking in thousands to Makkah and al-Madinah every year, he made a deeper study of the condition of Muslims in other Muslim lands.

Having thus fortified his theological and other studies, acquiring in this way a much broader knowledge of the Islamic world, he began to feel he was in a position to start his own Order.

Upon the death of Sayyid Ahmad bin Idris in the Yemen (where he had gone into exile following the hostility of the Maliki Shaikhs at Makkah), Sayyid Muhammad al-Sanusi proceeded in 1253/1837 to establish a new Order, which was actually a sub-Order of the Idrisiyyah, and chose as its seat Mt. Abu Qubais, near Makkah.¹²

Here he made great progress, particularly among the Bedouin tribes of the Hijaz, chief among which was the Harb tribe between Makkah and al-Madinah.¹³ This success among the Hijazi tribes aroused the jealousy of the various authorities in Makkah, and they proceeded to provoke opposition to his movement, as they had previously opposed that of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab.

In this they found great support in the attitude of the 'ulama' and the Sharifs of Makkah and the Turkish administration.¹⁴ This was apparently because the Order seems to have threatened the prestige and privileges of these authorities. Objection was also made to the manner in which the Order "lowered Sufi standards to accommodate itself to Bedouin laxity in religious matters, and that it verged on heresy."¹⁵

The Sayyid now decided to leave the Hijaz, in the same way as he had previously been compelled to leave Egypt. But he was faced with the difficult task of choosing a new seat for his movement. First, he knew his movement had very little, if any, chance of success in the Arabian Peninsula, particularly in view of the opposition to his movement by the Turkish authorities and the Sharifs and Shaikhs of Makkah. Secondly, he was bound to encounter the same opposition as he had already experienced in Egypt before his departure for the Hijaz.

Thirdly, he could not very well make his own country, Algeria, the centre of his movement, since the French had already occupied it in 1246/1830.

Fourthly, such a new place had to be centrally situated in the Islamic world, a seat where the movement could flourish without at the same time attracting the attention of the ruling authorities.

In 1257/1841, he left the Hijaz, accompanied by a large number of his disciples and followers, and headed for Algeria. After a few months' stay in Cairo, during which the Shaikhs of al-Azhar renewed their hostility to his person and movement, he continued his journey westward through Libya to Tunisia. Here he learnt of the recent French advances in Algeria, and, being fearful of their designs (he was apprehensive lest the French authorities should be planning to arrest him or in any case to crush his movement), he hurried back to Libya,¹⁶ now the only place to which he could go and where he could settle and extend his movement without arousing the jealousy and open hostility of the authorities.

In a way, therefore, his choice of Libya was rather accidental, but in any case that country seemed to meet all the con-ditions he had conceived of for a new centre for his Order.¹⁷ It was remote from the seat of Government in Istanbul, and was also relatively neglected. The Ottoman officials in it were few in number and were for the most part confined to the coastal towns, while the tribes were left to themselves and rarely disturbed by the authorities so long as they paid the taxes and kept the peace.¹⁸

Even the Turkish troops seldom exceeded a thousand, and the semblance of a police force was not introduced until shortly before the Italian occupation in 1329/1911.¹⁹ Moreover, the Libyan population was on the whole backward and in great need of religious orientation. Libya's human soil was, so to speak, ready for the reception of the Sayyid's teachings, a fact that no doubt made his task all the easier and thus speeded up his progress.

In 1259/1843, with the help of the Awaqir and Barasa tribes, Sayyid Muhammad al-Sanusi founded his first lodge (zawiyah) near Sidi Rafi on the central Cyrenaican plateau (al-Jabal al-A khdar).²⁰ This first lodge came to be known as the White Lodge (al-Zawiyah al-Baida), and it was from here that the Sayyid began to direct his teaching and propagandistic activities for the first few years after the establishment of his new seat.

In 1263/1846, however, he returned to Makkah, where he stayed for seven years, while his disciples carried on his teaching and preaching in his absence. In 1270/1853, he returned to Cyrenaica, and three years later he moved his seat to Jaghbug, about one hundred and fifty kilometres south-east of Sidi Rafi, and made it now the centre of his Order. His purpose in this was to direct his activities southward, particularly in the pagan and semi-pagan countries of the Sahara and Equatorial Africa and beyond.

He was now out of reach of the Turkish, French, and Egyptian Governments, as well as on the main pilgrimage route from North- West Africa through Egypt to Makkah; at Jaghbug itself, this route bisected one of the trade routes from the coast to the Sahara and the Sudan. Jaghbug was also centrally located for the purpose of his movement, lying as it was at fairly equal distances from his lodges in Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, the Western Desert of Egypt, and the Sudan.²¹

Actually, Sayyid Muhammad al-Sanusi's transfer of the seat of his Order to Jaghbug heralded a new stage in the history of the development of the Order. Whereas previously the Order had confined itself to being mainly an internal movement aiming at the rejuvenation and reform of Islam as a faith, it now began to disseminate Islamic teachings and to extend the in-fluence of Islam.²²

Sayyid Muhammad must have been alarmed by the Chris-tian missionary work in the Sudan, and he seems to have wanted to combat their activities. In this he was encouraged by the success that his movement had already scored in the coastal regions and the successful establishment of so many Sanusi lodges in North Africa.²³

Jaghbug soon became not only a centre for the Sanusi movement, but also a seat for an Islamic university which brought under its fold a total of some three hundred learned teachers and students in a community of some one thousand Sanusis and "Brethren".²⁴ This community included the Algerians, Tunisians, Moroccans, Libyans, and others.

As time went on, the University of Jaghbug, with its team of scholars, poets, theologians, and others played an important role in the revivalist movement of Islam and its expansion in Africa during the thirteenth/nine-teenth century. It was at this university that the future leaders of the Sanusi Order were trained, and it was from here that Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali, his followers, and successors directed their missionary activities in Libya, the Sahara, and the Sudan.²⁵

When the Sayyid died in 1276/1859, he had already founded twenty-one lodges in Cyrenaica alone.²⁶ In addition, his Order had spread so widely in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania-and elsewhere-that the Ottoman Government was compelled to take his influence and prestige seriously into account; it, thus, wanted to win his friendship and support in order to use his prestige for improving the then deteriorating Turco-Arab relations and to quell the risings which were taking place in Tripolitania.

It is even reported that one of the Turkish governors in Tripolitania at the time (Ashqar Pasha) became a member of the Sanusi Order.²⁷ In accordance with this courteous attitude of the Ottoman Government towards the Sanusiyyah Order, Sultan Abd al- Majid I issued in 1273/1856 a firman exempting Sanusi properties from taxation and permitting the Order to collect a religious tithe from its followers.²⁸

The Grand Sanusi was succeeded in 1276/1859 by his elder son, Sayyid Muhammad al-Mahdi, as head of the Order,²⁹ following a short period of regency. During Sayyid al-Mahdi's tenure the Order expanded considerably with twenty-two new lodges founded in Cyrenaica, apart from those in Tripolitania and Central Africa: In fact, so influential did the Order become that not only the Turkish Government but also the leading European Powers of the time sought its friendship and support.

Sultan Abd al-Aziz (1278/1861-1293/1876) issued a firman confirming the privileges granted by the earlier firman of Sultan Abd al-Majid (1273/1856) and further recognized the right of sanctuary within the confines of the Sanusi lodges.³⁰ Yet, in spite of these flattering advances

made by the Ottoman Government towards them the Sanusiyyah leaders refused to take any part in Turkish political entanglements abroad.

In 1294/1877, thus, they refused to accede to the Sultan's request that they should send troops to fight for him in the Russo-Turkish war. Moreover, in 1301/1883 they denounced the rising of the Mahdi in the Sudan and refused to give him help in his movement against the British. The head of the Sanusi Order seems to have taken this attitude as a matter of principle, particularly in view of what he considered to be the "false pretensions" of the Sudanese Mahdi.³¹

In 1304/1886 the Ottoman Sultan sent General Sadiq Pasha to Jaghbug with presents for Sayyid al-Mahdi (al-Sanusi). Ten years later, Rashid Pasha, Governor of Cyrenaica, dressed in civilian clothes and unarmed, visited the Sayyid and paid him homage.³²

Sanusi relations with the European Powers were on the whole conducted with great caution and circumspection. In 1289/1872, Germany unsuccessfully tried to enlist the support of Sayyid al-Mahdi and to rouse him to rebel against the French in both North Africa and French West Africa. In 1299/1881, the Sanusis remained unresponsive to Italian presents and flattery.

One year later they refused to give support to Arabi Pasha's rising in Egypt, although at the time there were some who thought that Arabi was a mere tool in the hands of the Sanusis and that he had risen in revolt under their influence.³³

In 1313/1895 Sayyid al-Mahdi moved the seat of the Order to Kufra, a hitherto insignificant oasis, about one hundred and fifty kilometres south of Jaghbug. This may have been done to be out of the reach of the Turkish authorities.³⁴ It may also have been instigated a reaction to the attitude of Sultan Abd al-Hamid II who, it is alleged, arranged with the 'ulama' of al-Azhar University in Cairo to issue a fatwa discrediting the Order by condemning Sanusi practices which they considered to be innovations in the rules of prayer.³⁵

Following this transfer of the seat of the Order to Kufra, the affairs of the Order continued to prosper. Economically, the Order profited greatly from customs dues as well as from directly engaging in trade. Kufra now became a relatively important commercial centre through which caravans were con-stantly passing.³⁶ In the political and religious fields the Order extended its influence to the then independent Sultanates in the Sahara: Kavar, Tibesti, Borku, Ennedi, Darfur, Wadai, Kanem, Chad, the Azgar, the Air, and Baghirmi. It also reached the Sudan.³⁷

In fact, contact with some of these Sultanates had already been made by the Grand Sanusi shortly after his move to Jaghbug in 1273/1856. But it was not until Sayyid al-Mahdi's tenure that the Order began to infiltrate into the Sahara and the Sudan. This not only brought the various Sultanates in the area under Sanusi influence and led to the foundation of new lodges in their territories, but also swelled the revenues of the Order as a result of improvement in the security of the desert- routes and the consequent prosperity of trade activities in the region.³⁸

This advance of the Sanusiyyah into the Sahara and the Central Sudan brought the Order face to face with the French, and Franco-Sanusi relations henceforward became greatly strained. In 1317/1899, therefore, Sayyid al-Mahdi moved the seat of the Order from Kufra to Qiru, in Kanem, in order to organize resistance to the French, to administer the vast regions recently won by the Order, and to direct the propaganda activities of the Order in a more effective manner in the region.³⁹

Between 1317/1899 (the date of the Anglo-French Declaration concerning disputed frontiers in the area) and 1320/1902, a number of armed clashes took place between the French garrisons and the Sanusi forces in the area, with results alternating between Sanusi victory and French ascendancy.⁴⁰

With the death of Sayyid al-Mahdi at Qiru in the summer of 1320/1902, however, the Order suffered a great blow and its resistance against the French began to crumble. Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif, the successor of Sayyid al-Mahdi-, apprehensive of French advance and of the designs on Africa harboured by the other leading European Powers, was careful to avoid any friction with any of these powers.⁴¹

Being a well read Shaikh and scholar, he preferred the mosque and religious instruction to the sword and the field. He, thus, moved the seat of the Order back to Kufra. It was in fact because of this that the fortunes of the Order began to suffer. The political, religious, and economic progress achieved by the Order during Sayyid al-Mahdi's tenure began now to diminish. In addition, personal rivalries among members of the Sanusi family, after Sayyid al-Mahdi's death, helped to further weaken the solidarity and strength of the Order and to halt the extension of its influence.⁴² By the time the Italian invasion of Libya began in 1329/1911, the Order was already on the decline.

B: Teachings and Philosophy of the Sanussiyyah Order

It has already been stated that the main objective of the Sanusiyyah movement, when it first began to take shape, was to purify the religion of Islam from the heresies and alien beliefs and practices which had in the course of centuries crept into it. It was, thus, a puritan and reformist movement, the chief purpose of which was to restore the original purity of Islam and to guide the Muslims to a better understanding of their religion.

It continued to be an internal reformist movement until its founder, the Grand Sanusi, moved the seat of the Order in 1273/1856 to Jaghbub. It was at this stage of the development of the Order that it embarked on a new course, i.e., that of preaching and extending the teachings and influence of Islam to wider regions. But even in this it did not confine itself to being a religious and missionary movement.

It soon began to be a political movement, concerning itself essentially with political matters. Its development from the purely spiritual level to the political one as well, together with the ground it covered and the problems it encountered in these two fields, must, therefore, be discussed at some length.

In its nature the Sanusiyyah Order was a strictly Sufi Order calling for puritanism and a return to the true tenets and rites of Islam. This it strove to

reach through what it considered the achievement of the purity of the soul that would ultimately lead to communion with God.

The process of accomplishing this “salvation” is described by the Grand Sanusi himself in three of his nine books: *al-Salsabil al-Main fi al-Taraiq al-Arbain* (The Sweet Spring of the Forty Orders), wherein he describes seven stages through which the soul has to pass in order to become purified and united with God; *Kitab al-Masail al-Ashr, al-Musamma Bughyat al-Maqasid fi Khulasat al--Marasid* (The Book of the Ten Problems, Called the Purpose of Desires and the Summary of Intentions), in which he discusses ten of the problems which the Muslims encounter in their daily prayers), and *Iqad al-Wasnan fi al-Amal bi al-Hadith wal-Quran* (Awakening the Slumberer through Observance of the Hadith and the Quran), in which, in an effort to extol the virtue of following the Prophet's (S) sayings and practices, he deals with the various ways and means followed by the Muslim ‘ulama’ for understanding the Hadith.⁴³

But the Sanusiyyah Order differed in many respects from other Sufi Orders. These other Sufi Orders believed in and encouraged meditation, liturgical recitations, and the practice of the familiar bodily exertions (particularly, the rhythmic movements of the body together with music playing, singing, dancing, drumbeating, and taking out of processions) which were supposed to enable the Sufi to rid himself of his physical self and attain spiritual union with God.

In opposition to this, the Sanusiyyah leaders declared themselves in favour of the rational approach to religion and the reform and guidance of Muslims.⁴⁴

This was not only the attitude of the founder of the Sanusiyyah Order and his immediate successors, but is also that of the present leader of the Order (Sayyid Idris) who, shortly after his proclamation as the first king of independent Libya, issued orders to his followers not to resort to what he called anti-quoted physical practices.⁴⁵

A basic feature of Sanusi philosophy is its attempt to combine and reconcile the two methods familiar to Islamic religious thought: that of the ‘ulama’ who adhere to the Shariah and that of the Sufis. In this he tried to follow the example of al-Ghazali. But the Grand Sanusi, in trying to follow the path of the ‘ulama’, admired and was greatly influenced by ibn Taimiyyah, though he differed with him in his attitude towards Sufism, for ibn Taimiyyah had evinced open hostility to all Sufi teachings and methods, while the Grand Sanusi (and his successors) showed tolerance towards these Orders.

It has already been stated that the Grand Sanusi carefully studied the teachings of a number of Sufi Orders (all of which were Sunni Orders) before he decided to establish his own, and that he made it a point to choose from each of these Orders those principles which he considered most suited for incorporation into a new Order. His book *al-Salsabil al-Main* contains an account of the chief Orders which he had studied including the *Muhammadiyah*; the *Siddiqiyyah*, the *Uwaisiyyah*, the *Qadiriyyah*, the *Rifaiyyah*, the *Suhrawardiyyah*, the *Ahmadiyyah*, and the *Shadhiliyyah*.⁴⁶

But although he studied all these Orders and was influenced by them, his own Order was not, as has been sometimes claimed, a mere conglomeration of them. On the contrary, it was a “consistent and carefully thought out way of life.”⁴⁷ Nor is his Order a mere offshoot of the Shadhiliyyah Order.⁴⁸ What he in fact seems to have intended was to bring together and unite the various Islamic Orders and so, eventually, to unite all Muslims.⁴⁹

In its teachings the Sanusiyyah Order did not make an intrinsically new contribution to Islam; it did not introduce any essentially original principles or ideas. It was only a modern revivalist movement derived from the Sunni sect, and is in fact considered to be one of the most orthodox Orders.⁵⁰

It followed the Maliki school of Muslim thought which was and still is prevalent in North Africa. The Grand Sanusi placed great emphasis on the Sunnah which, together with the Quran, he regarded as the basic source of Islamic Law. Though he also attached a certain degree of importance to qiyas (analogy) and ijma (consensus of opinion) as the sources of law in Islam he considered these to be of secondary importance.⁵¹

But the most courageous stand that the Grand Sanusi took in this connection was his recognition of ijtiḥad (independent reasoning) as a method for understanding and developing Islam. It was in fact this doctrine which evoked the hostility of the ‘ulama’ of the time in Egypt and the Hijaz and made him stand at variance with them; for many centuries before, it was considered that the door of ijtiḥad had been closed, and the ‘ulama’, there-fore, held that the advocacy of this method was likely to lead to innovations in Islam.⁵²

C: Achievements: An Evaluation

The success of the Sanusiyyah Order was spectacular in more ways than one. The rapid progress that it scored among the tribes of Cyrenaica, Tri-politania, and the Fezzan, together with the extension of its influence to other countries, particularly Tunisia, Egypt, the Hijaz, and Central Africa, has been especially conspicuous in three main fields.

In the religious field, the movement found ready acceptance wherever it went. By 1335/1916, when Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif relinquished the head-ship of the Order in favour of Sayyid Idris, one hundred and forty-six lodges had been founded in Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, the Fezzan, Egypt, Arabia, Central Africa, and the Sudan.⁵³

The success of the movement was, at least partly, due as much to the devotion of its leaders as to the simplicity and originality of its teachings. Its original purpose, as we have noted earlier in this chapter, was to reform Islam by combating alien beliefs and practices that had been creeping into Islam throughout the centuries. This purpose, which is actually the avowed purpose of all modern Islamic revivalist movements, was all the easier to realize since it came at a time when Muslims all over the world began to feel the need for the rejuvenation and reinvigoration of their faith.

What served to help the Order in this respect was the fact that when it emerged the Muslims in the countries to which it addressed its call were in a state of abject poverty and backwardness; they were, indeed, ignorant of their religion and in dire need for some spiritual orientation, particularly when Sanusi teachings took as their basis the true and original tenets and

rites of Islam. This, no doubt, made the Sanusiyyah teachings readily acceptable to these people, since it not only gave them the spiritual stamina they had needed, but also reassurance and confidence in their own values by acknowledging and in fact reinforcing the true principles and rites of their own religion.

On the other hand, the poverty, backwardness, and ignorance of the Muslim peoples at the time must not be carried too far as an explanation for the rapid progress that the Sanusiyyah Order achieved. For, then, the success of the Order would (unjustifiably) be attributed rather to the naïveté of these people than to the rational appreciation on their part of the intrinsic values of its teachings.

Nor should the Sanusiyyah Order be misunderstood, as it has been by several writers and thinkers, to be a purely reactionary and fanatical movement, seeking self-gratification through a negative attitude not only towards other religions but also towards life in general. The Sanusiyyah Order is indeed a constructive movement which aims primarily at introducing a positive element into the Ummat al-Islam (the Islamic community) which it tried to recreate and transform into a healthy and progressive society.

The methods which it employed to realize this end were peaceful; it did not advocate violence or aggression and would not agree to incite rebellion even in territories falling under colonial regimes, unless provoked to do so by the attitude of these regimes; it professedly and openly declared that its foremost weapons were “guidance and persuasion.”⁵⁴

Considered in this light, the Sanusiyyah Order is far from deserving the accusations of extreme puritanism and fanaticism which H. Duveyrier⁵⁵ levelled against it. He asserted that the Sanusiyyah prohibition of drinking and smoking is a reflection of this fanaticism. He even went to the extreme of saying that assassinations of Europeans in North and Central Africa at that time could have been committed by none other than the Sanusi agents, and even considered that the Sanusiyyah propaganda was in fact at the root of every misfortune which befell the French interests.⁵⁶

Similarly, Professor Arnold J. Toynbee⁵⁷ has accused the Sanusiyyah of “Zealotism,” that is, “archaism evoked by foreign pressure” seeking, in self-defence when encountering Western civilization, to take refuge from the unknown into the familiar. In his opinion when it joins battle with a stranger who practises superior tactics and employs formidable new-fangled weapons, it finds itself getting the worst of the encounter, and, therefore, responds by practising its own traditional art of war with abnormally scrupulous exactitude.

These and many other similar accusations are as unfounded as they are misleading; they lack evidence to substantiate their assertions.

This constructive aspect of the Sanusiyyah Order has been manifested by Sanusi leaders and their teachings in several ways. It will suffice to mention in this connection that the Order showed a most tolerant attitude towards other reformist movements as well as towards the cult of saints which was so common and widespread throughout North Africa.⁵⁸

This tolerance may be attributed to the broadmindedness and complacent disposition of the Sanusi leaders themselves, and the high degree of learning and accomplishment they had attained. It may also be because the Sanusiyyah Order itself partook of and was influenced by many Sufi Orders that had been in existence before it came to flourish.

We have already noted that the founder of the Order him-self had deliberately studied the tenets and rites of these various Orders and had chosen the best of each for incorporation into the Order that he was going to establish in his own name. In any case, as the Sanusiyyah Order was, par excellence, a movement calling for a return to true Islam and the actual implementation of its principles, it was inevitably natural and logical that it should show tolerance, which is one of the chief characteristics of Islam itself, not only towards other Sufi orders and cults, but also towards other religions and indeed towards humanity as a whole. Admittedly, the Sanusiyyah Order was a conservative movement, but the claim that it was reactionary and fanatical is a completely different thing.

In the political field too the Sanusiyyah Order scored considerable success. Although starting originally as a purely “religious” movement, the Order soon found itself entangled in political matters, both internal and external.

This was inevitable in view of the Grand Sanusi's keen interest in the welfare of the Muslims in general and his early anxiety about the fate of the Ottoman Empire as the protector and defender of the faith. The “political” conditions of the Muslims and their endangered situation, particularly in the face of the growing threat of European imperialism in Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Morocco, made a deep impression on the Sanusi leaders, and they, therefore, strove for the political advancement and liberation of Muslim lands.

In addition, Islam being by its very nature both a code of ethics and a way of life, not recognizing any real distinction between what are commonly known as “political” matters and purely “religious” matters, it was inevitable and indeed natural that any approach by the Sanusiyyah Order to the religious affairs of Muslims should have also touched upon their political affairs.

The attitude of the Sanusiyyah Order towards the position of the Ottoman Sultan as the Caliph of all Muslims is of great interest here and should, therefore, be noted. It has already been mentioned that the Grand Sanusi and his successors wanted to maintain cordial relations with the Ottoman Sultan, that the Ottoman Government for its part tried to cultivate friendship with them, and that it was on that basis that the Ottoman Government accorded its recognition to the Sanusiyyah Order.

What actually happened in this respect is that the Sanusi leaders were ever ready to support the Ottoman Sultan as the Caliph of all Muslims, provided that his Government did not in any way encroach upon their much-cherished autonomy. It was in fact on that basis that they also accepted the secular authority of the Sultan as the political head of the Ottoman Empire.

But it is doubtful whether they were profoundly and wholeheartedly in favour of the Turks as such. However, when the Sanusis saw that they,

equally with the Turks, were being threatened by common foreign enemies, particularly France and Italy, they hastened to rally around the Sultan. This, as we shall see later in this chapter, became all the more evident when Italy proceeded to occupy Libya, thereby provoking the Sanusi leaders, together with other prominent figures in Libya, to rise on the side of the Turks and declare a war of jihad against the Italians.

What is of particular interest at this juncture is to note how the Sanusiyyah Order developed from being a purely spiritual movement into one also political.

One important factor which helped the Sanusi leaders to score political influence in Libya was that the Order did not confine itself to purely preaching activities, but soon grew into a coherent movement with a common direction and developed into an organization of its own, identifying itself with the tribal system of the Bedouins of Libya.

The Grand Sanusi and his successors came, thus, to be regarded not only as holy men who had come to preach, in the way it had been done by others before them, but also as national leaders who exercised great political and religious influence and commanded not only the respect and affection of the tribes but also their allegiance.⁵⁹

It was actually in the economic and social fields that the Sanusiyyah Order made its greatest contribution to Libyan life, and it was this role that helped to make its impact on Libyan life durable and more conspicuous. Although the Order rallied around it the tribal people of Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and the Fezzan, as well as a limited number of the townsmen of these territories, and although it educated these people in the matter of their religious duties, its effect on their life proved to be much more lasting and conspicuous than any other reformist movement which had influenced the Bedouins of Libya.

As noted earlier in this chapter, the Sanusiyyah Order won much more than a personal and local following among the Libyan populace; its founder and his successors were able to establish themselves as leaders of a national movement which has continued to affect and indeed direct the destinies of the country up to the present day. The secret of this lies, not only in the cap-able, devoted, and commanding personality of the Sanusi leaders themselves, not only in the social, economic, and political conditions under which the Libyans had been living before the advent of the Sanusiyyah movement and which made the teachings of the movement more readily acceptable, but also in the type of organization which the Sanusi leaders were able to give the country and which aimed at creating people who were "healthy in body and mind."⁶⁰

It has been already noted that it was the avowed purpose of the Sanusi leaders to associate their movement with the tribes themselves. This is why the vast majority of the Sanusi lodges were founded in tribal centres and not in towns, and the distribution of the lodges also followed tribal divisions.⁶¹

The distribution of the lodges was carefully planned by the Sanusi leaders. They were designed to comprehend the principal tribal groupings, the more important lodges being built at the centres of tribal life, while most of the other lodges were placed on important caravan-routes. Professor E. E.

Evans--Pritchard, while commenting on the wisdom of the Sanusi leaders for constructing their lodges on Graeco-Roman foundations in conformity with a "politico-economic plan," remarks that "where the Greek and Romans and Turks found it convenient or essential to build villages and posts was where the Sanusiyyah established its lodges."⁶²

In fact, it was the tribes themselves that established the lodges which came, thus, to be regarded as tribal institutions. This was usually done following the grant of permission by the head of the Sanusiyyah Order each time a lodge was to be established. The head of the Order would, thus, send the tribe concerned a Shaikh from among his followers at the seat of the Order. This Shaikh was called the muqaddam and acted as a custodian of the lodge; he was helped in the performance of his duties by another Shaikh called the wakil who was primarily responsible for the financial and economic affairs of the lodge.⁶³

The lodges were, thus, administered by the principal Shaikhs, each of whom represented the head of the Order in his particular lodge. The functions of each of these Shaikhs covered the settlement of disputes between members of the tribe; leading the tribesmen in jihad (the holy war); looking after security matters in the area covered by the lodge; acting as intermediary between the tribe and the Turkish administration; receiving foreigners and offering them hospitality; supervising the collection of tithe; directing the cultivation of grain and care of stock; dispatching surplus revenues to the seat of the Order; acting as Imam on Fridays; and assisting in preaching and teaching.⁶⁴

Every lodge, small or large, usually contained a mosque, schoolrooms, guest-rooms, living quarters for teachers and pupils, and houses for the Ikhwan (Brethren - those Shaikhs who accompanied the principal Shaikh of the lodge to help him run it), clients and servants and their families. Some of the lodges had small gardens, and the local cemetery was usually close to the lodge.⁶⁵

The various tribal sections would donate to the lodge the lands adjoining it. Often other donations were also made, such as wells, springs, date palms, flocks, crops, and camels. The total lands of the Order amounted to 200,000 hectares in Cyrenaica alone, while the endowments of the Order totaled some 50,000 hectares.⁶⁶ Most of the work needed at the lodge was usually carried out by the lodge community itself, though often the tribesmen helped the Shaikh of the lodge in the cultivation of the lands.

The lands attached to the lodges belonged to the various lodges to which they were given and not to the Shaikhs of the lodges or even to the Sanusi leaders themselves. They were considered waqf properties, and the Shaikhs of the lodges were only the legal representatives of the properties of these lodges. In this way, the revenues of one lodge could not be used for the maintenance of another lodge.

Even the head of the Order possessed no authority to interfere directly in the administration of the estates of the lodges. Members of the Sanusi family and the teachers and administrative officials of the Order usually lived at Jaghbub and Kufra, and the lodges used to supply them regularly

with gifts of various products, local or imported, such as skin, wool, grain, butter, honey, meat, rice, tea, sugar, and cloth.⁶⁷

In fact, the relations between the seat of the Order and the various lodges became very strong and regular, particularly during the tenure of Sayyid al-Mahdi. For this purpose, a postal system was established, and horses were for the most part used to carry correspondence from the seat of the Order to the various lodges and vice versa. In this way, Jaghbub was closely connected with Egypt, Tripolitania, the Fezzan, Wadai, and the rest of Cyrenaica.⁶⁸

Later, however, during the life-time of Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif, abuse of the affairs of the lodges became common; it became now the practice to earmark the surplus revenues of particular lodges for particular members of the Sanusi family, and these members came to be regarded as patrons of the lodges which supplied them their needs and were under their supervision.⁶⁹

In addition, although, as stated above, the estates of the lodges did not belong to the head of the Order or to the Shaikhs of the lodges, the hereditary system of Shaikhdom soon became an established practice in many of the lodges. In the early days of the Order, it was the practice that once the head of the Order sent a Shaikh to found a new lodge and once that lodge was established, that particular Shaikh was transferred to another lodge.

Later on it became the practice to leave a Shaikh in charge of a lodge till his death and then nominate his successor from among his nearest relatives, with the consent of the tribe and on the advice of the Shaikhs of the neighbouring lodges. In most cases this happened following a request by the members of the tribe concerned for the appointment of the son or brother of the deceased Shaikh as director of their lodge, upon which the head of the Order sanctioned their nomination. In course of time the families of these Shaikhs came to regard themselves as having a hereditary title to their lodges and also a pre-emptive claim to their administration and to the enjoyment of their revenues.⁷⁰

The importance of the Sanusi lodges in the history of Libya and, indeed, of every other country to which the Sanusiyyah order extended its influence, does not lie in the religious and missionary field only. It lies also, and in a particularly conspicuous manner, in the economic and social progress attained by the Order in these countries.

The lodges were, of course, places of worship and centres for teaching the principles and rites of Islam. They also served to extend the influence of Islam into hitherto pagan or semi-pagan lands. But the lodges were not convents paying no attention to the course of worldly events and developments, nor were they places for mystical meditation and exercises.

On the contrary, they were (in addition to being centres for religious instruction and missionary propaganda) community centres bustling with great educational, economic, and agricultural activities. The Sanusi lodges provided the countries in which they were founded with a unique educational machinery which served to instruct both tribesmen and townsmen (but more the former) in their language, history, and religion, as

well as to teach them purely secular subjects, including mathematics, chemistry, agriculture, and the use of weapons.⁷¹

The Sanusi leaders are, in fact, known for insisting that their followers should work hard and avoid accustoming themselves to a lazy and leisurely life. Agriculture and commerce, thus, progressed, and Libya in particular experienced a degree of material progress that it had not known for centuries.

Sanusi influence in Libya, as indeed in the other countries to which the Sanusiyyah Order addressed itself, was, thus, two-fold: spiritual which consisted of the religious instruction and the missionary work carried on in the various territories falling within the orbit of the Order's activities; and material consisting of the social and economic progress attained by the Sanusi lodges in these territories.

D: Decline and Recovery

By the turn of the fourteenth/twentieth century the "Sick Man of Europe" had become, as one might say, so sick that there was very little prospect of his recovery or improvement. By this time, too, the importance of the Mediterranean, for a long time the centre of political and economic interests of Europe, had doubly increased, particularly in view of the opening of the Suez Canal.

The Mediterranean now became the scene of conflict and a bone of contention among the leading Powers of Europe. Great Britain, France, Germany, Spain, and Italy were keenly interested, for various motives, in the welfare of that sea. The race for the acquisition of oversea territories was now in great progress. As it happened, Italy was left more or less free to annex Libya.⁷²

By this time the Sanusis had succeeded in establishing in Libya a position almost independent of the Turkish administration, recognizing only the de facto authority of the Turkish Sultan, which in practice amounted to no more than a nominal acknowledgment of his already enfeebled representation in the territory.

At the same time, however, Italy was busy securing the diplomatic support of the leading powers of Europe for the occupation of Libya. Pending the arrival of the right opportunity for her to launch her offensive against Libya, she had proceeded to penetrate that country peacefully, particularly in the economic and commercial fields.

By 1326/1908, when the Young Turks came to power, Turco-Italian relations had reached a critical stage. Italian public opinion was greatly alarmed at the mistrust in Italian projects shown by the Turkish administration in Libya. The mood of the Italian official and semi-official circles was hostile, and it was becoming clearer every day that Italy was busy trying to provoke Turkey into war over the mastery of Libya.⁷³ Eventually, on September 29, 1911, the Italian Government proceeded to declare war on Turkey.

The Italians had estimated that the Arab inhabitants of Libya would take the only course open to them, namely, complete surrender and the acceptance of the Italian rule. However, as events proved, the Italians had miscalculated the feelings of the Arabs about the Italian adventure, for as

soon as hostilities began, the Libyans, Cyrenaicans, Tripolitarians, and Fezzanese hastened to join the Turkish force, rising as one man in an effort to repulse and drive out the invading gentiles.

In Cyrenaica, the resistance movement was led by Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif, leader of the Sanusi Order, who was then at Kufra. Immediately on learning of the Italian invasion, Sayyid Ahmad issued a call to jihad. A large number of tribal chiefs and tribesmen, roused by the call, hastened to rally around the Sanusi flag. In the Fezzan, the call to jihad sent out by Sayyid Ahmad met a similarly favourable response. And in Tripolitania, steps were taken for the co-ordination of Arab resistance throughout the whole of Libya.

For some time Arab resistance against Italy's invasion continued to be tough. But Turco-Arab forces were soon compelled to retreat to the interior. Eventually, the Turks, harassed by a number of complications at home and abroad and losing hope of any victory over the Italians in Libya, agreed in October 1912 to sign a peace treaty (Treaty of Ouchy) with Italy, by which Italy acquired de facto control, though not sovereignty, over Libya, while the Ottoman Sultan reserved for himself a number of rights which he insisted on exercising in Libya. But shortly before signing the Treaty, the Sultan issued a firman granting the Libyans self-government, thereby making Libya a semi-independent State.

But the Libyan leaders, including Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif al-Sanusi, dis-claimed the Treaty of Ouchy and decided to continue the war against Italy.⁷⁴

Actually, the Turks wanted to encourage Libyan resistance against the Italians, and they soon nominated Sayyid Ahmad as the leader of the new Libyan State.⁷⁵

The designation of Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif as the leader of the future Libyan State meant that the unchallenged Sanusi rule in the country now received final and definite recognition on the part of the Turkish Government.

Turco-Sanusi relations remained cordial all the time. And Libyan resistance continued until 1335/1916, when a serious difference of opinion arose between Sayyid Ahmad and his cousin, Sayyid Idris al-Sanusi, over the alignments of the Sanusiyyah in the War. Sayyid Ahmad wanted to join Turkey and Germany against Italy, while Sayyid Idris, who was known for his affection for the British and who seems to have been impressed by the understanding reached at the time between the Arabs and the British Government,⁷⁶ pre-ferred to join Britain against Turkey and, thus, reach an understanding with the Italians.⁷⁷

By March 1916 the Turks and Libyans were in retreat. By this time, too, the differences of opinion between Sayyid Ahmad and Sayyid Idris had become too great to be in any way bridged.⁷⁸ This was all the more evident since these differences were of a basic nature and reflected the difference in outlook and in the basic philosophy with which each of the two Sayyids looked upon the task of continuing the war against Turkey.

In view of the openly professed colonial and religious considerations underlying and motivating Italy's invasion of Libya, Sayyid Ahmad

considered the continuation of Libyan resistance to be both a religious duty and a matter of necessity. On the other hand, Sayyid Idris seems to have looked upon the Italian occupation of Libya as an inevitable evil, and thought it was no use continuing the struggle against such a formidable enemy.

It was, thus, natural that some decisive measure should have been taken to call a halt to the duel that was going on between the two Sanusi Sayyids. In this it was Sayyid Idris who took the initiative. He now wanted to take over the leadership of the Sanusi Order himself. He considered that leadership of the Order had devolved upon Sayyid Ahmad following the death of Sayyid al-Mahdi (1320/1902) only because he, Sayyid Idris, as the elder son of Sayyid al-Mahdi, was then too young to succeed his father.

Now, however, he argued, matters had changed, and he had become old enough (twenty- seven) to take over the command. Eventually, Sayyid Ahmad, looking with grief at this attitude of his cousin and in view of the failure of his own plans to continue the resistance movement against Italy, decided to hand over political and military authority to Sayyid Idris. According to this arrangement, a number of leading Sanusis were to share with the new head the management of Sanusi affairs in Cyrenaica and the Fezzan. At the same time, Sayyid Ahmad was to remain the religious head of the Sanusi Order, while Sayyid Idris himself agreed to designate Sayyid al-Arabi (Sayyid Ahmad's eldest son) as his successor as the head of that Order.⁷⁹

Following this, Sayyid Ahmad retired to Jaghub, but was soon forced to leave it under British threat to destroy that place and demolish the tomb of Grand Sanusi. From there he went to the Oases of Aujla and Marada and then to Jufra, with the intention of proceeding from there to the Fezzan and, if need be, to the Sudan.

Upon the insistence of Nuri Bey, however, he had to go to Aqaila, some 250 kilometres southwest of Benghazi, in order to continue the struggle against Italy. There he remained until August 1918, when he left for Istanbul at the invitation of the Turkish Government. He was received as a great hero and came to be treated with the utmost courtesy. In 1337/1918, when Wahid al-Din came to the throne of the Ottoman Empire, the ceremony of "coronation," which had hitherto been performed by the head of the Maulawi Dervishes, was carried out by Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif. "It was," remarks Sir Harry Luke, "probably in order to stimulate sympathy for the Sultan in Islamic circles that [Sayyid Ahmad] was invited to officiate."⁸⁰

In April 1921, the Turkish Parliament nominated him as King of Iraq. He proved to be a staunch supporter of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and later tried to work for the restoration of the Khilafat to Istanbul. He went afterwards to Damascus in order to bring about a reconciliation between Syria and Turkey, but was forced by the French authorities to leave Syria in 1343/1924. From there he went to the Hijaz, where he was well received by King ibn Saud, and remained there until his death at Madinah in 1352/1933.⁸¹

Sayyid Idris took over control of Sanusi affairs at a very critical time. The Sanusis under the leadership of his predecessor had suffered a

catastrophic defeat at the hands of the British forces in Egypt. Moreover, a devastating drought had overcome the country in 1333/1915. It was followed the next year by large swarms of locusts, and the year after by a general famine and epidemic throughout the country.

Sayyid Idris, therefore, decided (with the approval of Sayyid Ahmad who was still in Cyrenaica) to enter into negotiations with the British and Italian authorities with a view to reaching a *modus vivendi* with the latter. This was indeed Sayyid Idris's long-awaited opportunity for establishing himself not only as the political leader of the Sanusi movement, but also as its spiritual head.

However, although an agreement (Akrama Agreement of April 1917) was reached between Sayyid Idris and the Italians (with the help of the British) whereby a truce was established, the Italians soon violated the agreement by insisting on the acquisition of sovereign rights over Libya, a course to which Sayyid Idris could not agree without meeting the opposition of the Sanusi leaders.⁸²

Eventually, in 1339/1920, another agreement (Agreement of al-Rajma) was concluded between Sayyid Idris and the Italians. According to the terms of this agreement, the Italian Government agreed to grant the Sanusi Order a limited degree of self-government within specified areas. Sayyid Idris was designated as the hereditary chief of this "Sanusi Government" with the title of Amir. The Sanusi lodges were exempt from taxation, and a parliament was to be set up on the basis of proportional representation from the oases under the Amir's jurisdiction.

The Italian Government, moreover, promised to respect Arab lands and properties including those of the Sanusi lodges. Among other things, the Amir promised to put an end, within eight months of the signing of the agreement, to all the Sanusi military camps and other military formations within his area.⁸³

In the meantime, the Tripolitanian leaders who had been anxious from the start of the resistance to co-ordinate their policies with those of the Sanusi leaders in Cyrenaica and the Fezzan, eventually met at Gharyan in Tripolitania, proclaimed a "Tripolitanian Republic" in 1340/1921, and decided to invite Sayyid Idris to be its head.⁸⁴

Following this, in 1341/1922, a Tripolitanian delegation left for Ajadabiyah, seat of the Sanusiyyah Government since 1339/1920, in order to lay before and explain to the members of that Government the resolutions adopted at the Congress of Gharyan. On November 22, 1922, Amir Idris formally accepted the Tripolitanian offer.

The Tripolitanian *baiah* to Amir Idris stands as a landmark in the history of Libya for being particularly one of the most important formal bases on which Libyan unity has come to be erected in recent times. It is all the more remarkable since, in spite of the differences which had earlier existed between the Sanusi leaders and the Tripolitanians, it made it possible for the latter to accept Sanusi hegemony.

This *baiah*, in fact, proved to be a deadly blow to Italy's prestige and chances in Libya. It was now obvious that Italy's position in Tripolitania had become greatly jeopardized.⁸⁵ Even Amir Idris, under pressure from the

Cyrenaican tribes, could not suppress the military camps and other formations within eight months in accordance with the Agreement of al-Rajma.

This in fact proved to be of great annoyance and displeasure to the Italian authorities who were ever-apprehensive of the establishment of a unified and strong Libya. They always felt that they had come to terms with the Libyans as a result of the pressure of their own political and military circumstances.

With the rise of the Fascists and their assumption of power in Italy in October 1922 matters came to a head. Determined to uphold Italy's name and prestige in Libya and to reassert the acquisition of Italian sovereignty over that country, the Fascist regime proceeded to launch a new offensive on Libya.

On April 21, 1923, the Italian forces occupied Ajadabiyah, the seat of the Sanusi Government, and three days later the Italian Governor de-clared the unilateral abrogation of all the agreements concluded between the Sanusiyyah Order and the Italian Government.⁸⁶

Libyan resistance was once again weakening. By the end of 1342/1923 resistance in Tripolitania had collapsed, and the Italians had established themselves firmly in that territory. In December 1922, Amir Idris fled secretly to Egypt. Before leaving the country, however, he appointed his younger brother, Sayyid al-Rida, as spiritual head of the Sanusiyyah Order in Cyrenaica and Umar al-Mukhtar as political and military leader of the territory.

Cyre-naican resistance continued until the end of 1350/1931, when Umar al-Mukhtar, at the time eighty years of age, was caught and executed by the Italians. With this the resistance movement in Cyrenaica completely collapsed. A new phase in Italy's occupation of the country thus started. It now became possible for the Italians to carry out their plans for the colonization of the country and the settlement therein of Italian farmers and other colonists.

Italy's occupation of Libya lasted until 1362/1943 and formally ended with the conclusion of the Italian peace treaty in February 1947. During the thirty years of Italian rule in Libya, Sanusi fortunes suffered terribly; almost all the Sanusi leaders were forced to leave the country and live in the neighbour-ing Arab lands, particularly in Egypt.

On December 22, 1930, a Royal Decree was issued, whereby the various pacts between the Italians and the Sanusis were formally revoked and the lodges were closed. The sequestration of the estates and goods of these lodges was ordered. By this Decree all movable and immovable property of the lodges was confiscated and transferred to the patrimony of the "Colony" (i.e., Libya). The Decree even expressly forbade any recourse to the courts against seizures thus made by the Italian ad-ministration.

The Sanusiyyah Order itself was considered by the Italians to be an illegal association.⁸⁷ By the outbreak of the Second World War the Order had been finally crippled both as a spiritual and as a political force. It was not until August 1939 that the Sanusi leaders again began to recover their lost position as liberators and leaders of Libya. And it was not until

December 1951, following many internal and external developments, that Libya emerged as an independent and sovereign State under the political and, to a much lesser extent, spiritual leadership of the Sanusiyyah Order.

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Notes

1. This is the date given by Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif al-Sanusi in his book, *al-Anwar al-Qudsiyyah fi Muqaddamat al-Tariqat al-Sanusiyah*, and also by E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, Oxford University Press, London, 1946, p. 11, and by M. Fuad Shukri, *al-Sanusiyah Din wa Daulah (The Sanusiyah as a Religion and as a State)*, Cairo, 1948, p. 11. Other authorities, however, mention other dates: 1206/1791, 1207/1792, 1211/1796, and 1218/1803.
2. Salim bin Amir, "al-Sanusiyun fi Barqa" (The Sanusis in Cyrenaica), *Majallat Umar al-Mukhtar*, Benghazi, Vol. I (September 1943), p. 6. See also Shukri, op. cit., p. 13.
3. Salim bin Amir, op. cit., p. 5.
4. Ibid., p. 12.
5. Ibid., pp. 5-6.
6. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., p. 12.
7. Mustafa Bayyu, *Dirasah fi al-Tarikh al-Lubiyi (Studies in Libyan History)*, Alexandria, 1953, p. 23.
8. Salim bin Amir, op. cit., p. 12.
9. Bayyu, op. cit., p. 24.
10. Salim bin Amir, op. cit., p. 2.
11. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., p. 12.
12. Ibid.
13. Bayyu, op. cit., p. 27.
14. Ibid.
15. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., p. 13.
16. Salim bin Amir, op. cit., p. 3.
17. Bayyu, op. cit., pp. 28-35.
18. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., pp. 93-98.
19. D. C. Cumming, *Handbook of Cyrenaica*, Part V, p. 12. See also A. J. Cachia, *Libya under the Second Ottoman Occupation (1835-1911)*, Government Press, Tripoli, 1945, pp. 29-42.
20. Salim bin Amir, op. cit., p. 3. See also Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., p. 14.
21. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., pp. 14-16.
22. Bayyu, op. cit., p. 45.
23. Ibid., p. 53.
24. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., p. 17.
25. Ibid., pp. 17-18.
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Chapter 74: Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani

A: Introduction

While Europe was disengaging herself from the spiritual hold of Rome and embarking upon the hazardous yet challenging road of freedom, the Arab world was being isolated from and insulated against almost all outside influences and changes. This process of isolation and insulation continued unabated till it came to an abrupt end at the time of the Napoleonic expedition against Egypt in 1213/1798.

This was indeed the first serious external stimulus that the Arab and the Muslim world had received since the Ottoman conquest in 922/1516. The episode of French occupation of Egypt was quite significant as it ushered a new era for the Muslim world, an era in which the Western nations began to penetrate into the lands of the Muslims at a breakneck speed.

The story of this penetration is very painful to narrate but it proved to be a blessing in disguise since it awakened the Muslims from their slumber. The Muslim society, which was a medieval and ossified society, when it faced a relentless and superior power that subjected its people and exploited its wealth, fully realized the enormity of the danger.

The method by which the policy of the Western imperialists was executed and the resistance crushed, and the way in which the culture of the conquerors was imposed, did not foster either understanding or friendship, but rather created doubts and promoted fears with regard to the intentions of the rulers. The Muslims were alarmed at the situation that not only their political freedom was in peril, but their institutions, culture, and even their faith, the bedrock of their life, were also being threatened.

The advent of the modern Christian missionary movement at about the same time confirmed this belief. Islam as a result became a rallying call for existence and an instrument of protest against foreigners. The foreigners in turn arrived at the conclusion that unless this potent instrument was dubbed, their position in Muslim lands would not become stable. They, therefore, besides tightening their political control, tried to change the outlook of the younger generations of the Muslims by encouraging Christian missionary activity and foreign educational efforts.

“Throughout the Muslim world in general and the Arab world in particular this relentless political penetration galvanized Muslims into a reaction con-sonant with Islam's politico-religious structure. This structure being both a religion and a State at the same time, weakness in one was deemed by the Muslims weakness in the other and vice versa” (Nabih Amin Faris).

This feeling culminated in a form of movement that aroused the Muslims on the one hand to defend their lands against the inroads of Western imperialism and on the other to save their faith against the aggression of the Christian missionary. That is how the Muslims came to realize that they could not, even if they wanted to continue to live as they had hitherto lived, be com-placently secure in the illusion that the pattern of life accepted as valid in the past must for ever remain valid, for that complacency, that security of convictions and illusions, was shattered to pieces by what had happened to them in the last few decades.

It was the realization of this time-lag between the demands of a new situation and their traditional ways of thinking and living which inspired them with a strong desire to cast off their fatal inertia. The Muslims were, thus, awakened to the need of taking stock of their cultural holdings. They observed that only paying lip-service to their ideology could not help them to solve the problems which had cropped up as a result of the penetration of Western Powers in their respective lands.

If they really wanted to defend their freedom without obliterating Islam as a basis of their civiliza-tion, they must make a fresh start in terms of Islamic programme and thus resurrect their society from the old ashes of convention and decay. In case they did not realize the gravity of the situation and simply clung to old notions and conventions in their entirety, they would be playing the game of the proverbial ostrich that buries its head in the sand in order to escape the necessity of making a decision.

If Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab of Arabia (Chap. 72) and Shah Wali Allah of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent (Chap. 79) be considered to be precursors of the modern awakening in Islam and their movements the signs of the coming dawn, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1254/1838-1314/1897) must be taken to be the foremost leader of this awakening and his movement the first glow of the dawn.

He was the greatest Oriental thinker of the thirteenth/nineteenth century. It has rightly been said that the message of al-Afghani burst through the reigning obscurantism as a splendid lightning. He was a thinker and at the same time a man of action, endowed with a penetrating intelligence and a great heart. His rare intellectual gifts and his high moral qualities gave to his personality the magnetism peculiar to all great leaders and drew to him many followers.

Al-Afghani was for the Muslim world a comprehensive personality, being at the same time a great thinker, a religious reformer, and a political leader. Among his contemporaries he was regarded as a remarkable writer, a charming and eloquent speaker, and a dialectician endowed with great powers of persuasion. According to Muham-mad Abduh, he was also a man of heart and strong will, ever ready to under-take actions requiring the greatest courage and generosity, and devoted to the things of the spirit.

This "wild man of genius," as Blunt called him, always refused to consider money or honours, and preferred, without doubt, to preserve his liberty of action in order to serve better the ideal to which he devoted his whole life, namely, the rebirth of the Muslim world.

During his stay in Paris in 1301/1883, al-Afghani met Ernest Renan on whom he made such an impression that the illustrious French writer could not but express his enthusiasm in these terms: "The freedom of his thought, his noble and loyal character made me believe during our conversation that I had before me, brought to life again, one of my old acquaintances, Avicenna, Averroes, or another of those great infidels who represented during five centuries the tradition of the human spirit."

B: Life

Problems touching the origin of Jamal al-Din are far from having been solved. The biographers of diverse Islamic lands-Turks, Persians, Indians,

and Afghans, still claim the honour of being his compatriots. In reality, although he was named al-Afghani, i.e., coming from Afghanistan, his activities and influence were widespread; every Islamic land was home to him; and, besides, he was no stranger to the capitals of Europe. He made the acquaintance of scholars, theologians, and politicians both from the East and the West.

His early studies were pursued in Persia and Afghanistan where, by the age of eighteen, he had acquired an exceptionally thorough mastery of Islamic studies, philosophy, and science. The next year and a half, spent in India, introduced him to European teachings. He then made a pilgrimage to Mecca.

On his return to Afghanistan, there followed for him a decade of political career, interrupted by the vicissitudes of civil war. His liberal ideas and his popularity with the people led to the covert hostility of the English who were supporting Amir Shir Ali. On this Amir's accession in 1286/1869, Jamal al-Din left the country.

For a short period, he visited India again. The Indian Government honoured him, but also imposed restrictions on his activities. So he proceeded to Constantinople by way of Egypt where he made his mark at al-Azhar. In Constantinople he was well received but eventually his advanced views brought him the disfavour of the Shaikh al-Islam, and the resulting controversy was so heated that he was asked to leave the country in 1288/1871.

This was the prelude to an important period of his life, his stay in Egypt, where the warm reception given him by intellectual circles induced him to prolong his visit. There he spread his new ideas-notably influencing the future reformer Muhammad Abduh, and did much to awaken the young Egyptians to the dangers of foreign domination. Finally, however, his advanced religious views offended the conservative theologians and his political opponents, the British, and he was expelled from Egypt in 1297/1879.

Returning to India, he wrote "The Refutation of the Materialists," a defence of Islam against modern attacks. While he was in India, the Arabi Rebellion broke out in Egypt, whereupon the British detained him until the defeat of Arabi.

Then followed a period of three years in Paris, fruitful for the publication of his ideas. In 1301/1883, he carried on a controversy with Ernest Renan on "Islam and Science," and in 1302/1884, published with his disciple Muhammad Abduh, exiled from Egypt for his complicity in the Arabi uprising, an Arabic weekly al-Urwat al-Wuthqa (The Indissoluble Link) aiming at arousing the Muslims against Western exploitation. The British soon banned the paper in Egypt and India; nevertheless, in its short life it did exercise some influence in these countries.

From Paris, al-Afghani went to London to discuss the Mahdi uprising in the Sudan but was unable to obtain an agreement with the British. Thence, interrupted by a four years' stay in Russia, followed a period of service under the Shah of Persia, ending in his expulsion in 1308/1890 or 1309/1891 when his reforming zeal antagonized the Shah.

Then followed another brief visit to England where Jamal al-Din started his campaign against the Shah and published his “Splendour of the Two Hemispheres” (Dia al-Khafiqain) ending in his ill-fated acceptance of the Sultan of Turkey’s invitation to be his guest at Constantinople for there he had to remain in “gilded captivity” till his death in 1315/1897.

C: Philosophy

The life of al-Afghani corresponded exactly with his thought; in him theory and practice were closely linked. In this respect one might compare his mission in the modern Muslim world with that of Socrates in Hellenic antiquity. His life and thought were both marked by three characteristic traits: a subtle spirituality, a profound religious sense, and a high moral sense that influenced very strongly all his actions.

1. Spirituality: This trait manifested itself clearly in his detachment from physical pleasures, in his pursuit of spiritual things, and in his devotion to the ideals to which he had dedicated himself.

As Abbas al-Aqqad has said, Jamal al-Din was opposed to the propaganda made among the Muslims in favour of materialism; with his natural perspicacity he exposed the characteristic traits of materialism. He published a book entitled “The Refutation of the Materialists” (al-Raddala al-Dahriyyin). “Sometimes the materialists,” says al-Afghani, “proclaim their concern to purify our minds from superstition and to illuminate our intelligence with true knowledge; sometimes they present themselves to us as friends of the poor, protectors of the weak, and defenders of the oppressed.... Whatever the group to which they belong, their action constitutes a formidable shock which will not fail to shake the very foundations of society and destroy the fruits of its labour.... Their words would suppress the noble motives of our hearts; their ideas would poison our souls; and their tentacles would be a continual source of disturbance for the established order.” Jamal al-Din had denounced the sophism and practices of the partisans of the materialistic interpretation of history before it became well known in Europe.

2. Religious Sense: This trait found its expression in almost all of al-Afghani’s writings and is notably manifest in his views about the function of religion in society. “Religion,” he wrote, “is the very substance of nations and the real source of the happiness of man.”

Moreover, true civilization, he held, is that which is based on learning, morality, and religion, and not on material progress such as the building of great cities, the accumulation of great riches, or the perfection of the engines of murder and destruction.

3. Moral Sense: His acute moral sense subjected him to the famous accusation that he addressed himself against the imperialistic colonial policy of the Western powers, a policy based upon their intention to exploit the weak. He was of the view that what the Occidentals designate as “colonization” is in reality no other than what is its opposite in meaning, “decolonization,” “de-population,” and “destruction.”

It was this view that made al-Afghani make a distinction between “the Holy Wars” of Islam, which aimed at the propagation of faith, and the

economic wars of Europe, which always ended in the subjugation and enslavement of the vanquished peoples.

He clearly distinguished between “Muslim socialism,” which, according to him, is based on love, reason, and freedom, and material communism,” which is erected on hatred, selfishness, and tyranny.

Al-Afghani was a true Muslim and a rationalist. He appealed to the Muslims of all sects to make use of the principle of rationalism that is a special privilege of Islam. “Of all religions,” he says, “Islam is almost the only one that blames those who believe without having proofs, and rebukes those who follow opinions without having any certainty.... In whatever Islam teaches, it appeals to reason ... and the holy texts proclaim that happiness consists in the right use of reason.”

In the same spirit, al-Afghani advocated the Mutazilite doctrine of free will against fatalism; this latter is an attitude commonly but wrongly attributed to the Muslims by the Western people. According to Jamal al-Din, there is a great difference between the Muslim belief in al-qada wal-qadar (predestination) and that in al-jabr (fatalism).

Al--qada wal-qadar is a belief that strengthens the faculty of resolution in man, builds up his moral stamina, and inculcates in him courage and endurance. Al-jabr, on the other hand, is nothing but an evil innovation (bidah) that was introduced maliciously into the Muslim world for political purposes.

D: Political Thought

Al-Afghani made himself the champion of what Western writers call political “Pan-Islamism,” preaching the union of all Islamic peoples under the same Caliphate for the purpose of emancipating themselves from foreign domination. He used to say that “the European States justify the attacks and humiliations inflicted by them upon the countries of the East on the pretext of the latter’s backwardness.

Nevertheless, the same States try to prevent by all means in their power, even by war, all attempts at reform or renaissance of the Islamic peoples. From all this arises the necessity for the Muslim world to unite in a great defensive alliance, in order to preserve itself against annihilation; to achieve this it must acquire the technique of Western progress and learn the secrets of European power.”

He propounded these ideas in al-Urwat al-Wuthqa, under the title “Islamic Unity.” He maintained that Muslims were once united under one glorious empire, and that their achievements in learning and philosophy and all the sciences are still the boast of all Muslims. It is a duty incumbent upon all Muslims to aid in maintaining the authority of Islam and Islamic rule over all Muslim lands, and they are not permitted under any circumstances to make peace with and be conciliatory towards anyone who contends their mastery over their lands, until they obtain complete authority without sharing it with anyone else.

The bonds holding the Muslims together, al-Afghani maintained, began to fall apart when the Abbasid Caliphs became contented with their titular powers ceased to encourage scholars and those trained in religious matters, and stopped the exercise of ijtihad (free thinking). He said, “Today we see

Muslim rulers giving a free hand too foreigners in managing the affairs of their States and even of their own houses and fastening the yoke of foreign rule upon their own necks. Europeans, greedy for Muslim lands, seek to destroy their religious unity and, thus, take advantage of the inner discords of Muslim countries.”

However, as it has been rightly pointed out, al-Afghani did not intend to substitute religious zeal for national patriotism; he wished the efforts of the Muslim countries to converge independently of one another towards a com-mon goal-political liberation. And it was in order to regenerate Turkey, Persia, India, and Egypt that he worked for the resuscitation of Islam, a religion that exercises such profound influence on the political and social life of those who profess it.

In advocating the defence of one's own country, Jamal al-Din wrote in the *Urwat al-Wuthqa*: “To defend one's homeland is a law of nature and a precept of life bound up with the demands made by nature through the instinctive urges for food and drink.” About traitors he says: “By the term ‘traitor’ we do not refer to the individual who sells his country for money and gives her over to an enemy for a price, whether it be great or small-, no price for which one's country is sold can ever be great; the real traitor is one who is responsible for the enemy's taking one step on his land and who allows the enemy to plant his foot on his country's soil, while he is able to shake it loose. He indeed is the real traitor in whatever guise he may appear. Anyone who is capable of counteracting the enemy in thought or action, and then acquits himself poorly in this, is a traitor.”

He goes on to say: “There is no shame attached to any small and weak nation, if she is vanquished by the armed might of a nation larger and stronger than she. But the disgrace which the passage of time will not erase, is that the nation, or one of her individuals or a group, should run to put their necks under the enemy's yoke, whether through carelessness in the management of their affairs or out of desire for some temporary benefit, for they become thus the agents of their own destruction.”

The Occidentals, according to al-Afghani, adopt in the East strange methods for suppressing the patriotic spirit, stifling national education, and destroying Oriental culture. Thus, they incite the Orientals to deny every virtue and every value in vogue in their respective countries. They persuade them that there is not, in the Arabic, Persian, or Indian languages, any literature worth mentioning, and that in their history there is not a single glory to report.

They make them to believe that all merit for an Oriental consists in turning away from the understanding of his own language and in feeling proud of the fact that he cannot express himself well in his own language, and in maintaining that all he can attain in human culture resides in the jargon of some Occidental language.

The Orientals, exhorted Jamal al-Din, must understand that there cannot be a sense of being one community in a people who do not have their own language; that there cannot be a language for a people who have no literature of their own; that there can be no glory for a people who have no history of their own; that there cannot be history for a people who have no

attachment to the heritage of their country or recognition of the great achievements of their men.

E: Conclusion

Al Afghani died in exile in Istanbul on the 9th of March 1897. His short life had been full of persecutions and vexations which were the natural result either of despotism or of ignorance, but it was a life of heroism, full of noble thoughts and lofty notions, a life which exercised on the succeeding generations of the Muslims a lasting influence which has not been surpassed.

In fact, the secret of his personality and of all his activities was his love of freedom and independence and his antagonism to any oppression whether internal or external.

Self-dignity was the ideal of his life. The Muslims have to set up as a maxim, as they did in the past, the fine principle so well expressed in the verse: "Live in dignity and die in dignity; among the blows of swords and the waving of flags."

But, unfortunately, the Muslims have for long disregarded this principle. Having accepted a life of submission and servitude, they have fallen so low that others who have adopted their maxim as an ideal of life have been able to attain higher degrees of perfection and glory.

It is now necessary to proceed without delay on a new enterprise aiming to inspire the Muslims with a new spirit and to create a new generation. It is necessary, finally, to form associations of "salvation," led by men of faith and sincerity who would swear never to seek favour from the holders of power, never to be deceived by promises, never to flinch before threats, and ever to continue their efforts till they obtain the removal, from positions of authority in their country, of all the timorous hypocrites and charlatans.

More than sixty years have elapsed since the death of al-Afghani, but his illustrious name will rest engraved in all memories and his attractive personality will remain dear to all Muslim hearts. As was pointed out by Mustafa Abd al-Raziq, al-Afghani was in the history of modern Orient the first defender of freedom as he was also its first martyr. Indeed, he is the father of modern renaissance in Islam.

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Chapter 75: Renaissance in Egypt: Muhammad Abduh and His School

A: Life

Nobody has contributed to the renaissance of Muslim thought in modern Egypt more than Muhammad Abduh. He was a great Egyptian philosopher, sociologist, and reformer, and is ranked as one of the most remarkable figures in the modern Muslim world. On his death in 1323/1905 he left numerous disciples and many works of real interest and inestimable value. He was, and still is, commonly given the superb title “al-Ustadh al-Imam” (The Master and Guide); this title alone shows the influence that he had upon his contemporaries.

A young Egyptian writer, Kamil al-Shinnawi, recently described Abduh’s life as a “combination of the life of a prophet and that of a hero.” However, he remained little known: on the one hand, the passion for factions and schools of thought had for over half a century distorted his true personality; on the other hand, a superficial knowledge of his teachings had given rise to erroneous interpretations which everything in the Master’s writings combined to contradict, as everything in his life tended to refute.

We know the essential facts of Muhammad Abduh’s life, thanks to a source which is excellent because authentic. It is a form of autobiography that the Egyptian philosopher himself composed towards the end of his life, by way of replies to questions put to him by his disciple, Rashid Rida. We also possess, written by the hand of the Master, a number of very interesting documents about his family and his early education.

Muhammad Abduh was the son of an Egyptian farmer. He was born in 1266/1849 at Mahallat Nasr, a little village of Beheira Province, where his father enjoyed a high reputation as a man of integrity whose growing prosperity did not mar his altruism and willingness to make sacrifices for the cause of justice; Abduh’s mother was a gentle soul, respected for her piety and charity.

He studied first at Tanta, at the Mosque of al-Ahmadi, where he became so discouraged by the teaching method of his time, with its suppression of intelligent inquiry, that he would undoubtedly have turned away from his schooling altogether had it not been for the beneficial influence of his uncle, Shaikh Darwish, who was able to awaken in his nephew the feeling and taste for study and meditation.

“I had no one to guide me,” wrote Abduh later, “but Shaikh Darwish, who first liberated me from the prison of ignorance in opening to me the doors of knowledge. He broke for me the chains which had bound us when we repeated blindly all that we were told, and brought me back to true religion.” Shaikh Darwish remained for Abduh, for the rest of his life, a spiritual guide and the director of his conscience.

The great event of the youth of Muhammad Abduh was his entry, in 1283/1866, into the University of al-Azhar, the traditional centre of Islamic studies. However, the young Abduh spent two years there without deriving much profit from the courses that he attended, which circumstance was

surely due to the altogether antiquated and stale methods of instruction then employed.

In his book, *The Egyptian Empire under Ismail*, Dr. Muhammad Sabri observed: “They overloaded the memories of the pupils with a welter of grammatical knowledge and theological subtleties designed to narrow the mind and prevent its development.” While at al-Azhar, Abduh went through an inner crisis; he was then to be seen indulging in ascetic exercises and even trying to isolate himself and shun the world. But again the wise counsel of Shaikh Darwish aided him to emerge from this mystical crisis.

Yet another great personality was to exercise on Abduh a profound influence, and to show him the road that he had to follow. This was Jamal al-Din al-Aghfani, already famous as the courageous champion of religious and political freedom for Oriental peoples. Jamal al-Din, on arriving in Egypt, drew many disciples around himself, notably Muhammad Abduh. It was the spiritual direction of Jamal al-Din that made decisive Abduh’s turning away from ascetic practices in favour of an active life.

Abduh gradually broke away from religious traditionalism and studied philosophy, mathematics, morals, and politics, all outside the al-Azhar curriculum. To Jamal al-Din he owed a new vision in the comprehension of classical Arabic works, and equally a taste for Western works translated into Arabic, but above all he owed to Jamal al-Din the awakening of national feeling, the love of liberty, and the idea of a constitutional regime.

Abduh showed his enthusiasm for Jamal al-Din in his first work, *Risalat al-Waridat* (1291/1874). At the same time, Abduh actively interested himself in the political relations between the East and the West, and he admitted the necessity for a complete modification of the political and social life of the East. In 1293/1876 he began writing for journals articles on various subjects of general culture, but he still seemed to have difficulty in breaking loose from the technique and spirit then pre-valent in the Azharite circles.

In 1294/1877 Abduh obtained the al-Alimiyyah diploma which conferred upon him the title of Alim (learned man in the theological sense) and the right to teach in the various branches of Islamic science. He first earned his living by giving private lessons, and then by giving discourses at al-Azhar on theology, logic, and morals. These courses were distinguished by a new method that attracted a great number of students to him.

Having become a teacher, this man of inquisitive mind did not cease to study and to instruct himself. He applied himself to the general sciences called “modern” because they did not figure in the programme of instruction at the Islamic University. In 1296/1879 he was nominated Professor of History at the college of Dar al-Ulum and Professor of Literature at the School of Languages; he fulfilled his new functions still continuing his courses at al-Azhar.

At the same time Abduh devoted himself to the journalistic activity which Jamal al-Din had already recommended. Since its origin, the Arabic Press has been mainly centred in Egypt. At the beginning of the reign of the Khedive Tewfik, Abduh was made an editor of “The Official Journal.” He soon became its chief editor, and, by the impetus given by him, this

publication acquired a new significance. It was in this journal that there appeared the orientation and effort towards religious and moral reform that character-ized the work of Muhammad Abduh.

Then occurred the coup d'etat of 1296/1879, which precipitated the fall of the cabinet of Nubar Pasha, and some European ministers, the first consequence of the nationalist movement that was beginning to develop. Another, more serious, consequence was the revolt of the Egyptian army under Urabi against the Turko-Circassian officers; it developed into a revolution that resulted in the occupation of Egypt by the British troops in 1300/1882.

After Urabi's failure, Muhammad Abduh, accused of conspiring with the revolutionaries, was condemned to three years' exile. For, although he had not at first been a partisan of Urabi whom he considered to be the mouth-piece of purely military ideas, Abduh with the further development of events, came wholeheartedly to support his cause and became one of the chief voices of the revolutionist government, fighting energetically for the liberty and independence of the Egyptian people.

As an exile he first settled in Syria, but not for long; his spiritual guide, al-Afghani, having returned from India, invited him to join him in Paris. Abduh accordingly joined Afghani in Paris the following year; there they founded a society and started al-Urwat al-Wuthqa (The Indissoluble Link), a political weekly given to the cause of Pan-Islamism and the defence of the Orientals against foreign domination and internal despotism, and notably against the occupation of Egypt by the British.

Al-Urwah was the first Arabic journal to appear in Europe which was conscious of such a mission and which defended it energetically and with eloquence. At the beginning of the summer of 1302/1884, Muhammad Abduh left for England as a representative of his Review. His friend Wilfried Blunt gave him his valuable assistance in winning over public opinion through the English Press and making it interested in the Egyptian cause. He introduced Abduh to a large number of English politicians; among others to Randolph Churchill, the father of Winston Churchill.

Muhammad Abduh next returned to Paris to resume his work. But the banning of his Review in Islamic countries, as a result of English machinations, made his field of activity restricted, and the Review ceased to appear. In its short life this Review had a decisive influence on the development of nationalism and Pan-Islamism, but, in fact, it little suited the spirit of the Egyptian Shaikh, which leaned more towards education and gradual reform.

In 1303/1885, Muhammad Abduh returned to Beirut. There he was appointed teacher in the Sultaniyyah School, and gave his famous course of lectures on theology which served as a basis for his future treatise on Monotheism (Risalat al-Tauhid). His activity as a professor was particularly fruitful, but he did not occupy himself with instruction alone; he founded, with the aid of some others, an association which had one of its aims the bringing together of the three great religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. But it seems that his activity in this connection having been interpreted in Turkey in a political sense unfavourable to the interests of the

Ottoman Caliphate, Sultan Abd al--Hamid moved against it and took steps to persuade the British Government to ask the Egyptian Shaikh to leave Syria as soon as possible.

It is thus that Muhammad Abduh returned to Egypt in 1306/1888. He was appointed, a Judge in the Native Tribunal and then a Counsellor at the Court of Appeal. As a magistrate he was well known for his sense of equity and independence of his spirit that were never encumbered with the forms of judicial procedure. He now concentrated his efforts on the awakening of Egypt by the spreading of knowledge, by moral education, and by the adaptation of the traditional social institutions to the demands of contempo-rary life.

Nominated as a member of the Administrative Council of al-Azhar University, Muhammad Abduh threw himself into an indefatigable activity in order to renew and raise the material, cultural, and moral standards of this old Islamic University. The influence of the liberal doctrines he professed was readily felt. He instituted courses in the secular sciences such as history, geography, natural history, mathematics, and philosophy, sciences that had not previously appeared in the curricula of this University.

Nominated in 1307/1899 as Grand Mufti of Egypt, Muhammad Abduh gave this religious post a hitherto unknown prestige. It was in this capacity that his modernizing influence had its far-reaching effects. He himself gave a course of lectures consisting of commentary on the Quran, a course animated from beginning to end by a new spirit.

As Grand Mufti, Muhammad Abduh took three religious decisions (fatawa) that clearly showed his tolerance towards other religions. The first of these authorized the Muslims to receive interest and dividends; the second authorized them, while living in non-Muslim countries, to eat the meat of animals slaughtered by non-Muslims; and the third permitted them, if the occasion arose, to wear clothes other than their traditional costume.

It is not difficult to imagine why these decisions aroused so many controversies and even let loose the old Muslim faction and brought down on the Grand Mufti no small number of calumnies of which the motives were not purely religious. During the same years, he was made a member of the Legislative Council.

Muhammad Abduh was one of the founders of the "Islamic Benevolent Society" which aimed at spreading education among and giving moral and material aid to the poorer classes. He also founded a "Society for the Renais-sance of Arabic Books," i.e., for the publication of the masterpieces of classical authors.

In another sphere, he worked for the reform of the religious courts (mahakim Shariah); his report on this became well known, and remained a basis for the reform of the judicial procedure in the personal statute tribunals. The principal idea developed by Muhammad Abduh in the report had, as its point of departure, the elementary realization of the importance to the State of raising the intellectual and moral standard of future judges by improving their material conditions, and reorganizing their recruitment on a better basis. The idea of creating a School for Religious Judges (al-Qada al-Shari) was also initiated by him.

In 1320/1902, Muhammad Abduh was engaged in a controversy with Gabriel Hanotaux, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, following the publication by the latter of an article entitled "Confronting the Muslim Question." The Grand Mufti pointed out to the French historian how false was the idea held in France of Islam.

In another polemic on the philosophy of ibn Rushd, Muhammad Abduh defended a thesis dear to him, that the fatalism with which Islam is reproached is only a distortion of the Muslim religion, a distortion due to the misunderstanding of the very fundamentals of the faith. On another occasion, an article on ibn Rushd published by the Christian editor of the review al-Jamiah drew a reply from Muhammad Abduh which, published at first in a series of articles in the Manar, then collected in one volume, al-Islam wal-Nasraniyyah (Islam and Christianity), constitutes a piece of the modern Muslim apologetics of great value.

The Grand Mufti was a man of frank and keen intelligence, holding precise ideas on men's conduct and their ability to evaluate events. He was conversant with the principal works of European thinkers, and enriched his wide scholarship with many journeys through Africa and Europe. He often said that he needed these journeys "to renew himself." He had numerous Occidental and Oriental friends, and entered into correspondence with European thinkers, among whom were W. S. Blunt, Gustave le Bon, Herbert Spencer, and Tolstoy.

It must be remembered that Muhammad Abduh played an important part in the creation of the Egyptian University, a part too often forgotten in Egypt.

Loyalty, courage, generosity, love of good, and patriotism were the principal traits of his character. In the prison to which he was condemned for his liberal ideas and enlightened support during the Urabist revolution, Abduh wrote a letter which, in spite of the defection of certain of his friends who, under threats, had come to denounce him before the English and, thus, to betray his confidence, shows him a magnanimous and loyal associate. He was courageous in opposing the Khedive on an occasion when the favouritism of the latter proposed the awarding of an Azharite distinction to a special Imam unworthy of it.

His gentle quality of kindness found expression in more ways than mere words after the fire of Mit-Ghamr, when he applied himself to the task, a thankless one in Egypt, of exhorting the rich to make donations to the victims of the disaster. After a tour of Egyptian towns and villages, sparing neither time nor effort, Muhammad Abduh succeeded in obtaining the sum of twelve thousand pounds. It is also known that the Mufti distributed his own waqf salary among the needy families.

Abduh possessed in his character and conduct many of the mystical traits that he had acquired in the early stages of his education. But it was due to the influence of Jamal al-Din that he developed within him that happy balance between an altogether inner mysticism and an overwhelming need for action.

Muhammad Abduh died on 11th July 1905, in the midst of his work, without having had yet accomplished all his projects of reform. The

Egyptian people and Government took the funeral of the Grand Mufti as an occasion of public mourning. He was buried in the cemetery of al-Afifi at Cairo and on his tomb was engraved the famous verse of an Arab poet:

For greatness we have made a resting-place

And we have interred together religion and the world.

B: His Philosophy

In his philosophy, Muhammad Abduh soon emerged from the Azharite scholastic position and developed pragmatic and humanistic views that made his influence felt and pointed the way to reforms. He was well aware that philosophical reflection cannot always remain speculative or contemplative. To endow our existence with complete consciousness and full experience, it must engage us in the activities of the world, command us to take all our responsibilities, and urge us not to seek a form of refuge in solitary meditation.

Abduh's views even on the science of logic seem to characterize his whole belief in the dynamic relation between true thinking and good action. In his view, logic and the general scientific temper of thought must assume a highly moral character and role. In the beginning of the year 1283/1866, when the young Abduh entered the old theological University of al-Azhar, Islamic philosophy was in so backward a state that it was almost a negation of philosophy.

The only manuals of logic and Muslim rationalistic theology (Kalam), which were tolerated at the University, were those that had been composed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries of the Christian era. It was al-Afghani who, the first in the whole Islamic Orient, drew the attention of the young people around him to the necessity of studying classics and, in a general way, promoted the renaissance of Muslim philosophy, encouraging the direct study of original works rather than the customary study of the rather sterile commentaries and super-commentaries.

Al-Afghani himself turned to the study of ibn Sina, the ever-fresh source of inspiration unspoiled by centuries of neglect. According to Muhammad Abduh, this standpoint of al-Afghani was received by the orthodox and by the Azharites as a heresy of an un-precendented audacity. From 1292/1875 on, the young Abduh applied himself to the study of treatises on classical logic, of which many were then only in manuscript form.

Two years later, while still a student at al-Azhar, he wrote an article in which he resolutely defended logic and Kalam in view of certain prejudices and certain popular and even Azharite suspicions about them. He pointed out that faith could be strengthened, not weakened, by rational proofs, and that a sound appreciation of logic, the art and science of thinking, was essential to Muslim theology.

During his exile in Beirut, Abduh discovered al-Sawi's treatise on logic, al-Basair al-Nasiriyyah, which he later edited with scholarly annotations and enlightening clarifications. His course of lectures on logic at al-Azhar was marked by the same thoroughness and erudition. Muhammad Abduh's own system of logic showed the influences of Aristotle, ibn Rushd, ibn Sina, and, to a lesser degree, of certain Western, particularly French, authors.

He regarded logic not as an academic exercise, but as a positive instrument for true and constructive thinking that led to action. This view rendered the pursuit of logic obligatory for one's moral life. Shaikh Abduh, however, repeatedly expressed the opinion that, to liberate oneself from vulgar prejudices and idols, to be in a position to cultivate a science, in brief to be able usefully to seek the true and the good, force of the intellect in itself is insufficient. Necessary also, and above all, are moral qualities, principally courage, the will for action, integrity, and the love of truth.

Hence Muhammad Abduh constantly upheld the principle of *ijtihad*, that is, the right of unfettered personal inquiry, of thought free from all fetters, and did not cease to fight against *taqlid*, that is, the passive acceptance of dogmas from religious authorities without asking for proof, and without thinking of the rights of free examination and personal initiative.

In fact, he stigmatized the imitator (*muqallid*) to the point of likening him at times to an infidel. The gates of *ijtihad*, said Abduh, far from being closed once for all, as some wrongly pretend, are wide open to meet all the questions raised by the new conditions of life; the last word must no longer belong to the old works or to the authorities long dead, but must be the result of the modernist spirit and the due consideration of the common good. He argued that Islam is essentially a rationalistic religion. "Islam," he said, "has liberated man from the authority of the clergy; it has brought him face to face with God and has taught him not to rely on any intercession."

His philosophy of the history of religion envisages this rationalism in Islam as a final stage in religious evolution. His view shows the progressive stages by which humanity has arrived at last at the perfect religion, which is Islam. The earlier religions imposed stringent and rigorous rules and, appealing to the senses, pointed to the impressive miracles wrought by the prophets.

When human society had passed this primitive stage, there came the religion which appealed to the heart and spoke the language of sentiments and inner mysteries; but though it preached to its followers rigorous asceticism and contempt for this world, the people did not take long to corrupt its teaching to accommodate it to human needs and interests.

Finally, appealing to the intellectually mature, came the religion of Islam. Addressing itself to reason that it associated with feeling and sense, Islam reconciled reason with nature, and, recognizing neither master nor mysteries, freed minds from the tutelage of authority and brought man through his highest faculties closer to God.

The Egyptian philosopher approaches the problem of free will in a clearly pragmatic way. He is opposed to abstract speculation no less than William James or F. C. S. Schiller. He considers that the theory of predestination "results in negation pure and simple of the divine Law, in the suppression of all responsibility, and in the rejection of the evidence of reason which is the basis of faith."

Abduh, in the second phase of his intellectual activity, pre-occupied more with ethics than with pure metaphysics, rapidly passes over a thousand and one controversies raised by the question of free-will which, in Islam, has set

the partisans of free-will (the Qadarites) and the partisans of predestination (the Jabrites) one against the other.

The system of the Asharites (the dogmatic theologians of Islam) was based on the idea of necessity. Following their metaphysics, if one should admit this necessity, then no morality would be possible. As Kant has said, there is no morality without freedom. Faced with this contradiction between ethics and ontology, Abduh, as a pragmatist, opts for the former.

Concerning divine prescience, Muhammad Abduh says: “The omniscience of God embraces that which man will accomplish by his own will; it embraces the fact that at such a moment a man will do such an action which will be good and for which he will be rewarded, or such another which will be bad and for which he will be punished.” According to Abduh, this prescience does not prevent man from being free to a certain extent: “Nothing in the omniscience of God prevents man from choosing, and acting according to his choice.”

From the point of view of reason, the foreknowledge of what will happen can be regarded neither a curb nor an impulsion for action. To establish and define the freedom of man, Muhammad Abduh, like Descartes, almost always appeals to the testimony of conscience. Again, he points to the testimony of common sense that in everyday life attributes to each person the actions he performs.

Further, the divine commandments would have no meaning without free will. “All the commandments in religious Law are based on the principle that man is responsible for what he does. If man’s actions were not his own, the notion of responsibility would be annihilated and it would then be unreasonable to demand of the individual what exceeds his power or to hold him responsible for what is not the effect of his will.”

But there is no question of inferring complete freedom from this: freedom is absolute for God, but limited for men. “Appeal to your experience,” says Muhammad Abduh. “It is a well-known experience to ‘will’ to accomplish something and yet not to be able to do it, or even to realize the existence of a greater power which directs the world.” The Islamic term qada, taken by the Jabrites to mean predestination, is interpreted by Abduh as the principle of causation in nature, which makes ample allowance for freedom of will.

In other words, “necessity” applies to the natural and even to the social sciences, but leaves a wide range within which the human will, guided by reason, may act. According to his interpretation, Islam is not, as has often been supposed, a religion of “fatalism.” On the contrary, “Islam,” says Abduh, “is the negation of fatalism. In forty-six verses of the Quran free will is maintained explicitly and unequivocally. If there are other verses liable to suggest the idea of constraint, these are only to establish the general divine laws of the universe.”

He points out that the Prophet and his Companions were men of action whose lives expressed an unshakable faith in the freedom of the human will. In fact, “fatalism” associated with Islam was a later distortion which well served those rulers whose interest lay in exploiting the Muslim peoples. The evil effects of that enervating doctrine were only too visible in Abduh’s own

time, and supplied a living argument in favour of his pragmatic appeal to return to the vitality and freedom of the original faith.

Consistent with his attitude to free will is Muhammad Abduh's theory of good and evil. In his *Risalat al-Tauhid* he devotes several pages to this problem and its relation to dogma and reason. First, he tries to establish a sort of parallelism between the moral and aesthetic points of view, a parallelism which seems to be imposed by the Arabic language in which the term *husn* denotes both "beauty" and "good," and *qubh*, both "ugliness" and "evil." He deals with beauty, first in the sensible realm, and then in that of the intelli-gible, and in this latter respect compares beauty as conceived in the different domains of art, science, and morals.

This parallelism of values is established by Abduh, as by the Muslim rationalists (the *Mutazilah*), in a way which is now familiar to us, thanks to the teaching of Andre Lalande and to the writings of F. C. S. Schiller and also of so many other contemporary philoso-phers. "It is our conscience," says Abduh, "which provides us with the principle by which we distinguish between beautiful and ugly things." Individual tastes differ, but humanity nevertheless has a sort of general criterion, an innate sense of beauty and harmony.

Muhammad Abduh established a third parallelism between beings (*al-akwan*) and human actions (*al-afal*): "The impression made on our soul by these actions is analogous to that made on it by objects and beings." Then Abduh seems to use the term *husn* (good) in the three fundamental senses of the Muslim theologians (*Mutakallimin*), giving, in addition, a finer and more psychological analysis.

First, good is perfection, evil imperfection, whether it is found in the moral or in the intellectual order; secondly, good equally designates a relationship of fitness (*mulaamah*), in which two subdivisions must be made: of fitness to our nature, meaning the agreeable, a distinction hardly differing from that made by the superior animals, and of fitness for the ends which reason pursues, meaning the useful in a wide sense, which prevails over the agreeable as one rises in the hierarchy of beings, and is directed by utility, whether for oneself or for society, taking precedence over agreeableness even if it involves temporary revulsion or pain; thirdly, the good comprises the praiseworthy, the evil the blameworthy.

The Asharites and the *Mutazilites* recognized that the good in the first two senses is perceived by reason, but it is with regard to the third sense that disagreement between the two groups of the *Mutakallimin* arises. According to the Asharite theologians, *husn* and *qubh*, neither by their essence nor by the qualities inherent in the things, are such as should make them appear good or evil, beautiful or ugly.

Quite on the contrary, it is the religious Law, the divine decree, which confers on actions their character of being good or evil which we recognize in them. A reversal of values thus remains conceivable, if the will of the divine legislator (*al-Shari*) is pleased to reverse the order and criterion of his judgments and to arrange that good shall become evil and vice versa, as it happens, for example, in the abrogation (*naskh*) of a prohibition (*hurmah*) to make it an obligation (*wujub*).

And so, in the Asharite doctrine, the divine decree, envisaged in its absolute character, appears to conscience something so arbitrary that it could easily be confused with implacable fate. We consequently understand why the moralist that Muhammad Abduh was could not subscribe to a thesis of which the consequences seemed to him to be irremediably compromising the freedom that he had so strongly defended.

It is, thus, deliberately but without ever departing from his customary good sense that Muhammad Abduh ranges himself, on this point, on the side of the Mutazilah, of al-Farabi, and of ibn Rushd, who were certainly aware of a similar difficulty. All of them perceived that the distinction between good and evil was natural and that it was perceived by our common sense. Abduh adds that man finds this distinction by conscience itself.

The sense and natural reason of man are capable of making this distinction in every instance without awaiting the decision of an authority or guidance of revelation. This can be realized from observation of the way in which very young children grasp the meaning of the religious Law, or from the evidence of the history of primitive societies.

The distinction between good and evil is thus, according to Abduh, made by reason without the aid of dogma. Once the principle has been stated, Abduh is not afraid to draw conclusions from it. If, therefore, he says, a person arrives, solely by reasoning, at the affirmation of the existence of God and His attributes, if he deduces from this rationally acquired knowledge the idea of the immortality of the soul and the joys or torments it may have in the other life, briefly, if a thinker, basing his arguments solely on reason, arrives at the discovery or construction of a completely natural morality, nothing can prevent him from putting forward rules which would be as valid as the rules imposed by dogma.

And Abduh manifestly considers that reason can take him a long way on this path. "Natural morality," he says, "is not only possible in theory, but it has been applied by certain individuals of the elite." Unfortunately, not all humanity is constituted of sages. Man is not a simple creature, and his needs are not as limited as those of animals. Moreover, humanity does not always allow itself to be guided by reason alone; there are other faculties, other factors which exert an influence no less great on the conduct and judgments of men; from them comes the possibility of error and evil; and, besides, reason alone, with rare exceptions, is not sufficient to lead to happiness.

To attain this happiness, most men need a surer guide, a prophet. On the great mass of humanity is, thus, imposed religious morality of which the need is demonstrated by the history of human society. It is thus that revelation has been introduced into morality. Religious morality, abstracting from it the certitude with which it is presented because of its having a divine source, does not fundamentally constitute a teaching entirely different from that of natural morality.

"The sacred Law," writes Muhammad Abduh in his *Risalat al-Tauhid*, "came simply to show us what existed in reality; it was not this Law which created either the good or the evil.... At the same time as the sacred Law imposes certain beliefs on us, it makes their beauty accessible to reason."

The question which has raised many contro-versies among Muslim philosophers, that of the elite (al-khassah) and the common man (al-kaffah), seems to be settled by Muhammad Abduh in the same manner as was done by ibn Rushd by differentiating between two kinds of knowledge, one that of the philosopher and the other that of the common believer.

“Prophecy,” says Abduh, “indicates to the elite how they may rise above the common level, but it makes obligatory only that which is accessible to all.” Nevertheless, the Egyptian philosopher is convinced that no man, whoever he may be, can do without the natural gift, the instinctive feeling, we have for good and evil. There are certain principles of good on which all human beings are agreed, but this does not mean that a thing is good because God has commanded it; on the contrary, God has commanded it because it is good. To use the Kantian terminology, in the judgment of good and evil it is reason which gives us the categorical imperative.

If, in this theory of good, Abduh speaks so insistently of the essential role of reason, it is because in his eyes such an attitude entails important practical consequences in the moral and social orders. By this decision in favour of the renaissance of Mutazilite rationalism, the Egyptian reformer undoubtedly hoped to contribute to the restoration in the Muslim world of the principle of ijtiḥad and of the freedom of research on every subject.

It is thus, he thought, that the fuqaha (the Muslim jurists), for example, would come to treat the religious Law with greater independence and personal initiative, so that when they come to determine the licit and the illicit, to put forward prescriptions and prohibitions, they would be able to judge the spirit of the Law according to reason and not stop as they did in the past at the letter; and rather than restrict themselves to the usage of the single principle of arguing by analogy (qiyas), they would be able to examine new facts liberally and to apply to them solutions which would be more suited to the spirit and exigencies of the modern age.

In brief, by this rational-ism, Abduh hoped to realize the ideal of emancipating minds from routine, imitation, and intellectual stagnation that had marked the past few centuries of Islam.

As good and evil have a social significance, Muhammad Abduh was drawn at an early stage towards the study of human society. Muhammad Sabri, one of the historians of modern Egypt, speaks of Muhammad Abduh as “the greatest Egyptian reformer and sociologist” who “possessed to the highest point the sense of evolution.”

In 1295/1878, Abduh gave at the college of Dar al-Ulum, a course of lectures on the “Prolegomena” of ibn Khaldun, which was as remarkable for its method and novelty as for the wealth of its ideas. These lectures probably served as the basis of a work that Muhammad Abduh, according to Rashid Rida, wrote in the same year, namely, “The Philosophy of Society and History.

“As the manuscript of this last of Abduh’s work was unfortunately lost during the events of 1296/1879, we are obliged, in order to learn about the sociological theory of Muhammad Abduh, to have recourse to the more or less detailed accounts contained in his various writings. He appears to share

the ideas of ibn Khaldun, the great Muslim sociologist and the precursor of Auguste Comte.

Like ibn Khaldun, Abduh conceives history as a veritable science, and it is for him a discipline indispensable to philosophical studies. His evolutionary approach is evident in his *Risalat al-Tauhid* and his commentary on the Quranic verse: "Men form a single nation."

According to his conception of history, humanity is led by God progressively to realize a certain world-view. Abduh perhaps also belongs to that class of thinkers who see in history a sort of morality in action that must be studied by statesmen and venerated by the people. He is strongly aware of man's natural and necessary orientation towards social integration, a physical, intellectual, and moral need which makes it difficult for men to live in this world without feeling reciprocal sympathies and without giving one another mutual aid.

Conscious of this need for solidarity, Abduh, in his commentary on the Quran, condemns the indifferent state of mind of certain members of the social group towards others, an attitude which, in his opinion, must lead to the dissolution of social ties. But social solidarity for Muhammad Abduh is not something purely speculative.

The Egyptian sociologist worked all his life for the common good and always set an example of active co-operation, as a result of which he realized numerous social ends. In societies like ours, this sentiment of solidarity is not perfect. Abduh hopes that it is possible to lead minds to union and agreement by resorting to a new moral education, more effective than the laws imposed by the State.

"Union," he says in an introductory article, "is the fruit of the tree of virtue." No morality is possible without union and without love. The new education must, therefore, be essentially altruistic. But this education must begin with the family. "We hope," he says, "to give our daughters an education worthy of those who will be called on to take responsibilities equal to those of men." And again, "It is an unpardonable crime to leave women in a state of ignorance and mediocrity."

Besides, thanks to his experience as a judge, Muhammad Abduh ascertains that seventy-five per cent of lawsuits are those between relatives. Their causes generally are feelings of hatred and antipathy existing between members of the same family, feelings that, according to him, must be attributed to the lack of social instruction and education in social matters. The same remarks can be extended to a wider society. God, in His mercy, has sent men messengers (rusul), who are to the human race what intelligence is to the individual.

To Abduh, the evolution of human society has known three stages. The first stage is the age of the senses, when preoccupations of men scarcely rise above physical cares and their beliefs are animistic. The second stage is the age of prophecy, in which men have already been prepared by the experience of the preceding age to gain some understanding of the laws of nature and of the constitution of society. Corresponding to these stages, the first step in the education of society is the experience that it progressively

acquires, and the second is the teaching of the prophets who serve as guides to society and adapt their missions to its conditions.

Christ, for example, could accomplish his mission only in the epoch in which he lived, an epoch in which victims of violence and cruelty cried out for mercy and love. Muhammad (S) brought a vital and unifying message to revive men in an epoch of lethargy and of evasion of real spiritual issues in futile quibbling. The third stage, which is still with us, brings the era of error.

As we become distant from the prophets, hearts become hardened and passions predominate; society moves away from sound reasoning and moral principles; theologians falsify the divine teaching and use sacred texts in such a way that religion loses all influence on the souls of men; politics becomes mingled with religion; and discord and misunderstanding reign supreme resulting in error and war.

Muhammad Abduh does not, however, stop at this pessimistic note. He thinks the solution to lie in the awakening of a sort of universal conscience and thereby in the discovery of the right path that society must follow. Reason and morality are essential to this end.

Muhammad Abduh bases this optimism on a general view of humanity, very close to that of Socrates and the Stoics of antiquity, and to that of Rousseau in modern times. He believes that man is not intentionally wicked, and that he has a nature inclined towards good and love for peace. How can it be otherwise, he says, when God has given him a nature superior to that of the animals and “has endowed him with reason by which he has made himself master of the terrestrial world and has been able to have glimpses of the secret of the celestial world?”

Then God has not made the evil more congenial to our souls than the good. The good is so innate in the nature of man that we need only a simple piece of advice or a reminder to realize this good in action. It is thus that “the light which God sends to men through the mediacy of the prophets demands no effort to fix it in their souls and hearts, but it is a reminder to those who are not conscious of what God has already put in their nature.”

To affirm this instinct for good in man, Muhammad Abduh goes so far as to profess the human universalism of the Stoics, a universalism which tends to establish a community between men, in spite of the diversity of countries, religions, languages, and races; for, he says, they are all equal by their reason and their origin. This explains why men tend to associate with one another and to unite and live in harmony. If we regard men thus, we shall see that all humanity is like a single family living on the surface of the same earth and linked by the same morals, relationships, and habits.

“This state of affairs has so influenced the majority of reasonable men that they have tended to serve humanity without attaching themselves fanatically to one race, or one religion, or one doctrine.” If humanity conducted itself by following its nature, and in recalling the good that is innate in it, it would possess the social virtues such as strengthen in people’s minds the consciousness of their original identity, which consciousness would inculcate in them the spirit of concord, sympathy, and peace. Muhammad Abduh even declared in al-Urwah in 1302/1884 that virtues in

the human race are common; they preserve human society and protect it from dissolution.

Nearly all the biographers of Muhammad Abduh have pointed out that the principal task of his life was the religious reform of Islamic society. This opinion is right to a certain extent. But if we study the activities of Muhammad Abduh carefully and if we consider the import of his teaching, we shall perceive that there are, above all, reasons of ethical order, which explain the basic attitudes of the Egyptian reformer.

More than one theological or philo-sophical problem is, for him, dominated by moral considerations, and his every effort tends to moral action. If he fights against certain manners and customs and certain popular religious beliefs, if he denounces injustice and social and political abuses, if he strives to modify the teaching methods of al-Azhar, it is always in order to bring about a moral reform in Muslim society.

We can safely say that the movement of religious reform with which Abduh's name is associated in the Muslim world was only, in the mind of the reformer, a means for the realization of an end, which was moral reform. The Grand Mufti said it expressly: "The aim of religious reform is to direct the belief of the Muslims in such a way as to make them better morally and also to improve their social condition. To set religious beliefs right, to put an end to errors, consequent upon misunderstanding religious texts, so well that, once the beliefs are fortified, actions will be more in conformity with morality; such is the task of the Muslim reformer."

Religion is thus, for Abduh, the most effective means of realizing this moral reform. Minds not being mature enough to replace precise dogmas by abstract principles, it is the religious conceptions that we must begin to reform. "If the reformer," he says, "appeals directly to a morality or to a wisdom deprived of all religious character, he will have to build a new edifice for which there is neither material nor labour. But if religion is able to raise the level of morality, give actions a solid foundation, and urge people to seek happiness by the most appropriate means, if the adepts in religion are much attached to it, and if finally one has less difficulty in bringing people back to religion than in creating something new which they cannot clearly understand, then why not have recourse to religion and why seek other less effective means?"

The aim of Abduh's reform is, thus, certainly not, as has been wrongly believed, the realization of the political unity of the Muslim countries, and still less the "Holy War" against the non-Muslims. He expressly refrained from holding pan-Islamic ideas, which he considered to be chimerical and existing merely in the imagination of certain dreamers, Europeans and others.

Hence his concentration on moral and educational reform after the disappearance of al-Urwat al-Wuthqa. For him, theory and practice were always intimately related, and it was only arbitrarily that one could separate one's ideas from one's actions. Abduh was, in fact, a born moralist, and he wished to act directly on people's conscience rather than to isolate himself to construct a more or less coherent theological system.

Like Plato, Abduh, it seems, considered that only direct contact could light the flame in others. Abduh was above all a creative force; his teachings and his actions had a profound moral influence. More than one theological or philosophical problem was for him dominated by moral conditions, for example, the problems of the attributes of God, prophecy, and free-will.

He applied himself early to the work of reform in education, a condition indispensable in his eyes to the recovery of Islamic morality. He felt the results obtained by this means to be deeper and surer, even if slower than those obtained by a revolution, considering that “only progressive and methodical reforms are able to give the required results.” The educative and moral aspects of Muhammad Abduh’s reform explain in fact the profound and lasting influence he has had, particularly in Egypt and in the entire Muslim world in general.

This predominance of morality appears particularly in his commentary (tafsir) on the Quran. This commentary aims at explaining the Quran as a scripture containing moral guidance (al-hidayah) on which rests human happiness in this life and the next. The understanding of the Quran is a duty incumbent on all Muslims without distinction of race or culture.

As the only question for Muhammad Abduh is to explain the spirit and general sense of the Quranic verses without keeping too closely to the letter, he is careful, from the beginning, to discard as unwelcome the purely philological and grammatical considerations with which a great number of Quranic commentators have been conversant.

Abduh, moreover, criticizes the attitude of the Arabic authors who, due to an exaggerated admiration for ancient Arabic poetry, make it the basis of grammar and then find numerous grammatical difficulties in the text of the Quran. For Abduh, it is necessary, on the contrary, to make the Quran the criterion for the rules of grammar.

Equally unwelcome to him is the method of pure erudition dear to certain commentators, which consists in amassing, without any discrimination, all that may have been said by others about such and such a chapter, or such and such a verse, or such and such a word. “God,” said Abduh, “will not ask us, on the Day of Judgment, what people may have said or understood, but He will ask us if we ourselves have understood His Book and if we have followed its direction.”

For him, then, an exegesis drawn from all sources would very likely mislead the believers and make them stray away from the true aim of the Quran that is, above all, the guidance of conduct. The understanding urged by Abduh is thus that which rises in the depths of a sensitive and circumspect conscience, and is the fruit of meditation on the Book itself. The effort of Muhammad Abduh tends to eliminate from his to/sir all the questions giving rise to differences between the commentators.

And he insisted upon taking the Quran as a whole and not interpreting it in fragments; only thus may we rediscover under the apparent diversity the unity of the original inspiration. Abduh sometimes seems to apply to the Book the Cartesian rule of evidence. He often advises us to give credit only to what is related in a clear and explicit manner and never to abandon a categorical report in favour of a mere hypothetical one, that is, to rely only

on traditions the transmission of which appears to be free of disagreement or collusion to fabricate.

Abduh is always opposed to the interpretation of the Zahiriyah and the anthropomorphists, who explain the religious texts literally and without recourse to reason. For example, in explaining the Surah al-Kauthar, certain commentators pretended that the Kauthar was the name of a river in paradise that God had given to the Prophet. According to Abduh, there is no such thing; the Kauthar here simply means the great gift that God has conferred on humanity in the sending of prophets.

The condition for the veracity of a religious assertion, he says, is the fact of including nothing in it that can offend tanzih, i.e., the transcendence of God over creatures. If we come across a text of which the apparent meaning would imply a certain anthropomorphism, it is necessary for us to interpret it so as to reject the apparent meaning.

Rationalism, combined with marked pragmatic tendencies, seems to render the tafsir of Muhammad Abduh a justification of the principle according to which “a religion full of legends and stupid superstitions cannot live in the same mind with an enlightened reason.” It is, thus, impossible that things of the former kind may really be found in the Quran.

Islam is in harmony with enlightened reason; one must, therefore, make a sound and right interpretation that takes account only of categorical proof, or of sure tradition, and not of personal opinions and subjective impressions. Abduh rejects many of the long stories and anecdotes that a good number of commentators have been pleased to invent.

And, contrary to the practice of commentators, who sought to specify precisely the nature of certain places or persons mentioned in the Quranic text but left rather vague, Abduh observes that his method is to abstain from going in the details beyond the positive content of the sacred text, particularly because such efforts of the commentators have not brought any light to bear on the understanding of the text.

For example, in commenting on verse 58 of Sarah 2, which begins “Enter this village...,” Abduh does not wish to specify precisely to which village it refers, but prefers to stress the fact that the children of Israel received the order to enter various countries with the sentiment of humility and obedience to the divine order.

It is the same with the verse which follows immediately: “To the unjust We have brought down torment from heaven,” where Abduh, in accordance with his method, abstains from determining the nature of the torment; that, he would have said, has no practical importance. The tafsir of Muhammad Abduh shows a constant concern for affirming the universal message of the Quran, while always fitting this belief into an evolutionistic and progressive conception.

The old commentators often had a tendency to interpret certain Quranic verses by giving them a particular meaning, or relating them to local events which occurred at the time of the Prophet or before him. It is thus that some of them pretended that Sarah 102, for example, alluded to two tribes of the Ansars of Medina who boasted of the large number of their members, to the

extent that one of them, feeling itself inferior to its rival in the number of those alive, went to visit the tombs of those who were dead.

For Abduh the verses of this Sarah, like those of so many others, must not be interpreted in so particularized and narrow a manner; the Quran is not addressed to an individual or to a group of individuals. On the contrary, it is to mankind that it is addressed, and it aims at what is most permanent in the beliefs, customs, and practices of peoples. The school of Muhammad Abduh starts with the principle that Islam is a universal religion, suited to all people, to all times, and to all states of culture.

Thus, one of the important traits of his work on exegesis is its spiritualism modified by a kind of pragmatism. The tafsir of Muhammad Abduh has largely contributed to the purification of religious belief, as much among the mass of Muslims as among the 'ulama' and theologians, by freeing the minds of the believers from certain legends and ideas that are too materialistic and anthropomorphic. His tafsir, as Rashid Rida has put it, tends to offer an interpretation of the Quran in a spiritual sense conforming to reason.

In religious and social life, Muhammad Abduh takes the position of a critic and puts on trial the ideas, morals, and customs that he condemns, whether they are current among the masses or among the educated men of his time. He reproaches the Muslims for having falsified the teachings of their religion.

The 'ulama' and the representatives of Islam in general, he reproaches either for a rigorous formalism and unhealthy anxiety to observe in the minutest detail such practical rituals as ablution and fasting, or for the use of religious knowledge for lucrative ends. Religion, thus, furnishes them only with some sort of profession.

As for the popular conceptions, they contain, in his eyes, nothing religious except the name; they are all for the most part survivals of fatalistic beliefs. Abduh made the liveliest criticism of the bidah, that is, the false innovations introduced into the religious practices of the Muslims in later times. The 'ulama' in particular, he said, were completely indifferent to the superior interests of their country. Except the commentaries and super commentaries on old texts, which they understood badly and explained even more badly, they occupied themselves with nothing.

Ignorant of the needs and aspirations of their time, they lived almost on the fringe of society. Hence he urged his countrymen to realize their social responsibility towards their country, instead of waiting till reform came to them; he further urged them to build up their culture progressively upon their own institutions rather than blindly imitate Western ideas and customs in a superficial manner. He wanted a real reform from within, rather than the outward show thereof.

C: The School of Muhammad Abduh in Egypt

In July 1935, on the thirtieth anniversary of the death of Muhammad Abduh, "The Society of Muslim Youth" of Cairo held a public meeting to honour the memory of him who had justly been called al-Ustadh al-Imam (The Master and Guide). Testimony of Muhammad Abduh's former

colleagues, and of his old students, who have now in their turn become masters, demonstrated the extent of the influence exercised by his thought.

In the beginning of the present century, Muhammad Abduh promoted, in Egypt, the cause of science, religion, and patriotism. All the noble and generous sentiments of the Egyptian elite found their source of inspiration in him. When, in 1318/1900, the younger generation sought a guide to lead them out of their confusion, they addressed themselves to him.

One of the characteristic traits of Muhammad Abduh was the profound influence that he exerted upon the people. The words of M. Bouglé about the philosopher Frederic Hauh (*Les Maitres de la Philosophie Universitaire en France*, 1938) might equally well have been applied to Muhammad Abduh: "A fisher of souls..., converter, the least dogmatic of all, but the most pressing, the most able to change men, the most capable of preparing and firing young people with the personal effort of inner renewal." In his courses of lectures, virtually prolonged conversations, he seemed to apply himself to an examination of conscience, revealing a restless soul indignant at hypocrisy, bigotry, and indolence.

While having thrown himself into teaching and work of reform, Abduh was yet able to leave for us books which show the development of his thought and which have perpetuated his name. But in fact the reading of his works is not in itself sufficient to give one an idea of the profound influence that he had upon his contemporaries.

There were, in Egypt, many disciples of Muhammad Abduh other than those in the Azharite circles. It is noteworthy that it is among laymen, and particularly among those who had received European education, that the true disciples of Muhammad Abduh are to be found. First, the personality and the writings of Muhammad Abduh lent valuable support to social, religious, and philosophical reformers, represented by Qasim Amin, Rashid Rida, and Mustafa Abd al-Raziq.

Thanks to the authority of the Master's name, wrote Husain Haikal Pasha, his disciples were able to make the people accept principles that they had never before recognized. Then Abduh tried to reconcile the traditional Islamic method of teaching with the new methods borrowed from the West.

Between these two opposite schools, the modernist and the traditionalist, there was formed a third school mainly recruited from the most important writers of our time, all of whom, in different ways, were disciples of Muhammad Abduh. Egyptian thinkers before Abduh's time were in fact not inspired by any well-defined ideal. And there is good reason to say that Muhammad Abduh gave unity and precision to Egyptian thought.

Henri Bergson wrote: "One measures the significance of a philosophical doctrine by the variety of ideas into which it flowers and the simplicity of the principle into which it is gathered." This is true of the doctrine of Muhammad Abduh which, in spite of the simplicity of its principle, has led to reform, at least in Egypt, in three different ways: social, religious, and philosophical.

1. The Social School: Qasim Amin - One of the ideas dear to Muhammad Abduh was that of the instruction and education of Muslim women, with all that this implies concerning social reform of the conditions and customs

affecting their lives in the Muslim world. True Islam, affirmed the Grand Mufti, gives woman perfect equality of rights with man. It is only because the original intention of the Law has been ignored that all kinds of abuses have crept in to harm the moral and social position of women in the Muslim world.

Polygamy, for example, although allowed by the Quran, is basically no more than a concession to certain historical necessities which no longer exist. In any case this concession, properly understood, is equivalent to a refusal and a negation, given the practical difficulty in which one finds oneself the moment one wishes exactly to fulfill the conditions laid down by the religious Law concerning polygamy.

This shows to those who take the trouble of thinking and of penetrating into the deeper meaning of the Law that the intention of Islam remains in favour of the principle of monogamy, and that it justly considers it to be the most perfect ideal of marriage. The law of inheritance also testifies to this spirit. It is, thus, important that the social condition of the woman should be raised without delay and, if necessary, by appropriate modifications in the actual canonical Law of Islam and by all possible means providing women with better opportunities of education and instruction. It is, he considered, an unpardonable crime to leave Muslim women in ignorance and mediocrity, since they are to carry the heaviest responsibility in national life: the bringing up of children.

If Abduh was not able to see the realization of the social reforms that he ardently wished, it was left for one of his colleagues and friends, Qasim Amin, to distinguish himself by tireless activity in the domain of the defence of feminism in Egypt.

Like Muhammad Abduh, Qasim Amin was above all opposed to the great mass of the conservatives to whom every innovator appeared as a heretic. He showed that Islam, far from degrading woman, as was commonly believed, does, on the contrary, favour her, and that the responsibility for placing her at a disadvantage lay, not with Islam, but with the Muslims of later epochs.

Meditating upon the evils from which Egyptian society suffered, he perceived that half the nation was gripped by a general paralysis of social life, a paralysis the cause of which was the ignorance and mediocrity in which women were kept in the country.

The reform that Qasim Amin wished to introduce in the problems of the Muslim woman can be summarized under two heads. The first concerns the manner of treating woman and her education; the second is an appeal to the Muslim theologians and jurists to become aware of the needs and exigencies of the modern age and, therefore, cease to cling in the application of the laws to the advice of one religious authority more than to that of another; the only valid advice indeed is that which, while arising from the spirit and essential principles of the Islamic law, is in conformity with the interests of the nation and with the new conditions of its evolution.

However, the voice of Qasim Amin, which, during his life, was not well heard, began after his death to be singularly amplified. It was not long before women in Egypt took up journalism. Men appeared who took the

reform of women's position as the basis of every true renaissance. Some of them produced a journal named al-Sufur (The Unveiled), which had as its aims the preaching of feminism, and insistence on the necessity of the education and liberation of women, as well as on their equality with men.

Thus we see, in 1337/1918, the Egyptian women, in some of the demonstrations, marching before men to vindicate the rights of the nation. Safiya Zaghlul, the wife of the national leader, was venerated by all the people, and was called "The Mother of the Egyptians."

2. The Religious School: Rashid Rida - Rashid Rida is considered to be the interpreter of the religious school of Muhammad Abduh. Of all the disciples of Muhammad Abduh he exerted himself most to keep the master's memory alive by recording his thoughts and the history of his life.

He was born in the village of Qalamoun in Syria. On completing his Islamic studies according to the method of instruction followed in the schools of his country, he turned towards religious and literary studies. He devoted himself, at first, to mysticism, but the review al-Urwat al-Wuthqa of al-Afghani and Abduh exercised great influence on him and urged him to follow a new path.

In 1315/1897, he migrated to Egypt, moved by the conviction that there he would be able to serve his religion and his people, an end which conditions in Syria prevented him from accomplishing. "I decided," he said, "to join Jamal al-Din in order that I might perfect myself, through philosophy and personal effort, to serve the faith.

On the death of al-Afghani, when it became well known that it was the politics of Abd al-Hamid that ruined him, I felt myself suffocated in the Ottoman Empire and decided to leave for Egypt because of the liberty of thought which existed there; what I most hoped to acquire in Egypt was to profit from the wisdom, the experience, and the spirit of reform which Muhammad Abduh represented in that country." Thus wrote Rashid Rida in his Tarikh.

Rashid Rida contacted Muhammad Abduh as soon as he arrived in Cairo. He followed the Master, he said, like his shadow. In March 1898, he founded the review al-Manar that aimed at arousing the desire for education and at reforming textbooks and teaching methods, besides denouncing the innovations that had been introduced in religious beliefs and criticizing customs and practices foreign to the spirit of Islam.

Following the Master, Rashid Rida did not cease to declare that one could work for effective reform only through the direction of the Book and the Sunnah which are in harmony with human interests in every country and at all times. From the moment of the foundation of al-Manar he indefatigably put forth the idea that neither in the dogmas nor in the rites of Islam is it held that the Muslim should imitate any particular Imam.

In following the path traced by Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Rida was simply continuing the liberal modernism of his Egyptian Master. Nevertheless, because of a reaction against the growing European influence, Rashid Rida, according to Laoust, "became more and more conservative."

There are other things in which the disciple departs from the Master's path. Muhammad Abduh was always, to quote Lord Cromer (Egypt, 1906),

“a genuine Egyptian patriot.” That is to say, the Master played a role in the awakening of the Egyptian national spirit, which fact is far from being con-tested. Rashid Rida for himself was an anti-nationalist, an ardent defender of pan-Islamism, and he well nigh regarded nationalism as a principle strange to Islam.

In opposing the development of secular tendencies in Egyptian literature, in denouncing the heterodoxy of the thesis of Ali Abd al-Raziq on the Caliphate and that of Taha Husain’s on pre-Islamic literature, Rashid Rida, without being fully aware of it, departs from the line of thought of the Master. In any case, the conservative modernism of Rashid Rida has, at the present time, been superseded by a secular modernism of Western inspiration conforming to the ideas of Muhammad Abduh.

3. The Philosophical School: Mustafa Abd al-Raziq - Having graduated from al-Azhar in 1326/1908 at the age of twenty-three, Mustafa Abd al-Raziq continued his studies in France. He studied first at the Sorbonne, where, among other courses, he followed that of Emile Drukheim on sociology; he completed his education at Lyons, at the same time lecturing on Islamic Law and on Arabic literature at that University.

On his return to Egypt he became Secretary General of al-Azhar University, and took active part in its evolution along the lines inspired by Muhammad Abduh. While nominated as inspector of the religious tribunals he also worked, with the collaboration of Egyptians and foreigners, for the realization of a popular university and arranged during the First World War a series of remarkable lectures on cultural subjects. Shaikh Abd al-Raziq himself gave a valuable course of lectures on Muhammad Abduh.

When the Egyptian University was officially founded in 1344/1925, Mustafa Abd al-Raziq was called upon to teach there. He became the first Professor of Islamic Philosophy in that University. In his lectures at the Faculty of Arts, later published under the modest title of “Prolegomena to the Study of Islamic Philosophy,” he traced the main trends of Muslim philosophy; while throwing light on the various aspects of the principal problems, he met, with calm and serenity, the attacks of certain Orientalists who had denied the originality of Muslim thought.

He perceived that while the Muslims had admitted into their conception of the world elements borrowed from Greek thought, they had their own method and their own culture. And the real Islamic thought is to be found not so much in the philosophy of al-Farabi and ibn Sina as in the theological speculations of Kalam and the principles of Muslim jurisprudence.

Besides his functions in the Universities of al-Azhar and Cairo, Mustafa Abd al-Raziq was a member of the Egyptian Institute and a member of the Egyptian Academy for the Arabic Language. He was many times Minister of Trusts (Auqaf), and in the Chamber of Deputies he was President of the Commission of Auqaf and Religious Institutes.

In 1365/1945, he was elected Honorary President of the Egyptian Philosophical Society. The crowning point of his career was his nomination, in succession to Shaikh al-Maraghi, as Rector of the University of al-Azhar. In this exceptional position of Shaikh al-Islam he showed initiative and breadth of vision: he introduced the study of foreign languages at al-Azhar,

encouraged educational missions abroad, sent Azharite scholars to France and England to prepare themselves for the teaching of languages at the University, sent Muslim missionaries to Uganda, and, lastly, sent a group of research scholars to the Hijaz to study the faith at the sacred places of Islam.

Shaikh Abd al-Raziq was the author of a number of works on Muslim philosophy. His own philosophy was essentially moral and altruistic, filled with generosity, tolerance, and love of his fellow men. He often said that a great philosophy has existed since the dawn of human thought and has survived the vicissitudes of history: it is the heroic philosophy, the philosophy of those who live for others and not only for themselves, of those who are in unison with the fundamental note of the universe, which, to him, was a note of generosity and love.

Originally practised by the Oriental pro-phets, this philosophy, he said, was then spread by the great thinkers who, from Socrates to Plato and Aristotle, from Aristotle to the Stoics and Plotinus, from Plotinus to al-Farabi and Descartes, from Descartes to Kant and Gandhi, fall in a single great line. Many by glimpsing the essence of religion, some by deepening it through their meditations, arrive at a philosophy which they practise and live, the philosophy of generosity, which sees love to be a virtue which consists in always giving and giving without calculation.

Mustafa Abd al-Raziq believed, further, that this love is fundamental to each of us, that it is natural, that we have not to create it, that it will blossom on its own when we remove the obstacle which our egoism and our passions place in its way. With all the great philosophers he said that we are part of a whole, that the duty of the part is to act for the sake of the whole, and that the whole of which we are the part is humanity.

He wished our education to be oriented to an awareness of these potentialities - an education truly liberal that would make us conscious of our belonging to the same great family. Likewise, he saw the remedy for our social evils to lie in a moral reform that would extend our powers of sympathy with our fellow men. In that direction lie social harmony and solidarity.

This philosophy, so much of the heart, demanded the self-mastery of the sage. Mustafa Abd al-Raziq practised what he preached, recognizing wisdom in the constancy of conduct which guards against the instability of emotions. Muhammad Abduh glimpsed these qualities in the young Abd al-Raziq, whose faithfulness to his Master was to survive him. Abd al-Raziq aroused in his pupils at the University the desire to learn more of the doctrine of Muhammad Abduh, besides writing upon him and translating into French his Risalat al-Tauhid. Thus he sought to keep alive the spiritual flame kindled by the reformer, Abduh.

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Chapter 76: Renaissance in Turkey: Zia Gokalp and His School

In this chapter we shall discuss the role of philosophy in the rebirth of Turkey. It would be useful to clarify first the sense in which the term “philosophy” has been used here as a yardstick for identifying movements of thought. “Philosophy” denotes the intellectual efforts to understand and explain, in terms of rational and secular thinking, the problems relating to man, society, and the universe that have been presented to people when they felt unsatisfied by the interpretations given by religions or by the sciences.

The foremost prerequisite for the rise of philosophical thinking is the libera-tion of the mind from traditional modes of thinking. Secondly, it rests on a certain level of scientific advancement and begins when ultimate questions relating to man, society, and universe compel men to go beyond the realm of science. Philosophy arises when the traditional mode of thinking based on fixed values breaks down and when scientific knowledge opens new horizons, -both of which compel men to rational speculation. The establishment of a tradition of philosophical thinking is the third important factor in the history of philosophy in a country.

When we survey the development and present-day status of philosophy in Turkey, we find the first prerequisite amply whereas the other two exist only partially and imperfectly. During the last two centuries, modern Turkey has been in a process of gradual (at times violent) cultural trans-formation.

This transformation had two features that were decisive in determining the rise of philosophy and the direction it took. One was its secularizing feature and the other was its westernizing direction. With the breakdown of the traditional Islamic thinking, there appeared attempts to in-terpret phenomena in a very different way from that indicated by tradition. In these, however, Western European thinking served as a model.

As this transfor-mation is still going on and the two features mentioned above have not yet obtained an all-encompassing hold over the society and the individual, the state and the tradition of philosophical thinking in Turkey cannot be expected to be comparable to what they are in the West. Nonetheless, as several other Muslim nations are facing or are going to face the same conditions that gave rise to modern philosophical thinking in Turkey, it can be instructive to study that thinking.

The beginnings of the intellectual transformation in Turkey go so far back as the early part of the twelfth/eighteenth century. Philosophy had ceased to be taught in the madrasahs that were the highest schools of learning in Turkey even in the eleventh/seventeenth century. Hajji Khalifah (known in Turkish as Katib Chelebi), the unique liberal mind of that century, describes the deplorable condition of the philosophical and scientific teaching in the madrasahs. There was not only neglect of the sciences, but even hostility towards them for their being conducive to philosophizing.

Thus, the three bases of philosophy, the spirit of free inquiry, scientific investigation, and philo-sophical tradition, were destroyed by a growing religious traditionalism. This is an excellent example of the disappearance

of philosophy whenever the value of free inquiry is denied and the progress of science halted.

From the early part of the twelfth/eighteenth century on, intellectual awakening in Turkey showed its first stirrings. The printing press was introduced, a new interest in modern sciences arose, and the minds began to think about some political and social questions in a new way. Except for the emergence of some rudimentary philosophical inquiry, a century and a half had to pass before the Turkish thinkers could become acquainted with the European thought.

It is true that intellectual contacts with the modern European sciences had begun earlier than that. These contacts were especially in the fields of mathematics, physical sciences, and medicine. But the level reached by them was not yet conducive to philosophy. The intellectuals were still in the stage of acquiring the fundamentals of these sciences, and interest in them was purely a practical one and had not yet reached a theoretical level.

As a result of an intense desire to acquire European science and technology there arose a firm belief that reason and its product, science, were the prime factors of progress and therefore, capable of performing wonders in the progress of humanity. This belief contained in itself three germinal ideas (the power of science, progress, and the evolution of humanity) that were bound to lead to philosophical thinking sooner or later.

In fact, we find the first manifestations of an interest in philosophical thinking in literary publications in the middle of the thirteenth/nineteenth century. These were occasioned by the acquaintance of the Turkish intellectuals with the European philosophy of Enlightenment. Thinkers like Fenelon, Bayle, Newton, d'Alembert, Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Volney became known, and full or partial translations of their works began to be made.

The philosophical manifestation of the new mode of thinking and contacts with the European philosophy were seen in the rise of interest in two philosophical tendencies. One was scientism and materialism, the other the philosophy of natural rights and social contract. We find the first expressed by a former member of the 'ulama' corps, Tahsin Hoca, and the second by Namik Kemal, one of the leaders of the constitutional movement in Turkey.

Neither, however, can be called genuine philosophy. The first was a kind of creed, an expression of revolt against old ideas. Its exponents, far from being the founders of a philosophical tradition, were viewed as eccentrics or atheists. The second served as an ideological instrument in proving the necessity of a constitutional government in Islam. However, even that meant great progress and an unmistakable sign of the liberation of mind from tradition.

A severe reaction against both came with the establishment of what was known as Abd al-Hamid's regime. Both materialism and the theory of natural rights and social contract were declared incompatible with Islam and dangerous to morality, and were severely suppressed. Jamal al-Din al-Afghani's Refutation of the Materialists did a great service in the suppression of these ideas under the Hamidian regime.

Presented personally by the author to Abd al-Hamid, this work served as a model for several books written to refute the naturalists, materialists, constitutionalists - in short, all the manifestations of philosophical revolt against traditional obscurantism. Neither Afghani nor his Turkish imitators, however, left any philosophical tradition of their own to take the place of those rejected.

Furthermore, the suppression of Western materialism failed to stop the infiltration of European philosophical thinking, this time in a subversive manner. Not only did the range of the then known and read European philosophers widen to include such thinkers as Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Spencer, but materialistic philosophy with its Buchners and Haeckels also pressed harder across the border.

The naturalism of Zola and others became known through literature. The best exponent of naturalism was Besir Fuad, a gifted young man who found himself compelled to commit suicide that he did in a manner conducive to scientific knowledge. Although his writings were few, they exerted a great influence upon the younger generations, upon those who were going to emerge into full light with the fall of the Hamidian regime.

When the Constitutional Revolution of 1326/1908 came, the Turkish intellectuals appeared with a vision of European philosophy incomparably keener and broader than that of the pre-Hamidian Turkish intellectuals. From the philosophies they discussed and also from the movements with which they began to align themselves we can guess what they had been reading and learning under Abd al-Hamid's very nose.

An intense interest in philosophy appeared with the coming of the Constitutional era. This time, those who were engaged in philosophical thinking were not looked upon as eccentrics or dahriyyun. The first philosophical review, *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuasi*, began to appear at this time.

This review is itself the best example of the craving, now established, for a new philosophical orientation. Its pages were not reserved for the exposition of any particular philosophy. It was an excursion into all the various European philosophical ventures in search of ideas that might satisfy the needs of the Turkish thinkers. This review discussed and gave a panorama of the philosophies represented by Kant, Hegel, Comte, Spencer, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Mill, Marx, and a number of other Western thinkers.

This philosophical review died without establishing its own philosophical tradition. Its death, however, was not caused by any dearth of interest in philosophy as such. On the contrary, it was caused by its too much ramification. The review disappeared by giving rise to a number of different schools of philosophy. The subsequent years constituted a very active period for philosophy; but, if one considers the very calamitous political events, economic distress, and social upheaval through which Turkey had to pass during these years, one can understand why this active and variegated philosophical period did not flower into valuable and lasting works.

The principal field of interest was social and political philosophy. We find the emergence and differentiation of positivism, Spencerian

evolutionism, materialism, and idealism. All except the last appealed greatly to individual intellectuals; still they remained matters of intellectual embellishment and snobbery, in spite of the popularity of their exponents such as Riza Tevfik who became known even among the common people as the “Philosopher.”

Only idealism took root and played an important role in the intellectual life of Turkey through the hands of its exponent Zia Gokalp. This thinker, who cannot be called a philosopher in the narrow and technical sense of the term, can be called the real founder of a tradition of philosophical thinking in Turkey.

Gokalp’s idealism was a reaction against Spencerianism and utilitarianism as well as against materialism. It was not, however, the product of a theory of knowledge investigating the basis and nature of mind before it does so with regard to the nature of physical reality. It was rather an ideological premise to work out a moral philosophy upon which Turkish nationalism could be built.

Hence, Gokalp gave to his philosophy the appellation of “social idealism.” It was a spiritualistic as contrasted with the materialistic interpretation of history. It reduced reality, the physical as well as the social, to ideas; it rejected the individualistic philosophies of society and placed society, as a primordial and transcendental whole, above the individual. It suffered, however, from an internal strain due to its emphasis on the positivistic view of causation and the role of science in human conduct.

In spite of its serious defects as a system of philosophy, Gokalp’s idealism exercised tremendous influence over Turkish thinking. Part of this influence has been to the advantage of philosophy itself because Gokalp for the first time gave the courage as well as the taste for philosophical thinking independent of tradition and Western philosophies.

His was a daring experiment, to work out a philosophical view, not by the mere repetition of the Muslim or Western philosophies or by a juxtaposition of both in a syncretistic manner, but by blending them together through a creative synthesis. In spite of the fact that his philosophy aimed at teaching certain definite beliefs and value -judgments derived from his own philosophical speculation, it did great service to philosophical thinking by stimulating the rise of rival philosophies.

Gokalp’s intellectual integrity and personality played a decisive role in his contribution to thought. His great respect for philosophy, his emphasis on independent thinking, and his freedom from philosophical fanaticism prevented the utilization of his philosophy as an instrument for the suppression and persecution of the rival philosophies. In reality, all the subsequent philosophical trends took their initial clues from Gokalp’s thinking or were direct continuations of some aspects of his analysis. Another contribution of Gokalp’s personality to the Turkish mind was the road he prepared for closer contacts with Western philosophy.

As Zia Gokalp has done more to promote philosophy than expound his own philosophical views, it will be of interest to those concerned with the

growth of philosophical thinking in the contemporary Muslim countries to dwell a little more on this aspect of his influence.

Prior to Gokalp's time, philosophy was not taught in its modern form in the institutions of learning. Philosophy was only a private pursuit, an amateurish preoccupation. Its importance in the cultural formation of a nation as well as in the intellectual growth of the enlightened minds was not recognized.

On the contrary, philosophy was looked upon either with suspicion or with derision. Neither the conservatives who abhorred intellectual deviation from established dogmas nor the progressives who believed in the utility of action had a favour-able view of philosophy. It was either a heresy or an idle phantasy.

Zia Gokalp has been the chief instrument in discrediting both of these views about philosophy and in giving it an academic and educational prestige. Through his influence, courses of lectures on philosophy, logic, ethics, psy-chology, and sociology were introduced in the syllabi for undergraduates.

While teachers for these courses were sent to study in European universities, a de-partment of philosophy was opened with an entirely modern programme in the University of Istanbul. This programme was based primarily upon the tradition for teaching philosophy of the French universities.

A course on the history of philosophy from the early Greek period down to the contemporary Western philosophy was introduced in this department for the first time. A separate course was introduced on the history of philosophy in Muslim countries with a view to teaching the subject with a scientific approach. The latter course was introduced also in the Faculty of Theology. In addition to specialized courses dealing with Greek, medieval, Islamic, and modern Western philo-sophies, courses were given in systematic philosophy, metaphysics, logic, ethics, and aesthetics as branches of philosophical inquiry.

Gokalp himself taught none of these, he was a Professor of Sociology, but he was the patron behind all, even though the men who taught these were his philosophical adversaries. A further step was taken in the modernization of philosophical teaching during World War I with the appointment of German professors. Although these German professors of philosophy contributed nothing to the content of philosophical thinking in Turkey, they were useful in introducing the scientific treatment of the history of philosophy for which the Germans are reputed.

Gokalp's social idealism was a synthesis of Islamic and Western philosophical traditions with the aim of deriving a theoretical basis for Turkish nationalism. For him, therefore, teaching Muslim or Western philosophies was not enough. His greatest contribution, perhaps, lay in his emphasis on bringing home knowledge of these philosophies so as to make them the data by which Turkish thinking would free itself from the bondage of the old and of the foreign.

In other words, he wanted to promote it as an intellectual guide for an under-standing of the world confronting the Turkish mind. It was, thus,

above all a cultural matter rather than a matter of mere speculative curiosity or a continuation of scientific inquiry. In spite of the fact that this understanding of the role of philosophy is not in accordance with that dominant in the West and that it may tend to obscure the universal humanistic character of philosophy, it has left a tradition in Turkey that is worthy of attention.

Philosophy is conceived in Turkey to be very closely related to culture and society. The teaching of philosophy is believed to be of supreme cultural and pedagogical importance, particularly in a nation that is undergoing a total cultural transformation.

This understanding was inevitable in a country like Turkey where the other two prerequisites for philosophy, advanced science and a tradition of philosophy, did not exist. Both of these were necessary parts of Turkey's civilizational transformation for which philosophy was viewed as a guide. Gokalp's emphasis on social philosophy as against the theory of knowledge and scientific philosophy and his obsession for regarding philosophy as a preoccupation with eminently cultural function had at least the virtue of giving a philosophical tinge to all the educational, political, economic, religious, and moral aspects of Turkey's supreme problems.

This view of philosophical occupation showed itself in two other respects that, in our view, are extremely important for nations in a position similar to that of Turkey with regard to philosophy. Both were of vital importance in establishing a congenial milieu as well as a vehicle of communication in the realization of a philosophical tradition.

The first was the translation of the great philosophical works, Eastern and Western, into the Turkish language. The other was the stabilization and enrichment of a uniform terminology for expressing philosophical concepts.

The first was not merely a matter of practical facility for those who did not know Greek, Arabic, or modern European languages. A serious student of philosophy is supposed to be acquainted with at least some of these languages and, in fact, these are taught today to students of philosophy.

The problem was to use translations for developing the Turkish language to the degree of becoming capable of expressing philosophical thought. A nation that does not have a language to express abstract ideas is bound to remain foreign to philosophy or fail to understand philosophy when expressed in a foreign language.

As Latin in the West, so Arabic in all Muslim countries was the universal medium in the past for expressing philosophical thought. Significantly, the rise of modern European philosophies, several times richer than those in Latin, coincided with the flourishing of modern national languages.

When Turkish came into contact with modern philosophical thinking, it was utterly incapable of expressing philosophical thought without the aid of Arabic or of some foreign language (French). Arabic had ceased to be a medium of philosophical thought that had been killed in the hands of those who used that language. It was, therefore, necessary to improve Turkish as a vehicle of expression for the cultural experiences of a modern nation.

This task had already been faced in the natural sciences and in literature just before the middle of the thirteenth/nineteenth century. A new

vocabulary had developed in mathematics, the physical sciences, and medicine on the basis of Arabic. In the field of philosophical sciences, however, the situation was highly inadequate, confused, and unstable until Gokalp's time. It was impossible to understand a philosophical text without constantly using French terms and expressions.

Gokalp's contribution in improving this situation was great. He attached so much importance to the question of uniformity in scientific and philo-sophical terminology that he suggested the holding of an international conference among the Muslim nations to develop modern concepts derived from Arabic. As this never became possible, he worked for the development of a philosophical language in Turkish. He not only standardized the use of the already existing Arabic terms but also coined new terms by derivations from Arabic roots; some of these survive even today.

The establishment of a modernized teaching of philosophy, the translations and adaptations from the world philosophical classics, and the impetus given to the development of Turkish as a means of communicating philosophical thought contributed towards the establishment of a philosophical tradition in Turkey.

Gokalp's idealism and collectivism gave rise to a variety of reactions. On the whole, however, we may identify two major lines of thought, each being a reaction to one of the two aspects of his philosophy. One was individualism, and the other materialism.

The first reaction was inspired by the study of psychology, especially the Freudian psychology. It was best represented by Mustafa Sekip Tunc, a professor of psychology but an artist at heart. His greatest merit was, perhaps, his contribution to the development of a superior literary style of philosophi-cal writing; he showed skill both in translation and in original composition. In this he was perhaps influenced by his major inspirer, Henri Bergson.

Tunc's scope of philosophical interest was much wider than that of Gokalp. He avoided the conceptual and doctrinal rigidity of Gokalp. He was influential as a teacher, as an inspirer, and as a man of intuitive thinking, rather than as a systematizer. His individualistic approach to philosophy was not the one in vogue in the thirteenth/nineteenth century.

It was rather a revolt against rationalism and intellectualism; it emphasized the non-rational aspects of the human mind. Useful though it was in giving philosophical thinking greater depth and subtlety, its cultural implications remained complex and elusive. It varied from providing inspiration to liberal progres-sive leanings to supporting fascist anti-intellectualism. The saddest manifes-tation of this was Tunc's preoccupation with spiritism, psychic phenomena, and occult sciences at the end of his life. His was a restless soul and, despite his great efforts to the contrary, his thinking amounted to nothing but a kind of mysticism.

Another successor of Gokalp in cultivating philosophy was Mehmed Izzet. If Tunc's was an anti-intellectualistic reaction to Gokalp, Izzet's was a sceptic's reaction. Much better organized, subtler, and far more systemati-cally versed in both Eastern and Western philosophies, Izzet was

a careful thinker and an excellent teacher. He was in search of a moral philosophy, basically idealistic, oriented to a humanistic view of freedom. With his untimely death in 1349/1930 however, terminated conscientious, thoughtful work.

Both Tunc and Izzet were expressions of an attempt to break with Gokalp's nationalism in order to widen the horizons of philosophical thinking. Another reaction in this direction came with the rebirth of materialism, this time in the form of historical materialism. It is hardly possible to speak of this as a philosophical movement. It had neither a philosophical exponent of even mediocre stature nor any following in the academic circles. Its importance lay in its diffusedness and in its infiltration in bits, not as a system, into the intellectual make-up of the generations that sought liberation from Gokalp's idealism.

The same may be said of another philosophy of action: pragmatism. Although pragmatism never had a systematic presentation in the hands of a thinker comparable to Gokalp, it penetrated into the several facets of the Turkish mind and provided another diffused form of escape from Gokalp's influence.

All of these were expressions of a challenge to philosophy by the radical reforms carried out under Kemal Ataturk. All these were mere experiments in discovering new values compatible with those that were supposed to reign in modern civilization. Remembering the philosophical chaos reigning in the Western mind, one may excuse the Turkish thinkers for failing in their philo-sophical ventures.

Once plunged into the dazzling stage of the contemporary Western philosophy, the attempts of a number of Turkish thinkers, whose names would be too numerous to mention, became once again restless, searching for an orientation. None of these had the chance or capacity to select, digest, and systematize something that would take root as a philo-sophical movement.

The instability just illustrated was an inevitable consequence of the Turkish thinkers' plunge into the world of Western philosophy supported by a long tradition as well as by a constantly changing cultural and scientific background. It has shown that Turkey has not yet reached the stage of having genuine philosophical schools and representatives and that there is still a long road to travel.

Quite naturally, one reaction to this philosophical flux has been a growing distrust of philosophizing. A group of German scientists and philosophers, who, expelled from Germany, taught in the Turkish universities, have contributed to this trend. Not by any coincidence, most of them were inter-nationally known representatives of logical positivism. Hardly a trace of their philosophy has remained behind them in Turkey, but they left a deep impression by making the Turkish students of philosophy see what great and difficult tasks they have before them.

Discouraging though it may seem, philosophy at present is only a matter of disciplined academic teaching. The emphasis is upon the history of philo-sophy. The University of Istanbul, in particular, can boast of having a present-able staff of professors of philosophy. The history of Islamic

philosophy is gaining special interest. More value is being given to research, especially historical, than to attempts at original thinking. This, perhaps, is the right path.

After about one century of crawling, flying, and falling, a tradition is growing. The Turkish language has a rich literature in the world's philosophy available to Turkish students. A stage of careful learning and research has come. The longer this stage lasts, the more likely will it be possible one day to speak of the existence of a genuine philosophical tradition in Turkey.

Bibliographical Note

The following is not an exhaustive bibliography of the publications of philo-sophical nature. It does not include publications of the following categories: (a) philosophical works translated from European languages; (b) philosophical classics translated from non-Turkish languages; (c) works of Muslim philo-sophers of the past; (d) philosophical dictionaries; and (e) text-books on philo-sophical disciplines. The great majority of the philosophical publications in modern Turkey fall under the above categories.

The following contains writings concerning the philosophical trends and problems relating to the role of philosophy in the social and cultural transformation of modern Turkey.

1. Pre-Nineteenth Century - Some of the madrasahs of the capital of the Ottoman Empire were institutions of higher learning. In the early stage of the history of this Empire teaching in them was more legal and scientific than philosophical in tenor. In course of time, these institutions lost their interest in science and confined themselves to the study of law, with the so-called "religious sciences" as subsidiary disciplines. What we might call "philosophy" was connected with tasawwuf that was cultivated outside the madrasahs. Ibn al-Arabi and Rumi were the thinkers having the greatest influence on the educated classes. See Katib Chelebi (Hajji Khalifah), *Mizan al-Haqq fi Ikhtiyar al-Ahaqq*, translated by G. L. Lewis as *The Balance of Truth*, London, 1957; A. Adnan Adivar, *Osmanli Turklerinde Ilim*, Istanbul, 1943, particularly pp. 105-06. There arose during the eleventh/seven-teenth century a strong fundamentalist opposition to philosophy and mysticism both of which were branded as ilhad. This was followed in the twelfth/eighteenth century by the trends of scepticism, deism, and even atheism, perhaps as a reaction. No study of these is available.

2. The Earliest Phase of the Modern Era - The earliest manifestations of a modern philosophical tendency arose in the middle of the thirteenth/nineteenth century and were a reflection of the European Enlightenment. Some acquaintance with the modern European thinking, notably with Voltaire, goes back to the late twelfth/eighteenth century in which the introduction of the European natural sciences and medicine played an important role. See Cevdet Pasha, *Tarih*, Vol. VIII, Istanbul, 1303 A. H., pp. 212-14, and Vol. XII, Istanbul, 1301 A. H., p. 212. The first translation from European philosophy appeared in 1276/1859 in a collection of selections entitled *Muhaverat-i Hikemiye* (Philosophical

Dialogues) by Tahir Munif (later Pasha). This contained selections from the writings of Voltaire, Fenelon, and Fontenelle. During the Tanzimat period (1838-1916), the Turkish thinkers were interested mostly in the ideas of John Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Diderot, d'Holbach, Helvetius, and Cabanis. The influence of material-ism, especially that of Ludwig Buchner, was represented by Tahsin who was the first director of the Dar al-Funun and a friend of Jamal al-Din Afghani. The philosophy of natural rights and social contract was reflected in the writings of Namik Kemal. See Serif Hulusi, "Namik Kemal 'in Eserleri," in Namik Kemal Hakkında, Istanbul, 1942, pp. 395-401; M. Kaplan, Namik Kemal, Istanbul, 1948, p.31; C. O. Tutengil, Montesquieu 'nun Siyasi ve Iktisadi Fikirleri, Istanbul, 1956, Chap. IV, pp. 53-73; Kamiran Birand, "18 inci Asir Fransiz Tefekkuru ve Namik Kemal," in Felsefe Arkivi, Istanbul, 1945, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 90-140; and Aydinlanma Devri Devlet Felsefesinin Tanzimata Tesirleri, Ankara, 1955.

3. Period of Reaction (1295/1878-1326/1908) - No progress in the development of philosophical thinking was recorded during this period. The period was dominated by writings inspired by Afghani and Ahmed Midhat, the famous publicists of the period, dedicated to the refutation of materialistic systems. Despite this, natural-istic trends of the European thought continued their penetration and were, furthermore, strengthened by the coming of the ideas of evolution. Towards the end of the period, the writers became more acquainted with Western philosophers, particularly with the ideas of Darwin, Haeckel, Spencer, and Auguste Comte, but these remained implicit and were never expressed in writings until the coming of the Mesrutiyet (Constitutional) period. No monographic study is available about this period. In general, see H. Z. Ulken, "Tanzimattan Sonra Fikir Hareketleri," in Tanzimat, Istanbul, 1940, pp. 757-75.

4. The Constitutional Period - After 1908, various philosophical tendencies came to light. Two philosophico-sociological reviews were published: Yeni Felsefe Mecmuasi, Salonika, and Ulum-u Ictimaiye ve Iktisadiye Mecmuasi, Istanbul. The major trends were (a) evolutionism, (b) positivism, and (c) idealism. There was also a weak and vague interest in socialism. See H. Z. Ulken, "Bizde Fikir Cereyanlari," in Felsefe ve Ictimaiyat Mecmuasi, Istanbul, 1927, Vol. I, No. 4, pp. 311-14; "Turkiyede Positivism Temayulu," in Insan, Istanbul, 1939, No. 11, pp. 849-53; "Turkiyede Idealism Temayulu," ibid., Istanbul, 1939, No. 12, pp. 929-38; C. O. Tutengil, Prens Sabahaddin, Istanbul, 1954. The works produced by writers and translators such as Baha Tevfik, Ahmed Nebil, Haydar Rifat, Subhi Edhem, Mustafa Subhi, Edhem Necdet, and others were not original but transmitted mostly Western philosophical ideas. The idealistic trend was ushered in by Zia Gokalp; see his Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization, translated and edited by N. Berkes, London and New York, 1959, pp. 46ff.

5. The Republican Period - The study of philosophy in the form of teaching, writing, or translation began in this period in the real sense. Translations from Western philosophers such as Bergson, James, and Dewey, and, later, Russell and the logical positivists, phenomenologists,

and, finally, the existentialists became more extensive. This is the period of a definitive turn to Western philosophy. During the 1930's the translation of philosophical classics, ranging from Plato to Russell, began. Scores of major philosophical works were published under the Ministry of Education. The translation work is still in progress. The philosophical reviews of the period were *Felsefe ve Ictimaiyat Mecmuasi*, Istanbul, 1927-1930, edited by Mehmed Servet; *Felsefe Yillig*, Istanbul, 1931-1932, edited by H. Z. Ulken; *Is*, Istanbul, 1934, edited by F. Findikoglu; *Edebiyat Fakultesi Mecmuasi*, Istanbul, 1916-1917 and 1922-1938; *Felsefe Arkivi*, Istanbul, 1948. A Philosophical Society was founded in Istanbul in 1928. About the problems of philosophy and the major trends of thought in general, see the following: Mustafa Sekip, Tunc, "Turk Inkilabinin Felsefeye Tesiri," in *Hayat*, Ankara, 1927, No. 9, pp. 164-65; *Memleketimizde Felsefenin Inkisafi Icin Lazim Gelen Sartlar*, Ankara, 1938; Mehmed Izzet, "Dar-ul-Fununda Felsefe Dersleri," in *Edebiyat Fakultesi Mecmuasi*, Istanbul, 1925, Vol. IV, No. 2, pp. 121-32; Mehmed Servet, "Fikir Hayatimizda Bir Muhasebe," in *Hayat*, Ankara, 1929, Vol. V, Nos. 116-31-this is the best survey of the trends before 1929; H. Z. Ulken, "Turk Felsefe Dilinin Gelismesi," in *Felsefe Tercumerleri Dergisi*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Istanbul, 1947, pp. 135-43. The following may be listed among the works containing some contribution to original thinking and also as a sample of the range of the philosophical interest during the last three decades: Mehmed Izzet, *Milliyet Nazariyeleri ve Milli Hayat*, Istanbul, 1925; "Buyuk Insanlar ve Musir Hayat," in *Edebiyat Fakultesi Mecmuasi*, Istanbul, 1923, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 51-61, Nos. 2-3, pp. 91-102; Mustafa Sekip (Tunc), *Terakki Fikrinin Mense ve Tekamulu*, Istanbul, 1928; *Bir Din Felsefesine Dogru*, Istanbul, 1959; Hilmi Ziya Ulken, *Ask Ahlaki*, Istanbul, 1931 (the latter has been the most prolific author of the period; he has written practically on every branch of philosophy, but the above seems to be his most original work); A. Adnan-Adivar, *Tarih Boyunca Ilim ve Din*, 2 Vols., Istanbul, 1944; Macit Gokberk, *Kant ile Herder'in Tarih Anlyislari*, Istanbul, 1948; Kamiran Birand, *Dilthey ve Rickert'te Manevi Ilimlerin Temellendi-rilmesi*, Ankara, 1954; Nermi Uygur, *Edmund Husserl'de Baskasinin Ben'i Problemi*, Istanbul, 1958.

Chapter 77: Renaissance in Iran: General

In early thirteenth/nineteenth century, Iran presented a gloomy picture of political and social decline. After the collapse of the Safawid power (907/1501-1135/1722) it was never able to regain its old glory. The military achievements and political consolidation under Nadir Shah (1149/1736--1160/1747) were short-lived, and the admirable efforts of Karim Khan Zand (1164/1750-1193/1779), to restore the country's old prestige did not produce lasting results.

A new dynasty was founded in 1211/1796 by Aqa Muhammad Qajar, a great despot and a sadist of the worst type. It was under this new dynasty that Iran was reduced to a mere shadow of its past. The disaster came through internal disorder and foreign interference. During this period the Anglo-French rivalry in Europe and Napoleon's grandiose plans to conquer India in early thirteenth/nineteenth century dragged Iran into the orbit of international diplomacy. Again, the new Western influences awakened the people to their miserable plight and led them to the assertion of their basic rights.

An offensive and defensive alliance was concluded between Iran and France in 1222/1807, mainly by the efforts of General Gardanne, which put Great Britain on the alert. By this time her stakes in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent had become so vital that any threat to her interests there was bound to have repercussions in Europe. Consequently, Iran was wooed with equal vigour by both France and England and was, thus, dragged into international politics in sinister circumstances.

The story of Iran had touched the history of Europe at many points right from Darius and Xerxes in the sixth century B. C. to brisk diplomatic contacts between European Powers and the Safawids in the tenth/sixteenth century, but never before had Iran played the minor role. In the new set-up it had primarily to play the part of a victim. A political era was now initiated in which Iran had much to suffer and learn.

After the downfall of Napoleon, the Anglo-French rivalry in Iran was substituted by the expansionist policy of the Czarist Russia. This led to disastrous and prolonged military campaigns that ended in the treaties of Gulistan and Turkmanchay in 1228/1813 and 1244/1828 respectively. These compelled Iran to part with some of the richest territories in the north. Then started the sordid story of the Anglo-Russian intrigues and encroachments and a race by these powers for extorting economic and political concessions that at times deprived the country of nearly all its resources.¹

The tale of internal administration is no less sombre. The Shah of Iran was absolute and his decisions were unquestionable. "The taxes were collected, concessions were granted, and presents were offered, all for the benefit of the Shah and his courtiers, whose extravagance kept Persia poor."²

Power was abused in strange ways as Court decisions were sold and robbers were licensed.³ Public offices were monopolized by a host of princes - Fateh Ali Shah (1212/1797-1250/1834) alone had one hundred and fifty-nine children⁴, who in the absence of a strong and efficient central government plundered the helpless peasants with impunity.

Out of the ashes of an almost ruined society, however, emerged a national movement the goal of which was to resurrect a new and independent Iran.

The Russian campaigns had proved the vulnerability of the Iranian army to the new scientific methods of warfare and awakened the Iranians to their woeful backwardness and to the compelling need of Western education. Amongst the outstanding patriots who quickly grasped the implications of the new situation were Prince Abbas Mirza, the eldest son of Fateh Ali Shah, and Mirza Taqi Khan Amir-i Kabir or Amir-i Nizam, the Prime Minister of Nadir al-Din Shah (1265/1848-1314/1896).

Prince Abbas Mirza, whom Watson describes as “the noblest of the Qajar race,”⁵ not only played the chief role in the organization of the Iranian army on Western lines, but was also amongst the first to realize the need for sending Iranian students to European countries for higher education. He sent many students to England to study science at his own expense.

He was the first to introduce typography in Iran, which was a forerunner of the printing press. Again, it was at his instance that a number of Russian and French books on military science were translated into Persian. Mirza Taqi Khan Amir-i Kabir was an extra-ordinary statesman produced by Iran in the thirteenth/nineteenth century. During the short period of three years that he was the Prime Minister, he set himself to put his country on the road to progress and stability and arrest the political and social decline by the introduction of administrative, legal, and educational reforms of far-reaching importance.

He also tried to retrieve the honour of his country in the comity of nations by a vigorous foreign policy. His brilliant career, however, was cut short by Court intrigues. His exit from Iranian politics was a calamity of great magnitude.⁶ Perhaps his greatest reform was the foundation of the Dar al-Funun in 1268/1851, which became the centre of the growing educational and cultural activities in Iran.

This college, started on modern lines, had, besides Iranians, several Austrian professors on its staff. The presence of foreigners facilitated the introduction of new teaching methods. The college looked after the education of the boys of upper classes and provided the Government with diplomats, administrators, and military officers.

To begin with, it had one hundred students on its rolls and its curriculum included courses on infantry, cavalry, and artillery tactics, medicine, geometry, engineering, chemistry, pharmacy, geology, French, English, and Russian. Music and painting were added later. The year 1272/1855 witnessed the formation of the Ministry of Education. Forty-two students were sent to Europe in 1275/1858 in spite of the opposition of the Shah, who had once remarked that an ideal Persian was one who did not know whether Brussels was a city or a cabbage.⁷

In 1289/1872, a school of languages known as Maktab-i Mashiriyeh was opened under the supervision of Muhammad Hasan Khan Itimad al-Sultaneh. In addition to languages, it provided facilities for the teaching of different subjects in arts and sciences. A college was inaugurated in Tabriz in 1293/1876 with both Iranian and European teachers on its staff.

This was followed by military colleges in Teheran and Isfahan in 1301/1883 and 1304/1886 respectively. The first school for girls was opened in Chaltas near Kirman in 1315/1897. The next year a society was founded for the ex-press purpose of coordinating the working of various schools as well as for the unification of educational standards. A school of political science was founded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1317/1899. This was followed by a school of agriculture in 1318/1900. That is how Iran was slowly struggling ahead in the field of education.

Along with the educational efforts of the State the Western Christian missions too had been active in opening schools in Iran. The French Lazarite mission was the first to start a school at Tabriz in 1256/1840. In co-operation with les Filles de la Charite, the Lazarites established, during the next three quarters of a century, a chain of seventy-six schools for boys and girls in various towns. These schools played a substantial part in making the Government decide in 1319/1901 to recognize schools in the country run after the French model.

The American Presbyterian Mission also established in Teheran two schools, one in 1289/1872 for boys, and another in 1314/1896 for girls. The British Church Missionary Society founded the Steward Memorial College at Isfahan in 1322/1904. Amongst the non-missionary foreign schools may be included those founded by the Alliance Francaise and the Alliance Israelite Universelle. The Germans established a technical college in Teheran, and the Russians opened a commercial school in 1330/1911. This was followed by more Russian schools at Tabriz and other towns in northern Iran.

Amongst the educative influences the role of the Press cannot be over-estimated. It admirably discharged the vital function of formulating public opinion in the country and finally bringing about a revolutionary change in people's attitude towards national problems. It accentuated and revitalized the patriotic feeling which had never died down in the country, thanks to the immense influence and unique popularity of the national epic, namely, Firdausi's Shahnameh, as well as the lively sense of nearness which the nation has always had with its mighty past.

The first ever newspaper was published in Teheran in 1253/1837 by Mirza Saleh Shirazi⁸ who was, incidentally, a member of the first batch of students sent to England in 1225/1810. The next newspaper Ruznameh-i Waqayii Ittifaqiyah appeared in 1267/1850. The second half of the thirteenth/nineteenth century witnessed remarkable activity in the field of journalism.

The newspapers gradually became more outspoken in their comments. The despotic and corrupt government in the country could hardly tolerate independent criticism of its shortsighted policies, with the result that some patriots started independent Persian newspapers outside the country. Important amongst those which helped bring about a new political and social consciousness in Iran were the Akhtar, published in Istanbul in 1292/1875, the Qanun, founded in London in 1307/1889,⁹ the Hikmat, printed in Cairo in 1310/1892, and the Habl al-Matin, started in Calcutta in 1311/1893.

Their entry into Iran was prohibited from time to time and yet they were smuggled into the country enclosed in envelopes or books¹⁰ and commanded an ardent readership. By the turn of the century the tone of the Iranian newspapers had grown bitterer, even fierce. Some of these were suppressed.

One of the editors of the *Sur-i Israfil*, Mirza Jahangir Khan Shirazi, was put to death. The Press played a vital role in conducting the campaign for constitutional government. So much so that the jelly-graph publications known as *Shab Nameh* used to circulate from hand to hand in those days of official terrorism. Undoubtedly, the Iranian Press brought the dream of renaissance nearer realization.

Amongst the modernizing influences in Iran one cannot ignore the part played by the telegraph line. The Iranian Government, conscious of the role of telegraph in modern communications, built the first line in 1275/1858 between Teheran and Sultaniyeh. This was later extended to Tabriz and Julfa. The British Government was interested in the extension of telegraph lines in Iran because it lay on the direct route between Europe and India and formed a vital link in the new international telegraphic network.

Three conventions were, therefore, signed between Iran and Great Britain between 1280/1863 and 1290/1873 for the extension and improvement of telegraph lines between Europe and India. According to one of these signed, in 1287/1870, the Indo-European Telegraph Company completed a line between Teheran and London via Tabriz, Tiflis, Warsaw, and Berlin. By the end of the last century Iran had built up a system of telegraphic communications that connected most of her important towns.¹¹

In the later half of the thirteenth/nineteenth century, Nasir al-Din Shah thrice voyaged extravagantly to Europe. When his reckless handling of the exchequer precipitated a financial crisis, he launched upon a policy of granting concessions to foreign countries as a convenient source of revenue. In return the European imperialist Powers began to involve Iran in huge financial commitments that had far-reaching political and economic consequences.

In the words of William Hass, "Teheran became a meeting place for con-cession hunters of European nations. Many were adventurers and crooks...."¹² This created a sense of frustration not only in the people but also in the Shah himself who is said to have remarked once: "I wish that no European had ever set his foot on my country's soil, for then we would have been spared all these tribulations. But since the foreigners have unfortunately penetrated into our country, we shall, at least, make the best possible use of them."

Unfortunately, he did not. While concessions were being abused, public opinion began to ferment. In 1289/1872 he had to withdraw the con-cessions granted to Baron Julius de Reuter. But in 1308/1890 he granted a concession to one Major Talbot bargaining away the tobacco industry for fifty years throughout the country. This caused violent riots and country-wide agitation and led to a national movement against the despotic regime. The political unrest increased till it culminated in a revolution in

1324/1906.

Amongst those who now stepped in with a determination to fight against foreign influences was Sayyid Jamal al-Din, popularly known as Afghani.¹³ A born revolutionary, he flashed about the Muslim world exhorting its people to rise against the despotic rule of their kings, and put their house in order against the inroads of Western imperialism.

He had a dynamic personality. A peerless orator, he swept the masses off their feet with his impassioned speech. He cut across the frontiers of nations, and revolutions followed in his footsteps. Iran, Egypt, and Turkey felt the full impact of his personality. The Young Turk Movement of 1326/1908 owed most of its dynamism to the overwhelming influence of his teachings during his stay at Istanbul.

The Egyptian national movement and to no less a degree the intellectual awakening represented by Shaikh Muhammad Abduh were the direct outcomes of his creative genius. Most of the future leaders of the Iranian revolution in its early phase were inspired by him. Sayyid Jamal al-Din's eloquent sermons created amongst the Iranians a devotional attachment to him. He awakened them to a sense of dignity and freedom and to the dangers of internal despotism and foreign exploitation.

Even when he was treacherously expelled from the country, people still continued to receive guidance from him from London where he had started a newspaper called *Dia al-Khafaqain* with the help of Mirza Malkom Khan. In his newspaper Sayyid Jamal al-Din wrote his historic letter to the Iranian 'ulama'. In this letter he appealed to the divines to rise to a man to save the independence of their country. The effect was mira-culous. The famous tobacco riots followed and shook royal absolutism. The real success of this revolutionary figure lay in winning over the 'ulama' who wielded immense influence on the masses. The seeds of revolution were thus sown. The political discontent which found its first open expression in the tobacco riots of 1309/1891 culminated in the revolution of 1324/1906.

Nasir al-Din Shah was assassinated in 1313/1896 by Mirza Reza Kirmani and was succeeded by Muzaffar al-Din Shah (1313/1896-1324/1906). At this time Iran presented a sordid picture of heartless exploitation by Western nations. The new Shah had a paradoxical character. He was sympathetic to the peoples' political aspirations but he was weak and fickle-minded and played in the hands of corrupt and ambitious ministers who dissipated revenues and mortgaged national resources for foreign loans.

The Russian influence had now reached its peak. Russia advanced loans to Iran, established a bank in Teheran as a rival institution to the British Imperial Bank, while marked increase was registered in Russian trade with the country. By 1324/1906 Iran owed seven and a half million pounds sterling to Russia, mainly spent on the Shah's travels to Europe and on his corrupt ministers.

In return for the Russian and British-Indian loans almost the entire customs revenues of the country had been mortgaged to the two powers. The financial chaos had been accompanied by administrative crisis that drove people to organize an anti-government movement in the country. A

secret society was formed by the name of *Islah Talaban*¹⁴ or “the reformists” under the leadership of Sayyid Muhammad Tabatabai, which rendered considerable service to the cause of freedom. Along with Tabatabai the other most prominent religious leader was Sayyid Abd Allah Bahbahani.¹⁵

The orators like Malik al-Mutakal-limin and Sayyid Jamal al-Din Waiz Isfahani tried to awaken people by fiery speeches.¹⁶ At this time an originally minor incident took place that was to touch off a big national movement aiming at the constitutional government.

Encouraged by the policy of the Prime Minister Ain al-Daulah to terrorize the divines and merchants who were in the vanguard of the movement, the Governor of Teheran found a pretext to bastinado a well-known merchant. This provided the people with an excuse to intensify the political movement. The market was closed down and a stormy meeting was held in the *Masjid-i Shah*. The same night the ‘ulama’ decided to lodge the customary form of protest, that is, to take “bast” in the sanctuary of *Shah Abd al-Azim* in the outskirts of Teheran. The scheme to launch a revolutionary movement was almost complete. This incident hastened its implementation by three months. It was Sayyid Muhammad Tabatabai who had prevailed upon the ‘ulama’ to start immediately the movement that, according to an earlier decision, was to be launched three months hence.¹⁷

About two thousand persons now took refuge in the above-mentioned sanctuary to condemn the high-handedness of the Governor. This move had the desired effect. The shah agreed to dismiss the Governor of Teheran as well as the Belgian head of the Customs¹⁸ Department and to institute the *Adalat Khaneh* aimed at restricting the powers of the government officials and the nobility.

The promise was not kept and the purposes were not fulfilled and as a consequence the agitation gained momentum. Meanwhile, reports had been pouring into Teheran about the repressive measures adopted by the Governors of Fars and Khurasan and the consequent riot at Meshed and the closing down of the bazaar at Shiraz for one full month.

One can have an idea of the financial crisis in the country and of the blatant disregard of human rights by the government officials from an incident revealed by Aqa Taba-tabai in one of his public speeches. When, due to abject poverty, the people of a certain locality failed to pay wheat-tax the local officer forcibly rounded up three hundred girls and sold them off to Turkomans for thirty-six kilo-grams of wheat per head.¹⁹

Such inhuman conditions drove the people to desperation. It was the arrest of one of the divines, viz., Shaikh Muhammad Waiz, and the consequent mass agitation and shooting by the army which led some ‘ulama’ and merchants to take refuge in the *Jami Masjid* and to demand the dismissal of the Governor of Teheran. Not content with this form of protest, the ‘ulama’ led a mass migration movement known as *hijrat-i kubra* to the holy city of Qum, about a hundred miles south of the capital.

This further gave rise to a movement amongst the divines, merchants, and representatives of other classes in the town to seek refuge in the British embassy, a move helped by the political tussle between England and Russia. The Russian influence had become paramount through the granting of the

loans, the foundation of a Russian bank, and the winning over of the Prime Minister.

It suited the British Government to help patriots in dislodging the Premier and fighting the Russian influence. Hence the British embassy offered all facilities to the political refugees whose number had swelled to nearly fourteen thousand. They refused to leave until the constitution was granted. Their original stand for the dismissal of the local Governor now culminated in the demand for a constitutional government and the dismissal of the Prime Minister.

The Shah had to concede to the irresistible popular demand. The Governor had to go. The 'ulama' made a triumphant return from Qum and on Jamadi al-Thani 14, 1324/August 5, 1906, the Shah issued orders for the establishment of the National Parliament. The nation succeeded in attaining its goal after a relatively short struggle. Elections were soon held and the Shah inaugurated the Majlis (Parliament) in Shaban/October of the same year. It did not take long to draw up and ratify the constitution. Thus, the Iranians won the unique distinction of becoming the first nation in the East to attain the parliamentary form of government.²⁰

A nation that had been devoted for about two thousand and five hundred years to the theory of the divine right of kings, under the impact of the new democratic urge, threw away the yoke of monarchic absolutism. The process, however, was not so smooth as it promised to be at first. Muzaffar al-Din Shah died within five months of the granting of the constitution and his successor Muhammad Ali Shah, himself an ambitious despot, was persuaded by the Russians to overthrow the constitution.

He bombed the Parliament building in 1326/1908 and set upon a policy of repression. But the nationalists rose in revolt in Adharbaijan and Isfahan, and ultimately the Bakhtiyari tribes from Isfahan marched in Teheran under the leadership of Sardar-i Asad. This victory in Jamadi al-Thani 1327/July 1909 sealed the fate of Muhammad Ali Shah who had to abdicate in favour of his twelve-year old son Abroad Shah, destined to be the last of the Qajars, while he himself took refuge at Odessa in Russia. He struggled to stage a comeback in 1329/1911, but failed.

Muhammad Ali Shah's abdication brought an end to what is known as Istibdad-i Saghir or the smaller tyranny in Iranian history. But Iran was not destined to reap the benefits of constitutional freedom for many years. As early as 1325/1907 it had been divided into spheres of influence by the Russian and British Governments under an agreement which was the direct result of the Triple Entente concluded in Europe on the one hand and of the growing confidence of Iranians in an independent, democratic form of government on the other.

The Parliament could not work with freedom, as was amply proved by the resignation in 1329/1911 of Morgan Shuster, the American financial adviser, who had been engaged by the Iranian Government to reorganize the finances of the country. The riots which followed and the demonstration of three hundred women in front of the Parliament building in which they brandished revolvers out of their veils and threatened to kill their husbands and sons if they yielded to pressure and compromised with the national

honour,²¹ showed that Iran was now pulsating with a new spirit and a new urge for freedom.

The First World War which came soon after, however, stifled the new aspirations. Iran was overwhelmed by the sweep of inter-national events. It was occupied by the Russians in the north and the British in the south. Adharbaijan had to suffer the havoc of war on a large scale.²²

After the October Revolution of 1917/1336, however, the Russian policy completely changed. The Russian forces withdrew from Iran and the new government gave up all territorial claims and all economic concessions except fishery rights in the Caspian Sea. The vacuum created by the departure of the Russian troops was immediately filled up by the British army.

In 1338/1919 the British concluded an agreement with the Iranian Government headed by Wuthuq al-Dauleh, which virtually meant the complete political and economic domination of Iran by Great Britain. The Parliament, however, refused to ratify the agreement and be a party to surrendering the sovereign rights of the nation. This shows that the national will for survival had triumphed even in the worst hour of political crisis.

The proposed agreement aroused strong feeling in foreign countries and even amongst the British people, especially in view of the scandalous circumstances in which it had been negotiated.²³ The world opinion stirred up against the British deal, the with-drawal of the Russian forces, the offer to Iran of a pact of friendship by the Soviet Government, and the lack of enthusiasm amongst the war-weary British people to undertake new imperialistic ventures-all contributed to the cause of Iranian freedom.

The most determining factor in the situation was the people themselves who jealously safeguarded the spirit of freedom even in their darkest hour of trial, another evidence of the historical truth that Iran has always survived the greatest political crises, owing to the virile national spirit of the people which never completely died down and which had by now found a symbol, however weak, in the resistance put up by the Iranian Parliament.

It was at this stage that Reza Khan, a colonel in the Cossak Brigade,²⁴ appeared on the scene. In collaboration with Sayyid Dia al-Din Tabatabai, editor of the Teheran newspaper Rad, Reza Khan, staged a coup d'etat on April 21, 1921. He arrested members of the Cabinet and formed a new Government of which Sayyid Dia al-Din was selected the Prime Minister.

Reza Khan himself took over as the Minister of War and Commander-in-Chief of the army. Five days later, the Parliament rejected the Anglo-Persian Agreement that it had so long resisted. To provide an element of dramatic surprise the new Iranian Government signed on the same day a pact of friend-ship with Soviet Russia, by which the Soviet Government revoked all the concessions that had been granted earlier to the Czarist Government.

“All debts were cancelled and the Russian bank, railways, roads, and posts were handed back to Iran; Russian rights under the capitulations were also abolish-ed.”²⁵ After this pact with the Russians the Iranian Government became bold. Now that it had rejected the agreement it ordered the British officers and advisers out of the country.

In the new set-up the British troops that had occupied parts of the country so long had to withdraw. This withdrawal was effected in stages so that the last outpost in the south-eastern desert was evacuated in 1343/1924. Soon after, the last of the Soviet troops, still stationed in Gilan, also left the country. For the first time in about twenty years the Iranian soil was now free from the presence of foreign troops.

A new wave of national resurgence now swept the whole country, which, although still licking the wounds of the many inglorious years of misery and humiliation, yet aspired to conquer hunger, disease, governmental inefficiency, and the large-scale devastation wrought by World War I. It must be repeated that even in their darkest hour of frustration the people of Iran never abandoned the democratic ideals of the revolution of 1324/1906, and even in the face of the heaviest odds, and perhaps because of these, the national spirit continued to gather force and momentum.

Reza Khan was the first Asian dictator of the post-war world. As the Commander-in-Chief of the army and the Minister of War, he became the virtual ruler of the country. He was born in 1296/1878 at Alasht in Sawad Kuh in the Caspian province of Mazandaran. He inherited the military profession from his father, Major Abbas Ali Khan, and joined in 1318/1900 the Cossak Brigade in which he served with distinction and attracted the attention of some of the British officers who had replaced the Russians after the October Revolution.

To be able to exercise greater independence in his new position, he got certain sources of revenue transferred from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of War. Sayyid Dia al-Din, who was a known Anglophile, soon came to realize who the real power in the Cabinet was and had to go within a hundred days of his installation as the first Prime Minister after the coup. He was followed by a number of premiers, all overshadowed by the dominant and fierce personality of Reza Khan, who eventually stepped into the office of the Prime Minister in 1342/1923. Shortly afterwards Ahmad Shah, who was destined to be the last Qajar ruler, left for France never to come back to his country.

Immediately after the coup, Reza Khan set out to re-establish law and order with an iron hand and to unify the country under a strong central government. He first proceeded against Mirza Kuchik Khan, who had established an independent republic in Gilan, and defeated him in 1340/1921.

In 1342/1923 he liquidated the power of the Kurd leader Ismail Aqa Simitqo, who was planning to establish himself in Adharbaijan and had become dangerously strong for the central government. Next, he turned his attention to Shaikh Khazal of Mohammereh, who posed the greatest threat in the oil-rich region of the southwest. Very soon he was able to bring the Shaikh into complete submission. Different turbulent tribes including the Bakhtiyaris and the Lurs were also pacified by 1344/1925.

These successful military campaigns and the consequent establishment of law and order in the strife-torn country won the Sardar-i Sipah, as Reza Khan was known in those days, immense popularity, which was further enhanced by the ability he showed in unifying and reorganizing the army.

He absorbed the South Persia Rifles, a force raised by the British during World War I, and the gendarmerie created by Morgan Shuster into the Cossak Brigade and formed a compact national army. Adequate resources were diverted to re-equip and modernize it.

Reza Khan, the dictator, was now faced with the question of the future constitution. In spite of 2,500 years of its monarchic traditions, the Iranian nation, or at least a section of it, was now seriously advocating the establishment of a republic. After World War I the ideas of political democracy swept the whole world and the Iranians who had won constitutional government much earlier were now thrilled at the prospect of a republican form of government.

Ahmad Shah had made an exit. The example of Turkey, where the Caliphate had been abolished in 1343/1924, gave great impetus to this idea. But at this moment opposition came from the most unexpected quarters. The Iranian divines who had played a highly important role in the constitutional struggle were alarmed at the extinction of the religious authority of the 'ulama' in Turkey.

The apprehension that in a republic they would fare no better led them to oppose the new demand. In April 1924, Reza Khan forbade any discussion on the republican form of government.²⁶ In February 1925, he was officially given dictatorial powers; on October 31, Ahmad Shah was deposed and on December 12 Reza Shah was chosen the Shah of Iran by a majority vote in the Parliament. On April 25, 1926, the coronation of the new Shah took place amidst scenes of pomp and festivity. He now became the founder of the new royal dynasty of the Pahlawis.

The word "Pahlawi" has great historical associations. It is not only the name of the language which was spoken in western Iran during the Sassanian period, as has been pointed out by so many writers, but it is also the name of the brave tribe known as the Parthians,²⁷ long misunderstood by the Iranians as a foreign element but actually being of the purest Iranian stock.

The Parthians had driven out Greeks from Iran in 250 B.C. and during their long rule of nearly five hundred years (250 B.C. - 227 A.D.) they had vanquished many a foe on the field of battle. The word "Pahlawi" was, thus, bound to conjure up in Reza Shah's mind the visions of a glorious past from which he could derive boundless inspiration like his countrymen.

The past became a symbol of power and glory that stirred up the national spirit, as it had never done before. This spirit now touched new heights. Indeed, the national spirit was exhibited in many countries after World War I with exaggerated enthusiasm. Iran was no exception. A process of revivalism was set in motion that enveloped the entire national life.

Love of the old found expression in the minute study of ancient Iranian languages and literature in a desperate and even futile attempt to purify the Persian language of foreign influences and in an effort to harmonize in the stately buildings in Teheran the old Achaemenian architectural designs found in the buildings of Persepolis and Susa with the latest motifs in German architecture.

The Government took keen interest in archaeological excavations and built a huge museum in the capital to project the glory that was Iran. Even the word “Persia” long in vogue in the whole world was officially changed for “Iran”, the old name of the country. This exuberant love of the past was also exhibited in the commemoration of anniversaries of great literary figures and thinkers. Thus the thousandth anniversary of Firdausi’s birth was celebrated officially on a lavish scale in 1353/1934 to which Orientalists were invited from all over the world. This tradition has been carried into the regime of the present Shah and the memory of the philosophers ibn Sina and Nasir al-Din Tusi and the poet Rudaki has been similarly honoured in recent years.

A society known as the “Anjuman-i Athar-i Milli”²⁸ was formed in 1345/1926 to look after the mausoleums of eminent writers, poets, and philosophers. It has so far repaired or reconstructed the mausoleums of Firdausi, ibn Sina, Khayyam, and a few others. A tribute has also been paid to poets and scholars by associating the broad modern avenues of Teheran with some of the immortal names in Persian literature. Thus, we come across Hafiz Avenue, Sadi Avenue, Firdausi Avenue, etc., which happen to be amongst the finest in the city.

While the anxiety of the new regime to attain material progress was reflected in the improvement of communications by building a network of roads to link all important towns with Teheran and by constructing a spectacular railway line which connected the Caspian Sea with the Persian Gulf in 1356/1937 at a cost of £30,000,000, and while it implemented many industrial and financial projects, it was never forgetful of the all-important question of education.

Extensive reforms were carried out in this field. The number of elementary and secondary schools was still very limited. After the revolution in 1324/1906, an effort was made to reorganize the educational system of the country. For the first time interest was taken by the Government in women’s education. To foster an independent national outlook in children, the employment of foreign teachers was forbidden in elementary schools.

The progress, however, was still very slow. It was left to Reza Shah’s Government to make a fundamental departure from the old system both in its organization and scope. In 1340/1921 there were only two colleges in Teheran, both run by foreign missions. Reza Shah set out to make amends for the deficiencies of the past, first by unifying the sporadic activities into a national system of education and then by gradually expanding its scope.

Modern educational methods were adopted. Elementary education was made free and compulsory. Separate secondary schools for boys and girls were established. The buildings of these schools in Teheran are very impressive and symbolic of the new spirit of progress and development. Rightly enough, some of these schools have been named after great Persian poets.

Secondary education is not compulsory in the country but tuition fees are low. The secondary school certificate is treated as equal to matriculation by the German, French, and some British and American universities.²⁹ These

schools generally branch off into liberal arts and sciences after three years. There are a number of technical, vocational, industrial, agricultural, medical, and other schools that prepare students for higher university education as well as for specific occupations.

To give an idea of progress in the spread of education it would suffice to say that the number of elementary and secondary schools, which at the end of World War I was nearly three hundred, was raised to five thousand in the next decade and a half. Ever since it has made rapid strides forward. In 1376/1957, there were 7,301 elementary and 842 secondary schools in the country with 910,000 and 163,000 students respectively.³⁰ The stress now is on village schools and on manual and technical training.³¹

A special Act was passed by the Parliament in 1347/1928 according to which one hundred students were sent to Europe annually for higher studies by the Ministry of Education at State expense. This was particularly welcome as no university existed in the country. Besides, the Ministries of War, Posts and Telegraphs, and the Departments of Agriculture, Justice, Finance, and Industries also sent abroad a number of students to ensure the supply of trained personnel. To have an idea of expansion in higher education, it may be noted that the number of students studying abroad in 1376/1957 was about four thousand.³²

During the new regime education was practically brought under State control. After 1351/1932 no foreign school was permitted to admit students of Iranian nationality. In 1360/1941 the Government took over all foreign schools.

The Teheran University Act was passed on May 3, 1934. The foundation stone of the University campus was laid by the Shah on February 5, 1935. Soon elegant and spacious buildings began to rise with Mount Alburz in the background. The University had five faculties to begin with, namely, Arts, Science, Law, Medicine, and Engineering. The faculties of Fine Arts and Divinity were added afterwards. The campus of Teheran University enjoys a site of great natural beauty.

Although new universities have been founded at Tabriz, Isfahan, Shiraz, and Meshed during recent years, they are as yet in their infancy. Teheran University has come to enjoy a unique position in the intellectual life of the country. It can now accommodate hundreds of students who would otherwise go to Western universities for higher studies. It runs post-graduate classes in Persian literature and affords facilities for the doctor's degree.

The names of most of the eminent Iranian scholars are associated with the University academic staff. The literary output of the academic staff is by no means inconsiderable. Persian being the medium of instruction, the task of rendering important works of arts and sciences from Western languages into Persian engaged immediate attention. Several hundred books have been translated or originally written by the University professors. In order to popularize the Persian language and literature and to familiarize the foreign students of Persian with the latest trends in the language, the University runs a special class for scholars from foreign countries.

Technical education comes within the purview of the Ministry of Industries, which maintains a college for mining, metallurgy, chemistry, etc.

Besides, there is a chain of art and craft schools where pure and utilitarian arts are taught including those traditionally associated with Iran like miniature paint-ing, book illumination, enamel-work, and carpet making. Above these there is the Teheran College of Arts.

Other Ministries also run their own colleges. The Ministry of Agriculture has an agricultural college at Karaj and a college of animal husbandry in Teheran; the Ministry of Education administers the Academy of Music. Some other Ministries like those of Posts and Telegraphs, Transport, and the Interior also have colleges to meet their own requirements. Scientific education is encouraged. Library facilities have been extended throughout the country. The Parliament Library and the National Library enjoy a pride of place in this rather elaborate network.

There is co-education in elementary schools and at the university stage. The doors of all the colleges have been flung open to girl students and today there are a large number of girls studying in various colleges, especially in the departments of Medicine and Fine Arts.

As the curricula of educational institutions would suggest, the main object of Iranian education is to produce good citizens imbued with a profound sense of patriotism. All possible means are explored to strengthen the national spirit and the national outlook.

Adult education is not ignored. In a country where the overwhelming majority of people are illiterate, the importance of adult education cannot be over-emphasized. In 1355/1936, steps were taken to establish adult education centres in the country. The response was so spontaneous that within two months seven hundred and fifty centres were opened with more than fifty-six thousand adults on rolls.³³ The demand increased so rapidly that the Ministry of Education had to allocate increasingly large sums for adult education every year.

With all the admirable progress made in the field of education one would say that in view of the population and vast area of the country much work still remains to be done to justify the possibility of a scientific and technical revolution that is the dream of every educated citizen.

In the thirteenth/nineteenth century few facilities existed for the main-tenance and improvement of public health. The British General Mission Board and the American Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, were running hospitals in a few cities by the middle of the century. The earliest to be built by the Iranian Government, however, dates back to 1294/1877.

Conscious of the deplorable lack of medical facilities in the country, the new regime devoted full attention to this vital problem so that now every big town has a well equipped hospital. There are several large hospitals each with the capacity of five hundred beds. In addition to this, there are a large number of dispensaries throughout the country.

Apart from the spacious and magnificent medical college in Teheran there is a number of medical institutions in the country. There is no prejudice against nursing, and various colleges exist in Teheran for the training of nurses. Teheran has all kinds of medical specialists, while there

are numerous clinics run by Iranian doctors who have qualified from abroad or from the University of Teheran.

One of the fundamental changes in the Iranian society in recent history has been the emancipation of women, who had for long been deprived of their legitimate legal and social rights accorded to them by Islam. The late Shah, inspired by the example set by Mustafa Kemal, whom he looked upon as his model and whom he visited in 1353/1934, introduced far-reaching social changes.

The Shah had been gradually encouraging the fair sex to come out and discard the veil. By 1354/1935 a favourable atmosphere had been created for a big change. On January 8, 1936, the Shah provided a dramatic touch to his policy of emancipating women when, accompanied by the Queen and his two grown-up daughters, all the three unveiled, lie appeared in the Teachers' Training School in Teheran to present diplomas for the year. This was a signal for the abolition of the veil.

In his speech the Shah advised the women of Iran to serve their country with talent and ability. He could not imagine, he said, that one-half of the country's working power should be idle. From this day women assumed a new role in society. Legislation had already come to their help. Although mutah (temporary marriage) and polygamy were still in vogue, woman was given the right to sue for divorce if the husband married without her consent, or if he had concealed the fact of an earlier marriage.

Women now came out to work as typists, clerks, and secretaries in banks and commercial firms and, with the further progress in education, also as doctors, artists, lawyers, and even pilots. After the abdication of Reza Shah in 1360/1941 the force of law behind the abolition of veil was gone, with the result that the majority of women who had not yet got accustomed to the new change went back to chadur (veil).³⁴

Iranian women still lack some other fundamental rights like those of suffrage and appointments to high offices, yet the movement to win the rights enjoyed by their sisters in some other Islamic countries, say Pakistan, exists in the country and is gradually gaining force.

The impact of the West and the far-reaching changes in the political and social life of the country were bound to reflect themselves in modern Persian literature. Till the middle of the thirteenth/nineteenth century poets and writers pursued old themes without showing any awareness of the new change. The later half of the century was marked by great social and political upheavals.

The Press created a new political and social consciousness amongst the people. By the end of the century, the Persian poets and writers had become increasingly conscious of their role in society. They gave expression to these new feelings in their works. Some poets, Kamali being foremost amongst them, advocated the cause of pan-Islamism. The chief interest of the poets, however, lay in the future of their own country and in its suffering masses, and its despotic masters.

They put new vigour into the constitutional movement. We find a rare phenomenon of patriotic poetry in the early fourteenth/twentieth century. It

reflected the common urge of the people and was imbued with an unparalleled emotional sincerity.

The changing fortunes of Iran's political history continued to find an echo in the contemporary literature, and the poets violently reacted to the inroads of Western imperialism during World War I and the immediate post-war years. It was, however, after long years of suffering that stability and freedom of the country were restored under Reza Shah.

The literature of this period has a tinge of roseate optimism and the poet and the writer seem to have regained the lost self-confidence. With interest in the reconstruction of the new society, they responded to the new social urges. They advocated the cause of education, women's rights, political stability, reassertion of the national spirit, and revival of the ancient glory of the country.

There was a passionate desire to purify the Iranian society of its weaknesses and vices and to usher in an era of social justice and economic prosperity. Literature that till then was looked upon as a privilege of the few became a vehicle for the dissemination of social and moral values amongst the people at large. It showed a marked trend towards simplicity of style and expression to attain the widest appeal. The writers conveyed new aims and ideals through fiction and drama, and though Persian literature had no traditions in novel and short story in the modern sense, yet the writers made great efforts to catch up with Western literature.

The new Iranian writers and scholars have made rapid progress in the production of original literary works. Yet the output of translations far exceeds creative writing. As the Iranians, like many other peoples in the East, made a late start after a long time of intellectual sloth and social degenera-tion, it was but natural for them to learn through translations the phenomenal advances which the West had made both in the field of arts and humanities and in natural sciences and technology.

In order to understand Western thought the knowledge of one of the European languages was considered to be indispensable. Hence the Iranian schools made it compulsory for students to learn English, French, or German. Since the medium of instruction in Iranian schools and universities is Persian, it is imperative to write in and translate monumental works of arts and sciences into Persian. That is why translation of books has achieved singular importance in Iran.

The work of translation started in the later half of the thirteenth/nineteenth century, and it had proceeded apace till it gained further impetus after 1340/1921. To begin with, this venture started in a rather haphazard manner and translations were rendered indiscriminately. Now, the University of Teheran is mainly responsible for the translation of works of classical importance.

On the individual level, however, this work continues to be purely a matter of personal taste. Fiction and books of popular interest command the first position. Another organization called the Institute for Translation and Publication established under the Crown patronage in 1375/1955³⁵ has been accelerating the process of translation with special attention to the quality

and importance of the books to be translated. The Institute specializes in the translation of Western classics.

As a result of these attempts hundreds of European books have been rendered into Persian. These books have been translated mainly from French that was, till the end of the last war, the second language of the country. This deep interest in the work of translation is a sign of sincere efforts to render into Persian what is regarded as valuable and fascinating in Western thought.

There is a genuine desire to learn and derive benefit, and a stage is bound to come when creative approach to problems will take the place of translation. Besides those who are deeply interested in Western learning, some scholars have been trying to recapture the philosophical thought of their forefathers. The most important name in this second category is that of Mulla Hadi Sabziwari an account of whose philosophy is given in the next chapter.

During the last half century serious attention has been paid to problems of research in the literary field. The Iranians, till recently, were dependent on research carried out in the West to understand the currents and cross-currents of their own literary history. That stage of dependence is happily over. Numerous scholars have made distinct contributions in the field of research.

Unpublished classical works have been and are being edited and published at a very fast rate. If for nothing else, the modern Iranian scholarship should command respect for the interest it has evinced in the republication of numerous unpublished works of literature, some of them after minute research.

New trends in literature have synchronized with a new approach in other Fine Arts like painting and architecture. In the latter, as mentioned earlier, the modern architectural trends have been harmonized with the ancient designs found in the ruins of palaces at Persepolis and Susa. The classical traditions of miniature painting have been renewed with skill and imagination, while there is a visible attempt to understand or assimilate new movements in painting the world over.

There are three museums in Teheran that reflect the cavalcade of Iranian history and culture. These include the archaeological and ethnographical museums and the Gulistan Palace Museum. The last contains a treasure of crown jewels and rare specimens of art.

Various arts and crafts like miniature painting, enamel and inlay work, carpet-weaving and designing, tile-work, mosaic, and pottery are not only taught in the College of Arts, and industrial and arts schools but have also become widely popular in the country.

The new movement has not yet spent itself. There is much to be planned and done. The progress in modern Iranian society still lacks harmony and proportion. Modernization in the early twenties came abruptly and violently, and behind it was the force of dictatorship. The country was not fully prepared for the desired change. The edifice of the traditional Iranian society crumbled as a new way of life was grafted on it. Consequently, the progress made was rather uneven and lopsided.

The policy of modernization maintained itself after World War II, but since the reform movement had come like a storm and tried to destroy all that was old without creating a harmony and balance between the traditional and the modern, it could not achieve its objective fully and set a chain of reactions instead. In fact, creative activity alone can generate and sustain an original cultural movement.

The people of Iran have given repeated proofs of the remarkable assimilation of new and alien move-ments and of the institution of new sciences and philosophy. The present conflict between the old and the new, the traditional and the modern, is bound to solve itself as the people of Iran recover from the first great impact of Western civilization. They have learnt through trial and error, and the time is not far when they will have resolved all their present conflicts, assimilated the best of Western thought, and upheld their own cultural and national individuality as a people of great gifts.

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Notes

1. L. P. Elwell-Sutton, Modern Iran, p. 60.
2. P. Sykes, A History of Persia, Vol. 2, p. 382.
3. V. Sheean, The New Persia, p. 10.
4. R. G. Watson, A History of Persia, p. 269.
5. Ibid.
6. Some authors have paid great tributes to him: see E. G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, Vol. 4, p. 152; Robert Curzon, Armenia, p. 55; R. G. Watson, op. cit., p. 264; Bahar, Sabk Shinasi, Vol. 3, p. 401.
7. V. Sheean, op. cit., p. 10.
8. Bahar, op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 344.
9. This paper was started by Mirza Malkom Khan who had been dismissed from the office of the Iranian Ambassador in London on account of his pronouncedly patriotic stand on the issue of tobacco concessions. His newspaper turned out to be the best contemporary Persian journal for its splendid expression. See E. G. Browne, The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia, p. 19.
10. E. G. Browne, The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia, p. 17.
11. According to G. N. Curzon, the influence of the telegraph on Iran has been enormous. "I am disposed to attribute to it," he says, "more than to any other cause or agency, the change that has passed over Persia during the last thirty years ..." It is an exaggerated statement, yet it cannot be gainsaid that the tele-graph played a substantial part in indirectly enlightening the Iranian mind.
12. W. S. Haas, Iran, p. 35.
13. The Iranian writers like Mirza Lutf Allah, the author of Sharh-i Hal-o Athar-i Sayyid Jamal al-Din, and Mirza Sifat Allah, the editor of Maqalat-i Jamaliyyah, claim Sayyid Jamal al-Din, who was born at Asadabad in 1254/1838, to be of Iranian origin. Mirza Lutf Allah describes himself as the son of the Sayyid's sister.
14. Abd Allah Razi, Tarikh-i Mufasssal-i Iran, p. 532.
15. Habib Allah Mukhtari, Tarikh-i Bidari-i Iran, pp. 39-40.
16. Both of them lost their lives after the bombardment of the Parliament in 1326/1908; see Abd Allah Razi, op. cit., p. 521.
17. Abd Allah Razi, op. cit., p. 509.
18. During the thirteenth/nineteenth century, when the capitalist financial ideas of the British and Russian imperialists dominated the history of Iran, certain small European nations also came forward to share the grab-scramble, so that Belgium succeeded in taking over the management of the Customs in 1316/1898.
19. Abd Allah Razi, op. cit., p. 512.
20. E. Groseclose, Introduction to Iran, p. 61.
21. Abd Allah Razi, op. cit., p. 532.
22. "The sovereignty of Iran was violated with less compunction than that of Belgium, and with probably greater loss of life and property and greater disorganization of society" (E. Groseclose, op. cit., p. 72).
23. "To bring the agreement to a conclusion the British had to resort to bribery on a large scale. Three cabinet members, one of them the Prime Minister, were paid handsomely" (W. S. Haas, op. cit., p. 140). "The British negotiators (Sir Percy Cox and Lord Curzon, presumably) ... paid 750,000 tomans to the three Persian statesmen" (V. Sheean, op. cit., p. 23).

24. "It had been created in 1290/1878 as a brigade. Russian officers traditionally held key positions in this unit, and during the period of Russian political ascendancy the brigade served as an additional safeguard to Russian interests in Iran" (George Lenczowski, *The Middle East in World Affairs*, p. 157).

25. *Modern Iran*, p. 69.

26. E. Groseclose, *op. cit.*, p. 124. In the words of William S. Haas, "It is at least doubtful whether Reza Khan was ever attracted to republicanism, despite the example of Mustafa Kemal. Reza's ambition and idea of power fitted better with a monarchy" (*Iran*, p. 142).

27. It derives its root from the word "Parthawa" which evolved itself into various forms, to wit, Parhawa, Palhawa, Palhaw and Pahlaw. Apart from Pahlawi, the word Pahlawan is also derived from Pahlaw and means brave and heroic like the members of the Pahlaw (Parthian) tribe.

28. *Rahnuma-i Iran*, pp. 85-87.

29. *Modern Iran*, p. 136.

30. D. N. Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present*, p. 204.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 208.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 205.

33. Abd Allah Razi, *op. cit.*, p. 365.

34. A veil or mantle used by Iranian women to cover their body.

35. Naficy, *A General Survey of the Existing Situation in Persian Literature*, p. 2.

Chapter 78: Renaissance in Iran: Haji Mulla Hadi Sabziwari

A: Life and Works

After the death of Mulla Sadra, the school established by him found its most famous interpreter and expositor in Haji Mulla Hadi Sabziwari who was the greatest of the Hakims of the Qajar period in Persia. After a period of turmoil caused by the Afghan invasion, in which the spiritual as well as the political life of Persia was temporarily disturbed, traditional learning became once again established under the Qajars, and in the hands of Haji Mulla Hadi and his students the wisdom of Mulla Sadra began once again to flourish through the Shiah world. This sage from Sabziwar gained so much fame that soon he became endowed with the simple title of Haji by which he is still known in the traditional madrasahs,¹ and his Sharh-i Manzumah became the most widely used book on Hikmat in Persia and has remained so until today.

Haji Mulla Hadi was born in 1212/1797-98 at Sabziwar in Khurasan, a city well known for its Sufis and also for Shiah tendencies even before the Safawid period, where he completed his early education in Arabic grammar and language.² At the age of ten he went to Meshed where he continued his studies in jurisprudence (Fiqh), logic, mathematics, and Hikmat for another ten years.

By now, his love for the intellectual sciences had become so great that the Haji left Meshed as well and journeyed to Ispahan, as Mulla Sadra had done two hundred and fifty years before him, to meet the greatest authorities of the day in Hikmat. Ispahan in that period was still the major centre of learning, especially in Hikmat. Haji spent eight years in this city studying under Mulla Ismail Ispahani and Mulla Ali Nuri both of whom were the leading authorities in the school of Akhund.

Haji Mulla Hadi, having completed his formal education, left Ispahan once again for Khurasan from where after five years of teaching he went on a pilgrimage to Mecca. Upon returning to Persia after three years of absence, he spent a year in Kirman where he married and then settled down in Sabziwar where he established a school of his own. His fame had by then become so great that disciples from all over Persia as well as from India and the Arab countries came to the small city of Sabziwar to benefit from his personal contact and to attend his classes.

Nasir al-Din Shah in his visit to Meshed in 1274/1857-58 came especially to the city of Haji in order to meet him in person. In Sabziwar, away from the turmoil of the capital, Haji spent forty years in teaching, writing, and training disciples, of whom over a thousand completed the course on Hikmat under his direction.

Haji's life was extremely simple and his spirituality resembled more that of a Sufi master than just of a learned Hakim. It is said that along with regular students whom he instructed in the madrasah he had also special disciples whom he taught the mysteries of Sufism and initiated into the Path.³

He was not only called the “Plato of his time” and the “seal of the Hukama” (khatam al-Hukama), but was also considered by his contemporaries to possess the power of performing miracles of which many have been attributed to him in the various traditional sources. By the time he passed away in 1289/1878, Haji had become the most famous and exalted spiritual and intellectual figure in Persia and has ever since been considered one of the dominant figures in the intellectual life of the Shiah world.

Unlike Mulla Sadra all of whose writings with one exception were in Arabic, Haji wrote in Persian as well as in Arabic. Moreover, he composed a great deal of poetry collected in his Diwan, which consists of poems in Persian of gnostic inspiration and poems in Arabic on Hikmat and logic.

The writings of Haji, of which a complete list is available, are as follows: Al-Laali, Arabic poem on logic; Ghurar al-Faraid or the Sharh-i Manzumah, Arabic poem with commentary on Hikmat; Diwan in Persian written under the pen name Asrar; commentary upon the prayer Dua-i Kabir;⁴ commentary upon the prayer Dua-i Sabah; Asrar al-Hikam, written at the request of Nasir al-Din Shah, on Hikmat; commentaries upon the Asfar, the Mafatih al-Ghaib, al-Mabda wal-Maad, and al-Shawahid al-Rububiyah of Mulla Sadra; glosses upon the commentary of Suyuti upon the Alfiyyah of ibn Malik, on grammar; commentary upon the Mathnawi of Jalal al-Din Rumi; commentary upon the Nibras, on the mysteries of worship; commentary upon the divine names; glosses upon the Sharh-i Tajrid of Lahiji; Rah Qarah and Rahiq in rhetoric; Hidayat al-Talibin, as yet an unpublished treatise in Persian on prophethood and the imamate; questions and answers regarding gnosis; and a treatise on the debate between Mulla Muhsin Faid and Shaikh Ahmad Ahsai.⁵

Of these writings the most famous is the Sharh-i Manzumah, which, along with the Asfar of Mulla Sadra, the Shifa of ibn Sina, and the Sharh al-Isharat of Nasir al-Din Tusi, is the basic text on Hikmat. This work consists of a series of poems on the essential questions of Hikmat composed in 1239/1823 on which Haji himself wrote a commentary along with glosses in 1260/1844. The book contains a complete summary of Hikmat in precise and orderly form.

This work has been so popular that during the hundred years that have passed since its composition many commentaries have been written upon it including those of Muhammad Hidaji and the late Mirza Mehdi Ashtiyani as well as that of Muhammad Taqi Amuli whose commentary called the Durar al-Fawaid is perhaps the most comprehensive of all. The other writings of Haji, especially the Asrar al-Hikam which is of special interest because, as Haji himself writes in the introduction, it is a book concerned with the Hikmat derived from the Islamic revelation (hikmat-i imani) and not just with Greek philosophy (hikmat-i yunani), and the commentary upon the Mathnawi are also of much importance, but the fame of Haji is due primarily to his Sharh-i Manzumah.

B: Sources of Haji’s Doctrines and the Characteristics of His Approach

Haji cannot be considered to be the founder of a new school; rather, he expanded and clarified the teachings of Mulla Sadra without departing from

the basic features of Akhund's doctrines. The sources of Haji's writings are, therefore, the same as those enumerated in our study of Mulla Sadra, viz., gnostic doctrines drawn mostly from the teachings of ibn Arabi, the teachings of the Shiah Imams, ishraqi theosophy, and Peripatetic philosophy.

In his writings the sage from Sabziwar drew mostly on the Asfar of Mulla Sadra, the Qabasat of Mir Damad, the commentary upon the Hikmat al-Ishraq of Suhrawardi by Qutb al-Din Shirazi, the Sharh al-Isharat of Nasir al-Din Tusi, and the Shawariq of Lahiji.

In general, Haji did not rely so much upon reading various texts as he did upon meditating and contemplating on the essential aspects of metaphysics. The major source of his knowledge, as with Mulla Sadra, was his inner imam or the guardian angel through whom he was illuminated with the knowledge of the intelligible world. As to the formal sources of his doctrines, one must first of all mention Akhund and, secondly, Akhund's teachers and students some of whom have already been mentioned.⁶

Haji, following the path trod by Mulla Sadra, sought to combine gnosis, philosophy, and formal revelation; throughout his writings these three are present in a harmonious blend. He differed from Akhund in that he was able to expound the gnostic elements of his doctrines much more explicitly than Akhund and that he was not as much molested by the critics as the latter was.

It was due to this fact that he was highly respected by the Qajars and the 'ulama'; the Qajars were indeed not so opposed to Sufism and Hikmat as the Safawids were. Possessed with the gift for poetry and eloquence and great intellectual intuition which sometimes even in the middle of a treatise on logic would draw him towards metaphysical expositions, Haji wrote openly on Sufism and appears more as a Sufi well versed in philosophy and theosophy than a Hakim interested in gnostic doctrines. He was, like Mulla Sadra, among the few sages who were masters of both esoteric and exoteric doctrines, and of philosophy and gnosis.⁷

C: Teachings

As already mentioned, Haji's doctrines are in reality those of Mulla Sadra's condensed and systematized into a more orderly form. Haji follows his master in all the essential elements of his teaching such as the unity and gradation of Being, substantial motion, the union of the knower and the known.

There are only two points on which Haji criticizes his master: first, on the nature of knowledge which in some of his writings Akhund considers a quality of the human soul while Haji considers it to belong to its essence, like Being itself, above all the Aristotelian categories such as quality, quantity, etc.; and secondly, on Mulla Sadra's doctrine of the union of the intellect and the intelligible which Haji accepts, criticizing, however, his method of demonstrating its validity. Otherwise, the principles of the teachings of Haji in Hikmat are already to be found in the writings of Akhund.

It must not be thought, however, that Haji Mulla Hadi simply repeated the teachings of his predecessor verbatim. It is enough to glance at the

volu-minous writings of Mulla Sadra, in which one would surely be lost without a capable guide, and compare them with the precise form of Sharh-i Manzumah to see what service Haji rendered to Hikmat in general and to Mulla Sadra's school in particular. Haji prepared the way for the study of Mulla Sadra, and his writings may be considered to be an excellent introduction to the doctrines of his master.

The Sharh-i Manzumah depicts a complete cycle of Hikmat, containing in summary form all the basic elements of Mulla Sadra's teachings on the subject. In discussing its contents, therefore, one becomes better acquainted with Mulla Sadra as well as with Haji himself, and one gains a glimpse of traditional philo-sophy as it is taught in the Shiah madrasahs today.

The Sharh-i Manzumah, excluding the part on logic, is divided into seven books each of which is divided into several chapters, and each chapter in turn into several sections. The seven books deal with Being and Non-Being, substance and accidents, theodicy, natural philosophy, prophecy and dreams, eschatology, and ethics respectively.

The first book that is in a sense the basis of the whole work and is on general principles (al-umur al-ammah) treats of the various aspects of Being, its positive and negative qualities, its unity and gradation, necessity and possibility, time and eternity, actuality and potentiality, quiddities, unity and multiplicity, and causality.

The second book treats of the definition of sub-stance and accidents, and the third, which is called al-ilahiyat bi al-maani al-akhas, of the divine essence, the divine qualities and attributes, and the divine acts. The fourth book contains a summary discussion of natural philo-sophy (tabiiyat), including the meaning of body (jism), motion, time and space-astronomy, physics (in the Aristotelian sense), psychology, and the science of heavenly souls.

The fifth book treats of the cause of the truth and falsehood of dreams, the principles of miracles, the cause for strange happen-ings, and prophecy; and the sixth book of the resurrection of the soul and the body and questions pertaining to the Last Day. Finally, the last book treats of faith and infidelity and the various spiritual virtues such as repentance, truthfulness, surrender to the divine will, etc., which are usually discussed in the books on Sufi ethics such as the Kitab al-Luma of abu Nasr al-Sarraj.

Haji divides reality into three categories: the divine essence which is at once above all determinations including Being and is also the principle of all manifestations of Being Itself; extended being (wujud al-munbasat) which is the first act or word or determination of the divine essence and is identified with light; and particular beings which are the degrees and grades of extended being and from which the quiddities are abstracted.⁸ All these stages of reality are unified so that one can say that reality is an absolute unity with gradations, of which the most intelligible symbol is light.

The first feature of Being which Haji discusses is that it is self-evident and indefinable. There is no concept more evident than Being, because all things, by virtue of their existence, are drowned in the ocean of Being.⁹ Moreover, the definition of a species in logic involves its genus and specific difference, but there is no genus of which Being is the species. Therefore,

from a logical point of view there is no definition of Being; Being is the most universal con-cept since the divine ipseity of which It is the first determination is, strictly speaking, above all conception.

Though the concept of Being is the most obvious of all concepts, yet the knowledge of the root or truth of Being, i.e., as It is in Itself and not in Its manifestation, is the most difficult to attain. Existence, which is the extension or manifestation of Being, is principial with respect to the quiddities. This view, which we have already mentioned in previous chapters, is one of the major points of contention among Muslim Hakims.

The Peripatetics gave priority to existence or Being over the quid-dities, considering each being to be in essence different and distinct from other beings. Although Suhrawardi Maqtl never speaks of the principiality of the quiddities as understood by the later Hakims, he can be interpreted to consider existence to have no reality independent of the quiddities.

It was Mir Damad who re-examined this whole question and reached the conclusion that either the quiddities or existence would have to be principial, and divided the philosophers before him into the followers either of the principiality of existence or Being (isalat-i wujud), or of the principiality of the quiddities (isalat-i mahiyyah) while he himself sided with the latter group.¹⁰

Mulla Sadra in turn accepted his teacher's classification but sided with the followers of the principiality of existence. Haji, likewise, follows Akhund in accepting the principiality of Being which he considers to be the source of all effects partaking of gradations.

Another question that arises concerning the concept of Being is whether It is just a verbal expression shared by particular beings or a reality that particular beings have in common. It is known that the Asharites considered the term "being" to be merely a verbal expression used for both the Creator and the creatures; otherwise, according to them, there would be an aspect common to both which is opposed to the idea of divine transcendence.

Haji, like the other Hakims, rejects this reasoning and argues that in the statement "God is," by "is" we mean either non-being in which case we have denied God or something other than what we mean in the statement "man is" in which case we have denied our intelligence the ability to attain a knowledge of God. Since both of these conclusions are untenable, "is" in the case of God must share a meaning in common with "is" in the case of this or that creature.¹¹ The truth is that Being is one reality with degrees of intensity and not many realities from which the mind abstracts the concept of Being.¹²

Another point on which Haji criticizes the Asharites is that of the existence of the images of things in the mind that is one of the important aspects of his doctrines. The Asharites believe that in the mind the quiddity and existence of an object are one and the same; when we think of man, the quiddity of the conception of man in our mind is the same as its existence in our mind.

Haji opposes this view and distinguishes between quiddity and existence even in the mind. The world of the mind is the same as the external world with the same quiddity in each case. The difference between the two comes

in their existence; each has an existence proper to itself. If external existence becomes mental existence, then the object as it exists externally becomes the image of that object in the mind.

For example, when we think of fire, the concept of fire exists in our mind. It is the same quiddity as the objective fire that burns but its mode of existence differs. It has a mental existence that, although deprived of the power that makes fire burn and give off heat, is nevertheless a being.¹³

Reality, then, is a unity comprising stages or grades of intensity¹⁴ the source of which is the divine essence that we may consider to be Pure Being without quiddity if by quiddity we mean the answer to the question *quid est* - -“what is it?” or identical with its quiddity if by quiddity we understand that by which a thing is what it is.

Being has certain negative and positive qualities, the first such as the qualities of being neither substance nor accident, having no opposite, having no like, not being a compound and having no genus, species, and specific difference, etc.; and the second, the attributes of power, will, knowledge, and the like.

The quiddities, which accompany all stages of universal existence below Pure Being Itself, are abstracted by the mind from particular beings and are in fact the limitations of Being in each state of manifestation in all the vertical (*tuli*) and horizontal (*ardi*) stages in which Being manifests Itself. It is, therefore, by the quiddities that we can distinguish between various beings and different levels of existence.

Haji divides the quiddities according to their association with matter or potentiality. Quiddities are either free from matter in which case they are called the world of the spirits, or combined with matter and are then called the world of bodies. In the world of spirits, if the quiddities are by essence and in actuality free from all matter, they are the intelligences (*uqul*), and if they are free but have need of matter to become actualized, they are the souls (*nufus*).

And in the world of bodies, if the quiddities possess a subtle form of matter, they belong to the world of inverted forms (*alam al-mithal*), which is the same as that of cosmic imagination, and if they possess a gross form of matter, they belong to the world of nature. All of these worlds are distinguished in this manner by their quiddities, but all of them are in reality stages of the same Being which manifests Itself in different manners according to the conditions at each stage of manifestation.

After a discussion of the various aspects of Being and the quiddities, Haji turns to a study of substance and accidents.¹⁵ There are three substances, the intelligences, souls, and bodies, and the nine categories of accidents as outlined by Aristotle and Porphyry. Of special interest in this discussion is the category of quality (*kaif*) that is closely connected with that of knowledge.

Dawwani, the ninth/fifteenth century philosopher and jurist, had considered knowledge (*ilm*) to be in essence of the category of the known (*malum*) and in accident of the category of the quality of the soul. Mulla Sadra, on the contrary, believed that knowledge belongs in essence to the category of quality and in accident to that of the known. Haji adds and

modifies these views, considering knowledge to be an accident of the category of the known as well as that of quality but in essence beyond all categories like Being Itself.¹⁶

The third chapter of the Sharh-i Manzumah concerns theodicy, i.e., what pertains to the Divine Being, His names, attributes, and acts.¹⁷ Haji, after emphasizing the transcendence, unity, and simplicity of the divine essence, begins his discussion about the divine qualities and attributes, which are mentioned in the Quran, and interprets each following the tradition of the Hakims and Sufis before him.

Of special interest is his account of the epithet “Knower” (al-Alim) in which Haji discusses divine knowledge mentioning that knowledge is in the essence of God and God is in essence the Knower of all things. He knows all things by knowing His own essence.¹⁸

The knowledge of God consists of knowledge of beings at several stages which Haji enumerates as follows:¹⁹ ilm-i anani, the heavenly science, which is the knowledge of God that creatures have no being of their own; ilm-i qalami, the science of the Pen, the knowledge that God has of all beings in the world of multiplicity before their manifestation;²⁰ ilm-i lauhi, the science of the Tablet, which consists of the knowledge of the universals as they are issued forth from the first intellect or the Pen; ilm-i qadai, the science of pre-destination, which is the knowledge of the archetypes or masters of species of the realities of this world; and, finally, ilm-i qadari, the science of fate which consists of the knowledge of particulars whether they be of the world of cosmic imagination or the psyche or of the world of the elements which is the physical world. God, therefore, has knowledge of all things, and all degrees of existence are included in His knowledge.

Following the study of God’s essence and His attributes, Haji turns to His acts²¹ which in reality mean the stages of Being in which God’s signs are made manifest. God’s acts are of many kinds and from them the hierarchy of creatures comes into being. This hierarchy consists of seven stages: the longitudinal intelligences, horizontal intelligences which are the same as the celestial archetypes,²² the universal soul and the soul of the heavenly spheres, the inverted forms of the world of imagination, nature, form, and matter.

These stages, although distinct from one another, do not destroy the unity of God’s acts. God’s essence, attributes, and acts all possess unity, each in its own degree. The lowest stage of unity is the unity of the acts and the highest that of the essence, the realization of which comes at the end of the spiritual journey.

In the chapter on natural philosophy, Haji briefly outlines the physics of the Muslim Peripatetics as contained in detail in the Shifa of ibn Sina and other similar texts, and the Ptolemaic astronomy of epicycles as perfected by Muslim astronomers with the modifications made in it by Mulla Sadra and the other later Hakims.

The most important of these modifications is the introduction of the idea of substantial motion according to which the whole of the cosmic substance is in a state of becoming and the quantity of change is comprised in the measure of time. Haji also displays the tendency to interpret various aspects

of the natural and mathematical sciences symbolically; for instance, the water of Thales which he, like Mulla Sadra, identifies with the breath of the Compassionate (nafas al-Rahman) or the tetractys of Pythagoras which he regards as the symbol for the four principal stages of Being, intellect, soul, and nature.

After the discussion of natural philosophy, Haji turns to the soul and its faculties and stages of development. There are three types of souls: vegetative, animal, and rational, the last of which comprises the human soul as well as the soul of the heavenly spheres. The vegetative soul has the three faculties of feeding, growth, and reproduction; and the animal soul, the five external senses, the five internal senses, and the power of motion.²³

In man all of these faculties are developed to their fullness, but they are no more than the tools and instruments of the human soul that Haji calls the ispahbad light²⁴ and which is of the family of the lights of heaven.

The perfection of the soul is attained by treading the stages of the intellect and finally unifying itself with God. The soul is given essentially two powers, theoretical and practical, for each of which there are four degrees of perfection. The theoretical intellect is comprised of the potential intellect that has the capacity merely of receiving knowledge, the habitual intellect by which acquaintance is made with simple truth, the active intellect by which knowledge is gained without the aid of the senses, and finally the acquired intellect by which the spiritual essences can be contemplated directly.²⁵

As for the practical intellect, it too consists of four stages: tajliyyah, which consists in following the divine Laws revealed through the prophets; takhliyyah, purifying the soul of evil traits; tahliyyah, embellishing the soul with spiritual virtues, and, finally, fana or annihilation, which has the three degrees: annihilation in the divine acts, in the divine attributes, and finally in the divine essence.²⁶

In the chapter on prophecy²⁷ Haji discusses the qualifications and characteristics that distinguish a prophet from ordinary men. The prophet is the intermediary between this world and the next, between the world of the senses and the spiritual essences, so that his being is necessary to maintain the hierarchy of Being. The prophet is distinguished by the fact that he has knowledge of all things which he has acquired by the grace of God and not through human instruction, by his power of action which is such that the matter of this world obeys him as if it were his body, and by his senses which are such that he sees and hears through them what is hidden to others. He is also marked by his immunity from sin and error (ismah) in all his acts and deeds.

Sainthood (wilayah) is in one aspect similar to prophecy in that the saint, like the prophet, has knowledge of the spiritual world. Yet every prophet is a saint while every saint is not a prophet. The prophet, in addition to his aspect of sainthood, has the duty of establishing laws in society and guiding the social, moral, and religious life of the people to whom he is sent.

Among the prophets themselves, a distinction is to be made between the nabi and the rasul, the latter being distinguished by the fact that he possesses a divine Book in addition to his prophetic mission. Among those who are

called rasul there is a further distinction to be made between the ulu al-azm, i.e., those who's Shariah abrogates the Shariah before theirs, and those with whom this is not the case.²⁸ Finally, there is the Seal of the Prophets (khatam al-anbiya) the Prophet who envelops all these stages within himself.²⁹

The mission of the Prophet Muhammad (S), upon whom be peace-by virtue of his being the Seal of Prophets is the summation of all previous prophetic missions; his spirit is the universal intellect which is the first theophany of the divine essence and which made the body of the Prophet (S) so subtle that he was able to make the Nocturnal Ascent (miraj) to the highest heaven. That is why his light filled all directions and also that to whatever direction he turned he had no shadow.

The direction of prayer (qiblah) of Moses (as) was in the west or in the world of multiplicity and that of Jesus (as) in the east or the world of unity. The qiblah of the Prophet Muhammad (s), on the other hand, is neither in the east nor in the west,³⁰ but between them because, being the centre as well as the totality of existence, he brought a prophetic message based upon unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in unity.³¹

As a Shiah, Haji was greatly concerned with the question of the Imamate in addition to that of prophecy and, therefore, discusses the political and re-religious differences which distinguish the Shiah conception of the Imamate from that of the Sunnis'. For the Shiahs, as Haji writes, the spirit of Ali (as) is in essence one with that of the Prophet (S). It is the universal soul as the spirit of the Prophet is the universal intellect. Moreover, the light of Ali (as) is passed on to his descendants until the last and twelfth Imam (as) who is the invisible guardian and protector of the world and without whom all religion and social as well as cosmic order will be disturbed.

Just as there are twelve signs of the Zodiac, so are there twelve Imams of whom the last is like Pisces for all the stars of the Imamate and sainthood.³² The Last Day which means the end of the longitudinal hierarchy of existence is also the day of the manifestation of the twelfth Imam (as) who is himself the last stage of the hierarchy which extends upwards to the divine essence or Light of lights (nur al-anwar).

On the question of eschatology,³³ Haji follows closely the teachings of Mulla Sadra in considering the soul to have come into being with the body but to have a life independent of the body after death. He also rejects the argument of earlier philosophers against bodily resurrection and defends the idea of the resurrection of the soul and the body together on the Last Day.

There are two resurrections, the first at death, which is the minor, and the other on the Last Day, which is the major resurrection. In the first case all the faculties of the soul are absorbed in the isphabad light and in the second all the lights of the universe are absorbed in the divine source of all being or the Light of all lights.

Haji discusses also the traditional belief about the events which are to take place at the time of resurrection and discusses the symbolic as well as the literal meaning of the Scale (mizan), the Bridge (sirat), and the Account-taking (hisab) of good and evil. The physical sirat is that which, as the Quran mentions, covers the chasm over the inferno, but the spiritual sirat is

the path which the universal man treads towards the Truth (Haqq) and which connects him with the Truth.

In the final chapter on ethics Haji outlines the degrees of faith (iman) from simple acceptance to demonstration and from that to spiritual vision. This last degree can be reached only through the purification of the soul and the acquisition of spiritual virtues such as purity, truthfulness, reliance upon God, surrender to the divine will, etc. When man acquires all of these virtues his soul becomes simple and pure; he then becomes the receptor of the divine theophanies that illuminate his being and finally unify him with the centre, which is at once his own source of being and the origin of cosmic existence.

D: Post-Sabziwarian Hikmat

The doctrines of Haji that we have outlined and his influence are still very much alive in Persia. The school of those whose teachers learnt the mysteries of Hikmat from Haji Sabziwari himself and narrated stories about his life to them has been able to preserve itself in Persia, despite the anti-contemplative attitude encouraged by the spirit of excessive modernism, chiefly because of the life which Haji and to a certain extent some of the other Qajar Hakims infused into it.³⁴

Of the famous masters of Hikmat in Persia during the last century, we may name abu al-Hasan Jilwah, Muhammad Rida Qumshii, Jahangir Khan Qashqai, Mulla Ali Zunuzi, the author of *Badayi al-Hikam*, and Mirza Tahir Tunikabuni, all of whom were contemporaries of Haji, and those of a later date like the late Mirza Mehdi Ashtiyani, the author of *Asas al-Tauhid*, who passed away only recently.

Of the masters living today there are several who are worthy of special attention like Sayyid Muhammad Kazim Assar,³⁵ Hajj Muhammad Husain Tabatabai, the most prolific writer among the present Hakims of Persia,³⁶ and Sayyid abu al-Hasan Rafii Qazwini, a man who is a true master of all the traditional sciences and perhaps the greatest living authority on Hikmat and who lives in Qazwin in meditation and training of a few disciples away from the turmoils of modern life.

One should also mention Muhyi al-Din Qumshii, the author of *Hikmat-i Ilahi* and a large *Diwan* of Sufi poetry and the holder of the chair of Mulla Sadra in the Theological Faculty of Teheran University; Mirza Rahim Arbab who lives in Ispahan, the old centre of Hikmat in Persia; Hairi Mazandarani, now residing in Simnan, the author of *Hikmat-i bu Ali* and one of the most erudite of the living Hakims; Jawad Muslih, the author of a commentary upon the *Asfar* and its translator into Persian; Murtida Mutahhari, Muhammad Ali Hakim, Husain Ali Rashid, and Mahmud Shibahi, all with the exception of Mirza Rahim Arbab and Hairi Mazandarani being Professors at the Theological Faculty of Teheran University; Ahmad Ashtiyani, the author of several works on Hikmat and gnosis; Fadil-i Tuni, the commentator of the *Fusus al-Hikam* of ibn Arabi and many other treatises and a Professor at the Faculty of Letters of Teheran University; and Muhammad Taqi Amuli, the author of the commentary *Durar al-Fawaid* upon the *Sharh-i Manzumah*.

One cannot discuss the intellectual history of Islam justly without taking into account this long tradition the roots of which go back to the early civiliza-tions of the Middle East and which has been preserved in Persia and in the bosom of Shiism to this day.³⁷ The outstanding figure of Haji Mulla Hadi was able to revive and strengthen this tradition in the Qajar period as Mulla Sadra had done two centuries before him, and to make this wisdom to continue as a living spiritual and intellectual tradition till today.

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Notes

1. Only the most eminent figures in the intellectual life of Islam have come to receive such simple designations. In Persia one can name only a few such luminaries, ibn Sina being called Shaikh; Nasir al-Din Tusi, Khwajah; Jalal al-Din Rumi, Mulla; ibn Arabi, Shaikh al-Akbar; and Mulla Sadra, Akhund. In view of these designations it is easy to see what an exalted position has been accorded to Haji in Persia.

2. There is an account of the life of Haji by himself on which we have drawn much for our information. See M. Mudarrisi Chahardihi, *Tarikh-i Falasifih-i Islam*, Ilmi Press, Teheran, 1336-37 Solar, Vol. 2, pp. 131ff.; and also by the same author *Life and Philosophy of Haji Mulla Hddi Sabziwari*, Tahuri Bookshop, Teheran, 1955. The story of the life of Haji as related by his son as well as a sum-mary of some of Haji's doctrines not all of which, however, can be considered to be authentic is given by E. G. Browne, in his *A Year Amongst the Persians*, Adam & Charles Black, London, 1950, pp. 143-58. Accounts of his life are also found in the usual sources like the *Qisas al-Ulama*, *Matla al-Shams*, and *Riyad al-Arifin*. When Gobineau visited Persia, Haji was alive and at the height of his fame; he is mentioned with great respect in Gobineau's writings; see *Comte de Gobineau, Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, G. Gres et Cie, Paris, 1923, pp. 113-16. There are also references to Haji in A. M. A. Shushtery, *Outlines of Islamic Culture*, Bangalore, 1938, Vol. 2, pp. 452-54; and in M. Iqbal, *The De-velopment of Metaphysics in Persia*, Luzac & Co., London, 1908, pp. 175ff.

3. Among his special disciples one may name Sultan Ali Shah Gunabadi who later became the founder of the Gunabadi brotherhood of Sufis that is one of the most widely expanded brotherhoods in Persia today. For the stages through which Haji's students had to pass before being able to participate in his courses on Hikmat, see E. G. Browne, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-48.

4. There are many prayers composed by the various Shiah Imams, especially the fourth Imam Zain al-Abidin (as), like the *Dua-i Kubra*, *Misbah*, and the *Sahifih-i Sajjadiyyah* (Sajjad being the title of the fourth Imam) which are read and chanted throughout the year, especially during Ramadan, as devotional prayers. Many of them, however, are not simply prayers of devotion but are replete with gnostic and metaphysical doctrines of highest inspiration and have been, therefore, commented upon by many of the *Hukama* and gnostics, who, like Haji, have drawn out their inner meaning by the light of their own inspiration.

5. See M. Mudarrisi Chahardihi, *op. cit.*, pp. 63ff.

6. It is difficult to understand Iqbal's statement made in his *Development of Metaphysics in Persia* that with Sabziwari Persian thought went back to pure Platonism and abandoned the Neo-Platonic theory of emanation. Actually, Haji, like other Muslim Hakims before him, accepts the multiple states of Being each of which has issued forth from the state above through effusion or theophany. It is true that Plato was a definite source of Haji's doctrines as he himself was for nearly all the later Persian Hakims after Suhrawardi, but this is not to deny Haji's affinity to the doctrines of Plotinus and his commentators, especially concerning the hierarchy of the intelligences.

7. See the chapter on Suhrawardi *Maqtul*.

8. The relation of particular beings to extended being is like that of knots to the chord in which they are tied. See *Sharh-i Manzumah*, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1298/1880, section on *Ilahiyat*, pp. 1ff.; and M. R. Salihi Kirmani, *Wujud az Nazar-i Falasifih-i Islam*, Piruz Press, Qum, 1336/1917, pp. 55ff.

9. See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Polarisation of Being," *Pakistan Philosophical Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 2, Oct. 1959, pp. 8-13.

10. We can, therefore, justly say that this issue as understood by the later Hakims is one of the distinguishing features of Hikmat in the Safawid period and that the earlier schools, the Peripatetics as well as the Illuminationists, did not interpret this question in the same manner as the later Hakims.

11. The whole discussion concerning Being occupies the first section of the *Ilahiyat* of *Sharh-i Manzumah*, pp. 1-131.

12. The theologians (Mutikallimun) believed that each creature in the objective world is a quiddity including the divine essence that is an unknowable quiddity. Although this view is diametrically opposed to the view of the Hakims, in certain passages Haji interprets the view of the theologians symbolically to mean the same as the view of the Illuminationists and, therefore, defends them even though attacking them for their literalism.

13. For this view Haji is indebted partly to Mulla Sadra and partly to Jalal al-Din Dawwani.

14. In his commentary upon the Mathnawi, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1285/1868, p. 8, Haji names these stages as the divine essence or ipseity; its first determination; the archetypes (al-ayan al-thabitah); the world of the spirits (arwah); the world of inverted forms or similitudes (amthal); the world of bodies (ajsam); and, finally, the stage which is the summation of all those before it, i.e., the stage of the perfect man (al-insan al-kamil). In other places Haji considers the seven stages of universal existence to be the divine essence that is the Principle, the world of divinity, of the intelligences, of the angels, of the archetypes, of forms, and of matter. This descending hierarchy is also mentioned in E. G. Browne, op. cit., p. 150; A. M. A. Shushtery, op. cit., p. 454.

15. Sharh-i Manzumah, pp. 131-40.

16. Mulla Ali Zunuzi, a contemporary of the sage of Sabziwar, in his Badayi al-Hikam criticizes Haji's view and defends Mulla Sadra against his criticism. The view of Mulla Sadra as mentioned above appears in some of his works, while in others he also considers knowledge to be, like Being, above the categories.

17. Sharh-i Manzumah, pp. 140-51.

18. Ibid., p. 157. M. T. Amuli, Durar al-Fawaid, Mustafawi Press, Teheran, Vol. 1, pp. 480ff. It is in this discussion that Haji criticizes Mulla Sadra for having proved the identity of the knower and the known in the Mashair through the argument of relation (tadayuf) that Haji considers to be insufficient.

19. Asrar al-Hikam, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1286/1869, pp. 83ff.

20. This knowledge, Haji compares to the point of the Pen before writing which contains all the letters of the alphabet before they become distinct on paper. The Pen is the same as the reality of Muhammad (al-haqiqat al-Muhammadiyah) and the first victorial light (nur al-qahir) of the Illuminationists.

21. Sharh-i Manzumah, pp. 183-84.

22. Refer to the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtul. This seven-fold hierarchy is essentially the same as mentioned above with only a change in terminology that occurs often among the Hakims.

23. Sharh-i Manzumah, pp. 284ff.; Asrar al-Hikam, pp. 152ff. These faculties are also outlined in Iqbal, op. cit., and Browne, op. cit., p. 157.

24. For the meaning of this expression that is taken from the terminology of the Illuminationists, see the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtul.

25. See Iqbal, op. cit., pp. 185-86.

26. These stages have already been discussed in the chapter on Mulla Sadra whose terminology Haji has adopted directly. See also A. M. A., Shushtary, op. cit., p. 454.

27. Sharh-i Manzumah, pp. 318-29; also Asrar al-Hikam, pp. 307ff.

28. Regarding the question of the relation of Islam to previous religions and abrogation of older religions, see F. Schuon, Transcendent Unity of Religions, Pantheon Co., New York, 1953, Chaps. 5 to 7.

29. Haji considers the greatest miracle of the Prophet Muhammad (S), who is the Seal of Prophecy, to be the Quran, which in the beauty of language has no match in Arabic literature. He adds that in each period God gives those miracles to His prophets that conform to the mentality of the people of that age. That is why the miracle of the Quran lies in its language as the Arabs considered eloquence to be of such great importance; likewise, in the case of Moses (as) his miracle was in magic which was at his time one of the basic arts, and in the case of Christ (as) raising the dead to life because medicine occupied at that time an exalted position among the sciences.

30. This is with reference to the verse of Light in the Quran (24:35), in which the olive tree, from the oil of which the divine light emanates, is said to be neither of the east nor of the west.

31. By this symbolism Haji implies that the message of Moses (as) was essentially the exoteric aspect of the Abrahamic tradition, and the message of Jesus (as) its esoteric aspect, while Islam, being a totality, is the summation of the two, at once esoteric and exoteric. See also F. Schuon, op. cit., Chap. 6.

32. *Asrar al-Hikam*, p. 369.

33. *Sharh-i Manzumah*, pp. 329ff.; *Asrar al-Hikam*, pp. 261ff.

34. A list of some of these Hakims is given by Gobineau, op. cit., pp. 116-20. See also *Itimad al-Saltanih Muhammad Husain Khan, Kitab al-Maathir wal--Athar*, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1306/1888, pp. 131-226.

35. This great authority on Hikmat and gnosis has trained a generation of students in Teheran University and the Sepahsalar madrasah but has not written extensively on these subjects.

36. This sage whom we mentioned in the chapter on Mulla Sadra is the author of many important works in Arabic and Persian including the commentary *al-Mizan*, *Usul-i Falsafih wa Rawish-i Realism* with commentary by Murtida Mutahhari, a book on the principles of Shiism which came as answers to a set of questions posed by Henri Corbin and published as the *Salanih-i Maktab-i Tashayyu*, No. 2; commentary upon the *Asfar*, etc. Tabatabai has revived the study of Hikmat in Qum, which is the most important centre of Shiah studies today and has produced many scholars who have themselves become authorities on the intellectual sciences.

37. It is for this reason that with great obstinacy and despite some awkwardness we have refused to translate Hikmat and Hakim simply as philosophy and philosopher even if in Persia too Hikmat is often called *falsafah*. Philosophy in Western languages is almost synonymous with one form or another of rationalism, and recently irrationalism has been divorced from *sapientia* which Hikmat and even *falsafah* imply in Arabic and Persian.

Part 2. Renaissance in South and South-East Asia

Chapter 79: Renaissance in Indo-Pakistan: Shah Wali Allah Dihlawi

Chapter 80: Renaissance in Indo-Pakistan (Continued): Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan as a Politician, Historian, and Reformist

Chapter 81: Renaissance in Indo-Pakistan (Continued): Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan as a Religio-Philosophical Thinker

Chapter 82: Renaissance in Indo-Pakistan (Continued): Iqbal

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Chapter 79: Renaissance in Indo-Pakistan: Shah Wali Allah Dihlawi

A: Introduction

Of the two leaders of thought who appeared during the early years of decadence, Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab of Arabia and Shah Wali Allah of Delhi, the latter occupies a more prominent position. He was a luminary who during the stormy period of Indian history showed the bewildered Mus-lims the right path, the path of peace and glory. He was possessed of deep insight, profound learning, and heroic nobleness. Not long after his death his thought gave rise to a mighty movement under the leadership of Shah Ismail Shahid and Sayyid Ahmad Bareilvi for liberating the Muslims from the clutches of Western imperialism.

B: Life and Works

Qutb al-Din Ahmad, popularly known as Shah Wali Allah, was born in 1114/1703, four years before the death of Aurangzib. His genealogy can be traced back to the family of Umar Faruq, the great Caliph. It is difficult to ascertain the exact time when his forefathers left Arabia and settled down in India, but the circumstantial evidence indicates that it was about three hundred years after the great Migration (Hijrah). The historical records speak eloquently of the prominent position which Shah Wali Allah's grandfather occupied in the Mughul Court. It has been narrated that he played an important role in the struggle for power amongst the sons of Shah Jahan, and that he fought bravely against the Marathas of the Deccan.¹

Shah Wali Allah's father, Shah Abd al-Rahim, was greatly loved and re-spected by the people for his great scholarship and piety. He was entrusted by the Emperor Alamgir with the delicate and important task of revising the Fatawa-i Alamgiri. He acquitted himself creditably of the duty assigned to him and declined to accept any remuneration for the work.²

In his booklet al-Juz al-Latif fi Tarjamat al-Abd al-Daif, Shah Wali Allah gives an account of his brilliant educational career. Even a cursory reading of this booklet shows that Shah Wali Allah was precocious as a child. He soon mastered the different branches of learning, and so great was his command over them that even at the tender age of fifteen he could teach all these with confidence to others.

After the death of his illustrious father, we find him busy teaching Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh, and logic, subjects commonly taught in the madrasahs of those days. During this period of about twelve years, he penetrated deeply into the teachings of Islam and pondered seriously over the future of Muslims in India.

In the year 1143/1731 he went to the Hijaz on a pilgrimage and stayed there for fourteen months studying Hadith and Fiqh under such distinguished scholars as abu Tahir al-Kurdi al-Madani, Wafd Allah al-Makki, and Taj al-Din al-Qali. During this period he came into contact with people from all parts of the Muslim world and, thus, obtained first-hand information about the conditions then prevailing in the various Muslim countries.

He returned to Delhi in 1145/1733, where he spent the rest of his life in producing numerous works till his death in 1176/1763 during the reign of Shah Alam II.³ The most important of Shah Wali Allah's works is his Hujjat Allah al-Balighah in which he made an attempt to present the teachings of Islam in a scientific manner. His approach, though radical from beginning to end, is without complete break with the past.

The range of his works is varied and wide covering all aspects of knowledge: economic, political, social, meta-physical, as well as purely theological. Whether one agrees or disagrees either with Shah Wali Allah's theses or his conclusions, one has to admit that the book represents the first brilliant attempt to rethink the entire system of Islam in a spirit of scientific objectivity.

C: Sources of Shah Wali Allah's Thought

The pivotal point on which revolves the philosophical thought of Shah Wali Allah is religion. Since it is religion alone that, according to him, had been the source of strength and power for the Muslims, their decline was the direct result of their apathy towards it. His chief concern, therefore, was to call the Muslims back to the teachings of Islam.

He had a strong faith in the force and strength of Islamic ideology in which, he believed, if accepted fully and applied honestly, lay the hope for peaceful and prosperous development of the human race. Shah Wali Allah consequently bent all his energies towards purifying Islamic ideals of all unhealthy influences and providing them a fresh intellectual ground to meet the challenge of the time.

Shah Wali Allah was fully aware of the gap between the pattern of life as enunciated in the Quran and the Sunnah and the one which the Muslims had devised for themselves, the gap between the social and political institutions the framework of which had been supplied by Islam and the institutions which the Muslims had developed and set up for themselves in the course of history.

Nevertheless, Shah Wali Allah keenly realized that it was impossible to wheel back the march of history. It was, therefore, unwise to think that the Muslims could afford to live usefully on the pattern of life accepted as valid in the past, under the illusion that it would remain valid for all times to come.

For a proper study of Shah Wali Allah, historical imagination is, thus, the first necessity. Without referring to the intellectual environment from which he derived his inspiration, it is not easy to penetrate below the alluvial deposits of his intellectual and mystical experiences.

Even a cursory glance reveals that the first and the strongest influence that engraved the deepest mark upon his mind was that which came from his own father. From him he learnt the Holy Quran and the Sunnah and had the keen realization of the kind of invaluable guidance these contained for humanity. It can, therefore, be said that the Holy Quran and the Sunnah formed the bedrock on which he raised the superstructure of his thought system.

Shah Wali Allah was also greatly influenced by Imam Ghazali, Khatabi, and Shaikh al-Islam Izz al-Din bin Abd al-Salam. From them he learnt the

art of rational interpretation of the different aspects of Islam. In his introduction to Hujjat Allah al-Balighah he mentions these names with great respect. He also seems to be interested in abu al-Hasan al-Ashari, abu al--Mansur Maturidi, ibn Taimiyyah, and Imam Fakhr al-Din Razi.

In mysticism he was influenced by both ibn Arabi and Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. One may, however, find from the study of his mystical thought that though he received inspiration from both of them, yet his ideas were closer to the views of ibn Arabi than to those of the Mujaddid.

D: Socio-Economic and Political Thought

Shah Wali Allah made quite a serious attempt to find out the relationship between social, ethical, and economic systems. According to him, spirituality has two aspects: first, it is a personal relation of man to God, secondly, it is man's relation to his fellow-beings. No man is fully spiritual who seeks only his own personal salvation in isolation from society. It is only in the social set-up that the spirituality of an individual is expressed.

Islam, therefore, seldom deals with the individual as an individual; it always envisages him as a member of a family or a community. Thus, the achievement of social justice is a prerequisite for the development of the individual. How this ideal of social justice can be formulated and realized is a question that Shah Wali Allah has taken up in great detail in his famous work Hujjat Allah al-Balighah.

Adalah (justice or balance), according to him, is the essential feature for the harmonious development of the human race. Its manifestations may be numerous, but it is the one golden thread that runs into the web and woof of the variegated patterns of human life. When it expresses itself in dress, manners, and mores, it goes by the name of adab (etiquette). In matters relating to income and expenditure, we call it economy, and in the affairs of the State it is named politics.⁴

Under the head Irtifaqat,⁵ Shah Wali Allah discusses the problem of human relations. He starts with the fact that man has innumerable wants that urge him to action. The satisfaction of human wants, involving as it does the interdependence of individuals, leads to the origination of a society and its mores. When human beings join hands for collective safety and security, the government is formed, and when they come into contact with one another for the satisfaction of their material needs, the economic system is established.

The basic quality of a sound system, be it social, economic, or political, is the balanced relationship amongst the different members of a social group. This balanced relationship is without doubt a reflection of inward peace and of a sound relationship with the Creator. On the other hand, the social system it evolves is itself conducive to the achievement of such peace and relationship.

Shah Wali Allah then briefly deals with some of the basic aspects of a social system as a dynamic process. He starts with language and points out that it is not only a vehicle of expression, but is also an important factor for the development of culture and civilization.⁶ Then comes agriculture which provides food for the people. In this process man learns the art of irrigation; he also domesticates the animals and is benefited by them in hundred and

one ways. Then the houses are built in order to safeguard the human race against the inclemency of weather and seasons.⁷ All further development depends on the establishment of a State. The more uncultured a social group is, the more does it stand in need of a coercive power to exercise a proper check.

State, according to him, should not restrict the sphere of its activities only to the safety and security of the individuals, but should also devise ways and means for the happiness and progress of society as a whole. It is, therefore, within the functions of the State to eradicate all sorts of social evils, e.g., gambling, adultery, usury, bribery, etc.

A careful check should be exercised upon the traders to ensure that they do not indulge in malpractices. The State should also see that the energies of the people are made to flow into profitable channels, by maintaining, for example, the proper distribution of people in different occupations. Shah Wali Allah points out: “When the occupations are not fairly distributed amongst the different sections of a society, its culture receives a set-back; for example, if the majority of the people take to commerce, agriculture would be necessarily neglected and, thus, there will be a marked decline in the agricultural produce. Similarly, the people would suffer great hardships if the bulk of population enlisted themselves in the army; there would be only a few left to look after agriculture and commerce and the whole social system would be disturbed.”

Shah Wali Allah thinks that after the functions of the army and police, the most important activity within the State is that of agriculture, for it supplies to the people those necessities of life on which their very existence depends.⁸ The State should develop methods of cultivation. Every inch of land should be properly tilled, and there should be a scheme for the rotation of crops.⁹

Besides, the State should adopt ways and means to en-courage trade and industry. Thus, according to Shah Wali Allah, the richness of society as a whole depends upon its diversity, a truism that cannot be too often stressed. This diversity should be achieved by fixing people into different professions according to their aptitudes. The unlimited possibilities latent in men can only be unfolded if they are permitted to seek occupations according to their own bents of mind.

Shah Wali Allah believes that a sound economic system based on social justice can contribute to the happiness of society. If and when a State fails to develop or retain such a system, its decline becomes inevitable. He concludes his deliberations on this problem, as it existed in his own times as follows: “After a careful analysis I have come to the conclusion that there are two main factors responsible for the decline of the Muslim culture. First, many people have abandoned their own occupations and have become parasites on the government. They are a great burden on the public exchequer. Some of these are soldiers; some claim themselves to be men of great learning and, thus, deem it their birthright to get regular financial help from the State. There are not a few who get regular donations, gifts, and rewards from the Court as a matter of past custom, such as, for example, poets and clowns. Many of the people belonging to these groups do not

contribute anything to the welfare of society, yet they are allowed to suck its blood. The sooner the State gets rid of these parasites, the better.

Secondly, the government has levied an exorbitant rate of tax on the agriculturists, cultivators, and traders. Added to this is the cruel treatment meted out to the taxpayers by government officials at the time of collecting the taxes. The people groan under the heavy weight of taxes while their economic position deteriorates at an alarming speed. This is how the country has come to ruin.”¹⁰

In this connection Shah Wali Allah points out also a great misconception that is common among the Muslims. Most of them believe that poverty is loved by God and hence no good Muslim should make an effort to become rich. Such a view is erroneous. The simple living that comes from self-contentment is fundamentally different from the abject poverty to which the weaker groups are often subjected by the ruling classes.

This “forced starvation of certain classes,” as Shah Wali Allah calls it, “is highly detrimental to the welfare of society. It is no virtue but a crime. Islam grants no license to any class to compel others to remain as hewers of wood and drawers of water. It aims at the achievement of social justice, which is possible only when society is free from class conflict and everyone is provided with an opportunity to develop his latent powers and capacities and strengthen his individuality through free and active participation in the benefits of his material and cultural environment.”¹¹

“Islam,” he continues, “teaches that this strong concentrated individuality, sharpened and steeled through a life of active experience, should not become obsessed with self-aggrandizement; it should rather be devoted to the service of God and through this to the good of mankind. Islam never preaches its followers to submit themselves ungrudgingly to an oppressive social system. It is social justice rather than poverty which is eulogized by the Holy Prophet (S), justice which not only safeguards an individual against an attitude of arrogance and self-conceit, but also develops in him a power to spurn the temptations, bribes, and snares with which an unscrupulous ruling clique tries cynically to corrupt the integrity and character of the subjects.”¹²

Shah Wali Allah agrees with Aristotle that a State exists to promote “good life.” By “good life” he means life possessed of goodness as enunciated by Islam. For him the State is a means to an end and not an end-in-itself. Therefore, he holds that the possession of coercive power cannot be defended regardless of the ends to which it is devoted.

If a State wields this power honestly, then the highest duty of an individual is to become a loyal member of that State, but if it is a State only in name and is in reality a blind brute force, then it becomes the bounden duty of its members to overthrow it. Thus, an important duty of an individual is to become a member of the State, but more important than this is his duty to judge the quality of the State of which he is a member.

In his book *Izalat al-Khifa an Khilafat al-Khulafa* Shah Wali Allah lays down in very, clear terms the duty of an Islamic State (Khilafat). “Khilafat in general terms is a form of State which is established for the enforcement of the Laws of Shariah in accordance with the will of the Holy Prophet (S).

The foremost functions of the Khilafat are the revival of Islamic teachings and their translation in practical life, preparing the millah for endeavour (jihad), and carefully suppressing all those evils which arise from the misuse of its functions.”¹³

Shah Wali Allah clearly explains the relationship between the individual and the State. According to his theory of State, which he has in fact drawn from the teachings of Islam, an individual is not a mere part of a social whole in the same sense as bees, ants, and termites are. An individual has a real value of his own, for in Islam the beginning and the end of every consideration is the individual. But as every human being lives in a society it is through the social pattern that his spirituality is properly developed. Being the most powerful factor in the social pattern, a Muslim State is primarily responsible for the all-round development of an individual.

E: Philosophy of History

Every theory of social dynamics is ultimately a philosophy of history. Its special urgency arises from the fact that it gives people, as best as it may, an insight into the experiences of mankind and brings to mind the lessons that accrue from them. History is not a series of mere accidents; there is always a purpose behind them. The essential task of a historian is to study that inner process of thought, that underlying motive of action, which works behind the social change.

Anyone who cares to penetrate through the outer crust of historical events and episodes will find “something” that may be called the metaphysical structure of the historic humanity; something essentially independent of the outward forms social, spiritual, and political, which we see clearly.¹⁴

Shah Wali Allah as a historian tried in his own peculiar way to acquaint us with that “something.” It is noteworthy that he has also offered us an explanation for the differences in the social codes of the various prophets.

Lastly, he has, with remarkable acumen and penetration, winnowed out many mistaken notions about Muslim history commonly found even amongst the Muslim historians themselves. He reviews even that delicate period of Muslim history about which there is much inept sentimentalism amongst the Muslims. More particularly he draws a line of demarcation between Islamic history and history of the Muslim people and courageously points out the follies committed in the past because of overlooking this important distinction.

In his book *Tawil al-Ahadith*, he proves with the help of actual facts of history that man is not “an Ixion bound for ever to his wheel nor a Sisyphus for ever rolling his stone to the summit of the same mountain and helplessly watching it roll down again.” Humanity is ever-growing and, thus, faces new problems at every step.

The invisible hand that works on the loom of time is bringing into existence a tapestry in which one may envisage a developing design and not simply an endless repetition of the same old pattern. Shah Wali Allah, thus, comes to affirm that though there is a complete agreement of prophets with regard to the basic import of the divine revelation, yet they differ with one

another in the matter of the special codes which they presented in the forms that suited the needs of their times.

In his book *Fauz al-Kabir*, Shah Wali Allah says: “Every nation is accustomed to a certain mode of worship, and has a political and social pattern of its own. When a prophet (as) is sent to the people by God, he does not replace the old order by an absolutely new one. He, on the other hand, allows those customs to continue which do not contravene the will of God and effects necessary changes in all those patterns where these alterations are essential.”¹⁵

In his book *Tawil al-Ahadith*, Shah Wali Allah traces the development of society right from Adam (as) down to the last of the prophets (S) and discusses in detail the peculiarities of each age. Amongst the Muslim thinkers Shah Wali Allah is the first¹⁶ to compile a systematic history of the prophets and to explain that the social codes offered by the prophets can be reasonably interpreted in the light of the needs of their respective times.

Shah Wali Allah believes that in Adam the angelic qualities and the urges of the flesh existed side by side. The former led him to discover the different modes of worship and the latter showed him the way to satisfy his material needs, for example, cultivation of soil, domestication of animals,¹⁷ etc.

The Prophet Idris (as) later was possessed of all these qualities which his predecessor, Adam (as), combined in himself, yet he improved upon them by pondering over the creation, acquiring thereby a good deal of knowledge about physics, astronomy, and medicine. Further, as he flourished in an age when the people had learnt handicrafts, he acquired proficiency in these as well.¹⁸

The period between the death of Prophet Idris (as) and the birth of Prophet Noah (as) was marked by an all-round deterioration in the moral standards of the people. Virtues such as piety, truthfulness, and selflessness were hard to be found anywhere; man had become a veritable brute. Noah (as), therefore, made incumbent upon the people the offering of continuous prayers and observing of fasts. This was necessary to exercise a check on the urges of the flesh that had then taken full hold of the mind of the people.¹⁹

The above example should be sufficient to give an idea how Shah Wali Allah explains the differences of the social codes presented by various prophets at various stages of human history.

It is, however, important to point out that the differences of Shariahs to which Shah Wali Allah has referred here are differences in external forms only, i.e., in the rituals and routine activities, and not in their essentials. Since all prophets (as) were inspired by God alone, there could not be any difference in their fundamental teachings.

Belief in the unity of God, charity and brother-hood among mankind, subjugation of passions by the desire for higher values of life, accountability of human actions in the life hereafter, etc., formed the bedrock upon which were raised the superstructures of the various Shariahs.

In his work *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*, Shah Wali Allah particularly emphasizes the, essential unity of all religions by saying, “Remember, the real faith is one. This alone was preached by all the prophets (as) of God and

it is this alone that should be followed by the whole of humanity. Differences, if any, are only in their superstructures and details, rather than in their fundamentals. All prophets (as) have unanimously preached the gospel of divine unity.”²⁰ At another place he reiterates: “Just as articles of faith are the same in all reli-gions, similarly the basic virtues preached by them are necessarily the same.”²¹

The unity of faiths and moral values is due to the fact that human nature has essentially remained the same through the march of time. The human race has not altered physically and very little intellectually during the thousands of years of recorded history. The passions, pleasures, heartaches, and the political and domestic problems of the people of bygone ages were, in all likelihood, much the same as ours.

The greed of imperialistic powers was causing men to kill one another as brutally in 1600 B.C. as in the twelfth/eighteenth century. Though the fields of human activity have widened, the instincts that are the springboards of all action have remained the same. It is this sameness of human nature which led the celebrated philosopher--historian ibn Khaldun remark: “The past resembles the future as water; hence sociology, the study of the present, casts light on history, the study of the past, just as the study of history supplies the material for sociological studies.”²²

Shah Wali Allah completely agrees with ibn Khaldun on this point²³ and considers history “remembrance of the days of God,” to be a key to the study of the Holy Quran.²⁴ It is one of the remarkable doctrines of the Quran that nations are judged collectively and suffer for their misdeeds here and now.

In order to establish this, the Quran constantly cites historical instances and urges upon the reader to reflect on the past and the present experience of mankind: “Of old did We send Moses with Our signs; and said to him: ‘Bring forth thy people from darkness to light, and remind them of the days of God.’ Verily in this are signs for patient and grateful persons”²⁵; “Already, before your time, have precedents been made. Traverse the earth then, and see what hath been the end of those who falsified the signs of God.”²⁶

The latter verse is an instance of a more specific historical generalization, which, in its epigrammatic formulation, suggests not only the possibility of a scientific treatment of the life of human societies, but a warning for the future. To the students of the Holy Quran, Shah Wali Allah gives a very valuable advice in the following words: “While reciting the Holy Quran one should not think that the accounts of the nations of the past are given for the sake of mere narration. No, the stories of the past have been narrated not for an appeal to fancy but for the generalizations that may be drawn from them.”²⁷

It may be noted that Shah Wali Allah attaches great importance to the study of social phenomena as a preparation for the proper understanding of the Quran. These phenomena are sufficiently constant and follow regular and well-defined patterns and sequences. The social changes and complexities of the past have an object lesson for those living in the present,

since the people of every age have to encounter the same kind of complexities as were encountered by those who lived before them.

The danger spots in the march of nations are nearly the same. The historical record is, therefore, the light-house that informs the new sailors of life about the perilous rocks that may be hidden beneath the surface of the bottomless ocean of human existence. The Quran says: "Have they not travelled on land and seen the end of those who were before them? They were even stronger than these in power, and they dug the earth and built upon it more than these have built."²⁸

This verse reveals that the past with all its sunshines and sorrows recurs and manifests itself in the garb of the future. The events of life are governed by laws which have not only taken effect in the past, but which are also bound to take effect in every similar situation that may arise in the future. Shah Wali Allah, like all great thinkers, has endeavoured to discover these laws according to which nations rise and fall. His generalizations are based mainly on the Quran and the Sunnah, but the way in which he has applied them to practical life bears ample testimony to his keen insight both into the Quran and in the problems of human existence.

In his *Izalat al-Khifa*, Shah Wali Allah points out that the love of material wealth leads the nation to moral depravity that brings in its wake its down-fall. "Remember," says he with a note of grim warning, "that sensual qualities like selfishness, greed, etc., develop in unbalanced personalities. The abundance of riches brings these brutal qualities into action."²⁹

In support of this view Shah Wali Allah recalls the words in which the Prophet (S) on one occasion addressed the people: "By God, I am not worried about your poverty but I am afraid you might become proud of the worldly riches that might be stretched before you as was done by the people of the past ages and like them these worldly riches might destroy you as they destroyed those who were vainglorious before you."³⁰

Shah Wali Allah is of the opinion, which in fact is based upon the teachings of the Quran, that when the acquisitive instincts take hold of the majority of human beings, the creative genius dies in them and this brings about their ruin. If day in and day out they are busy in accumulating riches, morality, justice, and truthfulness become mere empty words, having no use in practical life.

The love of worldly riches is accompanied by the love of power and distinction. What the aristocracy desires is not only to own riches but also to keep others under the yoke of abject poverty. Society is split up into two distinct classes, haves and have-nots, the one that owns the treasures and along with it controls the affairs of the government, the other which through persistent hard labour ekes out a precarious subsistence.

The rich become callous and watch tyranny and oppression with complete indifference, the religious people retire into seclusion or become otherworldly, and the immoral aristocracy inflicts unchecked wrongs upon the class of have-nots. The result is a frightful moral disorder, born of unspeakable suffering and intolerable oppression. Such conditions strike at the very root of social structure and the outward grandeur and glare of

national life cannot make any compensation for its inner wretched-ness, and ultimately the whole nation collapses like a house of cards.

Shah Wali Allah substantiates this contention with the rise and fall of the Roman and Persian Empires. He gives a vivid account of all the circumstances that led to the ruin of these two great nations of the past. He writes: “The historical records eloquently speak of the fact that the Romans and the Persians held sceptre and crown for a fairly long time. According to their own cultural requirements, they added a good deal to the luxuries of their age. Their highest aim was to lead a life of pleasure.... The people who could make their lives more luxurious flocked from all the corners of the world in order to achieve this objective.

The aristocracy having thus become immersed in the pursuit of pleasures, there began a race amongst its members to excel one another in this respect, and matters became so bad that a rich man who tied a belt around his waist costing less than one thousand gold coins was looked down upon by others.

Everyone tried to possess a magnificent palace with a number of orchards attached to it. Their whole life came to be centred upon sumptuous foods, gaudy and attractive dresses, horses of the finest stock, coaches and carriages, and a retinue of servants.... They got used to all forms of luxurious living, and this was in fact the canker eating into the very vitals of their society.

“This meant a heavy drain on the purse of the people, as the kings and rulers were forced to levy an exorbitant rate of taxation upon the artisans and cultivators. The poor had perforce to raise a banner of revolt against the ruling clique. But under the circumstances this was well nigh impossible; therefore, the only course left for the poor was to live as bond slaves and lead their lives like donkeys.... In short, the lower strata of society were so much occupied in the service of the aristocracy that they found no time to pay any heed to the problems of the life hereafter.”³¹

Shah Wali Allah then further analyses this process of degeneration. He states that in order to run such a sensate system where all well-to-do persons were absorbed in the pleasures of life, a class of society came into existence, the highest duty of which was to supply the aristocracy the maximum luxuries of life. A useful section of the population was, thus, engaged in idle pursuits with the result that no one was left to think of the nation’s welfare. All this naturally led to their downfall.³²

It is interesting to note that this brilliant analysis of the Roman as of the Persian society given by Shah Wali Allah (1114/1703-1177/1763) is substantially the same as given by Edward Gibbon (1150/1737-1209/1794) about thirty years later. In his monumental work, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Gibbon writes: “Under the Roman empire, the labour of an industrious and ingenious people was variously, but incessantly employed, in the service of the rich. In their dress, their table, their houses, and their furniture, the favourites of fortune united every refinement of conveniency, of elegance, and of splendour, whatever could soothe their pride or gratify their sensuality. Such refinements, under the odious name of luxury, have been severely arraign-ed by the moralists of every age; and it might perhaps be more conducive to the virtue, as well as happiness, of

mankind, if all possessed the necessities, and none of the superfluities, of life.”³³

It is, however, wrong to conclude from the above discussion that Shah Wali Allah favoured the life of renunciation and considered it as such conducive to the progress of any nation. No, not in the least. He condemns such a view of life³⁴ and calls it un-Islamic. He commends the individual’s active participation in the affairs of the world.

This attitude of his does not interfere with his belief that unless the overwhelming majority of the people retain an inner attitude of detachment and superiority with regard to material possessions, a nation cannot make real progress. Its progress is possible only when the people, instead of becoming slaves to worldly riches, use them for the betterment of mankind. What is referred to here is a kind of intellectual and emotional asceticism rather than a life of renunciation.

F: Metaphysics

Doctrines of Wahdat al-Wujud and Wahdat al-Shuhud

Like all great Muslim thinkers, Shah Wali Allah penetrated deeply into the metaphysical problems raised by the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah. His approach in this as in other matters was to bring about a creative synthesis by reconciling the opposite movements of thought.

He tried, for example, to reconcile the views of ibn Arabi and those of Mujaddid Alf Thani. In order fully to appreciate this effort of Shah Wali Allah, it will be necessary to outline here briefly the views of ibn Arabi and those of the Mujaddid with regard to the problem of Being.

There are two different senses in which the term “Being” may be understood. First, it may be taken epistemologically as the cognized form or idea of existence and, secondly, it may be taken ontologically to stand for that which exists or subsists and not for the idea of it. Tauhid or the unity of Being may, therefore, mean either the unity of the mystically cognized existence or existence per se.

The term “Absolute Being” (al-wujud al-mutlaq) or “Universal Being” (al-wujud al-kulli) explained by ibn Arabi’s school is Reality as the ultimate ground of all that exists. This expression may be taken in either of the above two senses.³⁵ From the writings of ibn Arabi, which are, however, at places highly subtle and sometimes equally ambiguous, it may be gathered that when he says that all Being is One which is an Absolute Unity, he does not mean that all individual beings, past, present, or future, are essentially One Being, nor does he mean that Being in its abstract and most universal sense comprises all forms of Being in all possible universes of discourse.

When he says that all existence is one, he means that all existence is at source one, that is to say, that God is the one source and cause of all that has being (existence or subsistence). It is only for the sake of convenience that ibn Arabi compares God’s “Being” to a “universal” (say, colour) and the being of any other existent (or subsistent) to a particular “mode” or manifestation of that “universal” (say, red).³⁶

Were it not for the all-pervasiveness of God, by virtue of His form in all existents, the world would have no existence, just as, were it not for the

intelligible universal realities (al-haqaiq al-maqlat al-kulliyah), no predi-cations (ahkam) of external objects would have been possible.³⁷

To express the whole matter in modern terminology, there is an identity of God and universe on the basis of the identity of His “existence and essence” (dhat-o sifat) or substance and attribute, the world being only a tajalli or manifestation of His attributes. In other words, the creation of the world is a form of emanation.

Ibn Arabi believes that the act of creation by the word “Be” (kun) is nothing but the descent of the Creator into the being of things. There are, however, five stages of this descent or determination. “The first two are ilmi or cognitive and the last three are khariji or existential.

In the first descent, Unity becomes conscious of itself as pure Being, and the consciousness of attributes is only implicit and general (sifat-i ijmal). In the second descent, it becomes conscious of itself as presenting the attributes explicitly and in detail (sifat-i tafsil). These two descents seem to be con-ceived by ibn Arabi as conceptual rather than actual; they are supra temporal, and the distinction between existence and essence in their case is only logical.

The real distinctions begin with the third descent, which consists in the determi-nation of spirits (taayyun-i ruhi) when Unity breaks itself into so many spirits, e.g., angels. The fourth descent is ideal determination (taayyun-i mithali), whereby the world of ideas comes into being. And the fifth descent is physical determination (taayyun-i jasadi): it yields the phenomenal or physical beings.”³⁸

This shows that for ibn Arabi “Being” (dhat) of God is identical with His attributes (sifat), and these attributes express themselves in manifesta-tions (tajalliyat) as modes that are objects and events of this world. It is, thus, clear that, according to ibn Arabi, ontologically there is only one reality. It has two aspects: (1) a reality transcending the phenomenal world and (2) a multiplicity of subjectivities that find their ultimate ground and explanation in the essential unity of the Real.³⁹

Thus, the world as it looks and the multiplicity that we find in it is nothing but the multiplicity of the modes of the Unity; it has no existence of its own. Ibn Arabi proclaims that “existent things have not the slightest touch of reality about them.”⁴⁰ He explains this statement through the metaphor of the “mirror” and the “image.”⁴¹ The phenomenal world is the mirror image, i.e., the shadow of the real object beyond. The whole world is like a shadow play.

At another place ibn Arabi uses the metaphors of permeation and “spiritual food.” The many permeate the One in the sense in which qualities (say, colours) permeate substance. The One, on the other hand, permeates the many as the nutriment permeates the body; God is our sustaining spiritual “food,” because He is our essence. He is also the spiritual food of the pheno-menal world and it is thus that God is endowed with attributes.⁴²

We can, thus, sum up ibn Arabi’s whole philosophical thought in the two propositions: (1) in God existence and essence or being and attributes are identical; (2) the world is nothing but a pale reflection or emanation, or mode of His attributes only.

Mujaddid Alf Thani, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, vehemently criticizes the philosophy of ibn Arabi. He says that it is wrong to believe that the attributes are identical with Being. The Quran says: “Verily God is wholly sufficient unto Himself - He needs none of the world.” According to him, this verse is clearly indicative of the fact that God is not dependent upon the world for His unfoldment. The attributes by which He turns to the world and creates it are other than His Self.

The Mujaddid also finds no valid basis for the theory of ibn Arabi that the world is the emanation (tajalli) of the attributes of God. For, if the world is merely the emanation of God’s attributes, it would have been identical with them, but the attributes of God are perfect, while the world is full of imperfections,⁴³ for example, human knowledge has no resemblance to God’s knowledge, so the former cannot be called to be the tajalli of the latter.⁴⁴

Just as we cannot call the shadow of man his being on the existence of which his very existence depends, similarly it is wrong to conclude that God depends upon the creation for His own unfoldment. There is no reciprocity between the One and the many as understood by ibn Arabi. God is an objective Reality, independent of the existence of created worlds.

Thus, there is no likeness whatsoever between the divine and the human attributes. The verse “Thy Lord is nobler than the qualities which they ascribe to Him”⁴⁵ clearly points to this.

So, while ibn Arabi bases his theory of wahdat al-wujud on the identity of asl and zill, i.e., the thing and its adumbration, the Mujaddid insists that the zill of a thing can never be identical with its asl or being.⁴⁶ Thus, according to him, there is absolutely no identity between the unique Creator and the world created by Him.

He also believes that mystic experience, however valuable and perfect it might be, has no objective validity with regard to Being and attributes. It is through prophetic revelation alone that we can understand Reality. Moreover, the finite beings cannot apprehend the Infinite through mystical experiences. Consequently, the faith in the unseen is unavoidable. Such faith alone is valid in the case of God, because it is in keeping with our limitations and His inaccessibility or beyondness.

Shaikh Ahmad also bitterly criticizes the doctrine of determinism that is a natural corollary of the doctrine of wahdat al-wujud. He believes that man has been afforded opportunity by God to exercise his freedom in a sphere of life where he may accept or reject a certain line of action according to his own choice. Should he be a mere puppet, as he is according to the inherent logic of ibn Arabi’s pantheism, he cannot be justifiably rewarded or punished for his good and evil deeds. The idea of reward and punishment presupposes a world of free and responsible moral agents who can adopt or reject a certain course of action.

These are, in short, some basic differences between the metaphysical thought of ibn Arabi and that of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. The Mujaddid’s criticism of the philosophy of wahdat al-wujud was very severe, and few had the courage to oppose him. It was Shah Wali Allah who for the first time tried to bridge the gulf that yawned between the views of these two

great thinkers of Islam. Shah Wali Allah professed that God had granted him the special gift of creative synthesis or reconciliation.⁴⁷

According to Shah Wali Allah, there is no substantial difference between the philosophy of wahdat al-wujud and that of wahdat al-shuhud and the difference if any is nothing but an illusion. The world is not an attribute or emanation of attributes but consists of non-emanative modes of attributes in the mirror of non-existence. These modes look real, but in truth their reality lies only in Being.

He resolves this difference with the help of an example. He says, "Let us make a horse, a donkey, and a man out of wax. This wax is common to all of them although their forms differ from one another. We call these forms, moulded out of wax, a horse, a donkey, and a man. If we reflect deeply we find that these forms are only modes of their being and their being is nothing but the wax."⁴⁸

Shah Wali Allah contends, however, that if we leave simile and metaphor aside, there is no essential difference between the doctrines of ibn Arabi and those of the Mujaddid. To say that the essence of the contingent beings are the names and attributes of the necessary being differentiated in the conceptual, as ibn Arabi holds, or to say that the contingent beings are the asma-o sifat of the Necessary Being reflected in their adam al--mutaqabilah or non-being as the Mujaddid maintains, is practically the same.⁴⁹

If there is any difference between the two positions, it is quite insignificant. The Mujaddid and ibn Arabi relate the same fact in two different languages but the shortsighted critics look upon these as matters of vital difference.⁵⁰

The Spiritual World and the Material World

Shah Wali Allah believes that in between the material world and its Creator, there is a spiritual world in which the planning will of God is first reflected and then materialized into different forms. Thus, there is a close relationship between the two. All beings and happenings of this world are first reflected in the spiritual world or, as Shah Wali Allah names it, the alam al-mithal, then these are transmuted into material forms.

He elucidates this point by the example of a clairvoyant dream. The coming events are first visualized in the forms of shadows which have no material existence but which later may actualize into tangible existents. A true dream is, thus, an instance of the alam al-mithal. The things found in the spiritual world appear to a layman to be immaterial, but to the prophets (as) they are tangible and concrete.

For example, the Prophet (S) once after having offered his prayer said to his Companions, "I saw heaven and hell before me." Once in the midst of his prayer, he is reported to have heaved a deep sigh as if he were actually feeling the heat of hell. Shah Wali Allah, quoting numerous examples in support of his contention, concludes, "It is an established fact that the prophets (as) could not see all these phenomena with their physical eyes. Heaven and hell are too large to be comprehended physical-ly. Had these been matters of common sight they would have been visible to the Companions also who were by his side at such occasions."⁵¹

Thus, over and above the material world, there is another world that transcends its spatio-temporal limitations and receives the impressions of the planning will of God before these are manifested as concrete configurations in space and time.

Space and Time

Shah Wali Allah in his book al-Khair al-Kathir deals with the nature of space and time. He affirms that space is inconceivable without time, and vice versa. These are not two separate categories, but a single category of space-time continuum in which time and space have their being. He further holds that space and time are indivisible and adds that but for this indivisibility there would have been complete chaos and disorder in the world so much so that the creation could not stand even for a single second.⁵²

He also maintains that space and time like all created things are not eternal, but were created by the will of God and would cease to be with the end of creation.⁵³

As regards matter, Shah Wali Allah argues that, matter can be conceived only in terms of space and time. It is only the external form of space and time, for it can be apprehended only through the agency of these.⁵⁴

Freedom and Fatalism

Shah Wali Allah's attempt to solve the problems of freedom and fatalism is also of the nature of a reconciliation. He looks upon fate as a fundamental article of faith and declares that anyone who disbelieves it is not entitled to be called a Muslim.⁵⁵

The Quran explicitly states that all beings and happenings in this world are due to a conscious creative power or divine will.⁵⁶ The omnipotent will of God has such a full grasp of the whole universe that no one can budge even an inch from His decree. In fact, our belief in God is closely related to our belief in the divine ordinances. They are as much laws, in the strictest sense of the term, as laws that regulate the movements of celestial bodies, and, thus, belief in them forms the corner-stone of Islam.⁵⁷

The above view of Shah Wali Allah, however, should not be construed in terms of wahdat al-wujud, which, through its intrinsic logic, leads to a form of determinism such as leaves no scope for the free activity of man. According to him, if men were mere puppets made to move by a kind of push from behind, they could not be held responsible for their actions, and the distinction between good and evil too would become meaningless; all this is repugnant to the teachings of Islam.

Islam holds man accountable for his deeds to God; His justice demands that man should be given freedom to avoid the path of vice and follow the path of virtue and piety. Every human being has two inclinations, one angelic, prompting and impelling him to good, and the other beastly, prompting and impelling him to evil. It is up to man him-self to adopt the one and abandon the other.

“Everyone is divinely furthered in accordance with his character. Say not that man is compelled, for that means attributing tyranny to God, nor say that man has absolute discretion. We are rather furthered by His help and

grace in our endeavours to act righteously, and we transgress because of our neglect of His commands.”⁵⁸

G: Jurisprudence

Shah Wali Allah attempts reconciliation between the different schools of Muslim jurisprudence. He delineates the broad outlines of Islamic Law, consisting of mandatory and unalterable edicts and fundamental principles that have always been accepted unanimously by all the Muslim schools of thought.

More important, however, for our purpose here are his views with regard to the problems about which differences do exist and which are the outcome of interpretations and ijtiḥad, all, of course, within the limits prescribed by Islam.

He advocates the policy of confining oneself within the framework of the four main schools of Islamic jurisprudence, viz., Hanafi, Shafii, Maliki, and Hanbali.

There is a consensus of opinion amongst the majority of ‘ulama’ that taqlid is essential. He agrees with them, but moderates the traditional view of taqlid by saying: “No one can have any objection to the concept of taqlid; but I neither look upon any Imam as infallible, nor do I believe that his judgements were revealed to him by God Himself and so are obligatory for us.

When we follow a certain Imam we do so on the explicit understanding that he was possessed of a deep insight into the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah and his findings were drawn from the Quran and the Sunnah.... Had it not been so, we would not have attached any importance to them. It would be the height of misfortune to give priority to the reasoning of man over the command of the nass. This alone is the type of taqlid which appears to me quite justifiable.”⁵⁹

Similarly, Shah Wali Allah offers a workable solution of the differences of pure traditionists (Muhaddithin) and the followers of the four Imams. “The general practice,” he says, “with regard to the framing of Fiqhi Law is that either the deductions are directly based upon the Hadith or they are drawn in the light of the principles enunciated by the jurists.

The scholars of every age have been following these two courses, some stressing the former, others stressing the latter.... It is unfair to tilt the balance to one side only and neglect the other altogether.... The right procedure is to harmonize them. Both these methods should be employed for raising the superstructure of Islamic jurisprudence. The edifice of the Shariah so erected would be sound and well consolidated.

The Muhaddithin should judge their deductions on the principles enunciated by the great jurists. On the other hand, those who follow the practice of deducing laws on the basis of the procedure adopted by great jurists should never give preference to their own principles over those of the nass, and see that their conclusions do not in anyway contravene the injunctions of the Hadith. In the same way it is not proper for any Muhaddith to lay unnecessary stress on the principles laid down by the old compilers of the Hadith. They were after all human beings and their

principles could not, therefore, be claimed to be final and free from all errors.”⁶⁰

Shah Wali Allah fully recognizes the importance of individual judgment (ijtihad), but at the same time believes that as this important task entails great responsibilities, it cannot be entrusted to everyone. He recounts three main qualifications of a mujtahid: (1) He should be able to frame the principles according to which the individual judgment is to be exercised; (2) he should be fully conversant with the Quran and the Sunnah and should know the ahadith which form the basis of Fiqh; (3) he must be capable of exercising his judgment to draw injunctions from the Quran and the Sunnah in order to meet the new requirements of his times.⁶¹

Shah Wali Allah not only emphasizes the catholicity of Islamic Law and explains its assimilative spirit, but also stresses the need of reasoning in matters relating to the Shariah. He believes that the ijtihad of the old jurists, however high and exalted their status, is open to correction in the light of the Quran and the Sunnah. He, thus, opens the gate of ijtihad that had been sealed long ago.

No wonder that, like his illustrious predecessors, ibn Taimiyyah and ibn Qayyim, he was also accused of heretical innovations; yet he was one of the few intellectuals of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent whose influence was deeply felt even beyond the borders of that country. His works, especially Hujjat Allah al-Balighah, Budur al-Bazighah and Fauz al-Kabir, are read with admiration throughout the Muslim world.

His popularity outside the sub-continent of Indo-Pakistan may be partly attributed to the fact that he had a perfect command over the Arabic and Persian languages. His mastery over the Arabic language was especially remarkable; he was one of the very few writers of the Indo-Pak sub-continent who could write Arabic prose with the same ease and confidence with which he could write his own mother tongue.

This might have been one of the factors of his popularity abroad. But a close analysis of the writings of the Muslim scholars of other countries clearly reveals that he was respected more for the depth of his thought and his keen insight in the matters of Shariah than for the lucidity of his style. This is substantiated by the fact that his reputation as a scholar and as a leader of thought has considerably increased during the last few decades when there has been a visible stir amongst the Muslims to reconstruct their thought on Islamic foundations without losing sight of the benefits which can be derived from the study of modern sciences.

There is hardly any modern scholar of repute in the Muslim world who has worked on Fiqh and Hadith and has not quoted Shah Wali Allah in support of his contentions. Abu Zuhra of Egypt, who is an authority on Muslim law, seems to be deeply influenced by him and has profusely quoted him in his scholarly discussions on Imam abu Hanifah’s juridical views.

Jamal al-Din Qasimi, an eminent scholar of Hadith in Damas-cus, has time and again referred to Shah Wali Allah’s valuable thought in his famous book Qawaid al-Tahdith, which is considered to be a basic work on the principles of Hadith. Abu Zahau in his scholarly treatise, al-Hadith wal-Muhaddithun, in which he traces the history of the revival of Hadith in

different lands, pays glowing tributes to Shah Wali Allah for the enviable contributions that he made in connection with the popularization of the study of Hadith in India. In fact, he places him at the top of the list in this respect.

The famous Shaikh al-Islam of Turkey, Shaikh Muhammad Zahid al-Kauthari, devotes a whole chapter to Shah Wali Allah in his compilation *Maqalat al--Kauthari* published in Damascus. Muhibb al-Din al-Khatib, a leader of the liberation movement of Egypt and for several years editor of *al-Fath*, speaks of Shah Wali Allah in several of his articles with great respect.

Abd al-Munim al-Namar, another leading scholar of Egypt and a member of the Board of 'Ulama' of Azhar, in his book *Tarikh al-Islam fi al-Hind*, speaks of him as an authority on Hadith and Tafsir. He states that Shah Wali Allah shattered the bonds of taqlid and prepared the Muslim scholars for research. *Al-Mukhtarat*, a compilation by abu al-Hasan Nadawi, which has been prescribed as a textbook for the secondary school stage in Damascus, includes a selection from *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*.

Shah Wali Allah's most valuable book, *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*, has been published in Egypt in various editions and is widely read in the Arab lands. *Musawwa*, another important work of Shah Wali Allah, has also been translated into Arabic. A French translation of *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah* has recently been published in Paris.

H: Conclusion

Shah Wali Allah's influence was quite widespread and penetrating. He revolutionized the philosophical, political, social, and economic ideas within the framework of Islam. Like an experienced surgeon he analysed and examined the various components of Islamic mysticism and Fiqh and rearranged them in an order that made them highly beneficial to the Muslim society. According to Iqbal, he was the first Muslim to feel the urge for rethinking the whole system of Islam without in any way breaking away from its past.

Shah Wali Allah aimed at presenting Islamic thought in as coherent and logical form as any theologico-philosophical system could be. His style has all the philosophical subtlety and penetration about it and his doctrines have a logical cogency and consistency surpassing those of many Muslim theologians.

His philosophical endeavour consisted in explaining and resolving satisfactorily the apparent contradictions and dichotomies between the eternal values and the changing conditions, the unity of God and the multiplicity within the universe, etc. In this he was the precursor of Iqbal; anyone delving deep into Iqbal's *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* will find the spirit of Shah Wali Allah pervading this work from beginning to end.

In Islamic mysticism Shah Wali Allah tried to comb out all unhealthy foreign influences, such as a morbid kind of neo-Platonism and Vedantism. He stressed that genuine mysticism, as distinguished from pseudo-mysticism, encourages an active way of life that assures progress and prosperity in this world and salvation in the hereafter.

Commenting on Shah Wali Allah's role as a Sufi, Professor Gibb writes: "During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a succession of remarkable scholars strove to restate the bases of Islamic theology in a manner which broke away from the formalism of the orthodox manuals and laid new stress upon the psychological and ethical elements in religion. Among the more outstanding figures in this movement, which has not yet received the attention it deserves, were the Syrian Abd al-Ghani of Nablus (1641-1731) and the Indians Ahmad Sarhindi (1563-1624) and Shah Wali Allah of Delhi (1702-1762)."⁶²

Shah Wali Allah translated the Holy Qur'an into Persian despite opposition and, thus, brought the Word of Allah within the reach of the common man. His illustrious son, Shah Rafi al-Din, following his example, translated the Quran in Urdu and, thus, dispelled the prejudice against translations of the Holy Book.

In Hadith he revived interest in the study of Imam Malik's Muwatta, which became elevated in the eyes of scholars only through his efforts.

In Fiqh, Shah Wali Allah attacked the conventional notions prevailing during his time. His main endeavour consisted in freeing the concept of the divine Law from the subjective elements that had intruded into it, thus restoring to it the purity and compactness that it had at the time of the Companions.

He also tried to bridge the gulfs that yawned amongst the different schools of Fiqh. According to him, all the prevalent systems of Fiqh drew their inspiration from one single source so that there could be no fundamental differences in them; differences there had been and there would be, but these were differences in interpretation only, not in principles. The significance of Shah Wali Allah's standpoint in Fiqh from the point of view of welding the Muslim community into one ummah cannot be over-emphasized.

Shah Wali Allah, like Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, made it amply clear that Islam is not a religion in the usual sense of the term but a complete code of life which aims not only at individual righteousness but provides a framework for all individual and social activities.

It was the effect of the radical change brought about by Shah Wali Allah in the outlook of the Muslim community in the various walks of life that a mighty movement under the leadership of Shah Ismail Shahid and Sayyid Ahmad Barelvi was set afoot. This made the Muslim community realize the condition in which they had been left through a neglect of their faith, or through an incorrect approach to it.

There sprang up an ardent desire in the minds of the Muslims to retrieve their position, not merely to claim the heritage of their past culture but also to revive the vitality inherent in it. Although the movement suffered defeat at the hands of the imperialistic powers, yet it could not be curbed permanently. The time that elapsed between the martyrdom of Shah Ismail and late forties of the present century, is very important for it was the time during which the plant nourished by the life-blood of Shah Wali Allah continued growing till it flowered into the birth of Pakistan.

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Notes

1. Al-Furqan (Special Number on Shah Wali Allah), 2nd edition, Bareilly, 1941, pp. 203-04, 402.
2. Ibid., pp. 113, 170.
3. Thus, he lived to see the reigns of ten kings who followed one another in quick succession, namely, Alamgir, Bahadur Shah I, Muizz al-Din Jahandar Shah, Farrukh Siyar, Rafi al-Darajat, Rafi al-Daulah, Muhammad Shah, Ahmad Shah, Alamgir II, Shah Alam.
4. Hujjat Allah al-Balighah, Idarah Tabaat al-Muniriyyah, Cairo, Vol. 1, pp. 50-53.
5. Maulana Ubaid Allah Sindhi has translated this word as "social institutions" in his Shah Wali Allah aur Unki Siyasi Tahrik, Sind Sagar Academy, Lahore, 1952, p. 43.
6. Hujjat Allah al-Balighah, Vol. 1, p. 38.
7. Ibid., pp. 43-44.
8. Ibid., pp. 40, 47.
9. Ibid., p. 40.
10. Ibid., p. 44.
11. For a detailed study of this problem, see Hujjat Allah al-Balighah, Chap. "Iqamat al-Irtifaqat wa Islah al-Rusum," pp. 104-09.
12. Ibid. Shah Wali Allah enumerates the mean tactics which the ruling class employed to corrupt the masses.
13. Shah Wali Allah, Izalat al-Khifa an Khilafat al-Khulafa, published in Bareilly, n.d., p. 1.
14. Oswald Spengler, The Decline of the West, George Allen & Unwin, London, Vol. 1, p. 3.
15. Al-Fauz al-Kabir, Urdu translation, Maktabah Burhan, Delhi, p. 16.
16. It appears that Shah Wali Allah has taken most of the material under this heading from ibn Kathir's Bidayah wal-Nihayah, Matbaat al-Saadah, Egypt.
17. Tawil al-Ahadith, Matba Ahmad, Madrasah Aziziyyah, Delhi, pp. 9-13.
18. Ibid., p. 14.
19. Ibid., p. 15. See also ibn Kathir, op. cit., pp. 100-18.
20. Hujjat Allah al-Balighah, Vol. 1, pp. 86-87.
21. Ibid.
22. Charles Issawi, An Arab Philosophy of History, John Murray, London, p. 7.
23. For a detailed study of this subject, see Hujjat Allah al-Balighah, Chaps. 4 and 6.
24. Al-Fauz al-Kabir, pp. 4, 17.
25. Quran (14:5).
26. Ibid., (3:137).
27. Al-Fauz al-Kabir, pp. 21-23.
28. Quran (30:9), The Meaning of the Glorious Koran by Pickthall.
29. Izalat al-Khifa (Urdu translation), Nur Muhammad Karkhanah Tijarat-i Kutub, Karachi, Vol. 1, p. 560.
30. Ibid., pp. 563-64. See also al-Nawawi, Riyad al-Salihin, Dar al-Ihya al-Kutub al-Arabiyyah, Cairo, pp. 213-14 (muttafiq alaih, Bukhari wa Muslim).
31. Hujjat Allah al-Balighah, Vol. 1, pp. 105-06.
32. Ibid.
33. The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Modern Library, New York, Vol. 1, p. 48.
34. Hujjat Allah al-Balighah, Vol. 1, p. 53.

35. A. E. Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyid Din-Ibnul Arabi*, Cambridge, 1939, p. 1.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
38. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi quoted by Burhan Ahmad Faruqi in his *Mujaddid's Conception of Tawhid*, pp. 88-89.
39. A. E. Affifi, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
40. *Fusus al-Hikam*, Cairo, p. 63.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
42. A. E. Affifi, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
43. *Maktubat Imam Rabbani*, Urdu translation by Qadi Alam al-Din, Lahore, Vol. 3, pp. 113-14.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
45. *Quran* (37:180).
46. *Maktubat Imam Rabbani*, Vol. 2, Epistle 7.
47. Shah Wali Allah, *Faisalat al-Wahdat al-Wujud wa Wahdat at-Shuhud* (Arabic), p. 6.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*, Vol. 1, pp. 13-14.
52. Shah Wali Allah, *al-Khair al-Kathir*, ed. Bashir Ahmad, *Dairat al-Hilal*, Benares, pp. 29-30.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*, Vol. 1, pp. 65-66.
56. Cf. *Quran* (15:21); (16:79); (48:21).
57. For a detailed study of this aspect, see *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*, Vol. 1, pp. 55-67.
58. *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.
59. Shah Wali Allah, *al-insaf fi Bayan-i Sabab al-Ikhtilaf*, Urdu translation by Sadr al-Din Islahi, Lahore, n.d., pp. 29-80.
60. *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
62. H. A. R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism*, The New American Library, New York, 1955, p. 125.

Chapter 80: Renaissance in Indo-Pakistan (Continued): Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan as a Politician, Historian, and Reformist

A: Introductory

Born of a distinguished family of Delhi in 1232/1817, Sayyid Ahmad was brought up under the care of his mother and went through the customary schooling. He started his literary career in 1273/1856 when he began to write for his brother's journal, Sayyid al-Akhbar. After the fashion of the time he took to composing poetry but the hobby did not hold his interest for long.

The death of his father in 1254/1838 sent him out into the world in quest of a living. His first occupation was a petty job in a civil court under the East India Company at Delhi. He earned promotions by sheer merit and served first at Agra and then at Fatehpur Sikri. In 1263/1846, he was sent back to Delhi at his own request. Before coming to this place he had compiled a few tracts on such diverse subjects as history, science, theology, and civil law, dealing with them each in a distinctly medieval spirit.

In addition to his official duties at Delhi, he re-read intensively a number of medieval Muslim classics, sat in the company of prominent poets and men of letters, practised medicine for some time, and busied himself with the first round of his researches in history which culminated in the Athar al-Sanadid, a work which would do credit to any professional historian.

After seven years' stay at Delhi his employers transferred him to Bijnaur as a civil judge. The rising known as the Mutiny of 1273-74/1857 broke out while he was stationed there. The rulers foisted the responsibility for this on the Muslims and singled them out for a fierce vendetta. The Muslim losses by way of seizures, confiscations, and malicious persecutions were colossal.

In Sayyid Ahmad's own words: "Scores of illustrious families were laid low. Theirs is a harrowing tale. I was heedless of my personal sufferings, grievous though they were. I was shocked at the afflictions of my people.... I was seized with despair. I lost all hope of Muslims' ever rising again and recovering their departed grandeur. I stood aghast at the tragedy. I could not stand Muslim tribulations. The gnawing agony aged me prematurely. I wanted to say good-bye to the country of my birth and settle down in a foreign land. However.... I realized that I should not desert my post, but stand by my people in their ordeal and sink or swim with them...."¹

Sayyid Ahmad viewed the Mutiny as an outcome of racial misunderstanding and administrative blunders. After the outbreak had been quelled, he threw himself heart and soul into the task of bringing about a better understanding between the British and the Indians, and between the British and the Muslims. His thought-provoking book on the causes of the revolt and his commentary on the Bible belong to this period.

He anticipated his educational work by setting up two schools in the cities of Muradabad and Ghazipur. In 1281/1864, he founded the Scientific Society, almost the first learned body in Northern India. The periodical of this association, The Aligarh Institute Gazette, was noted for its sober tone,

objective reporting, and scrupulous avoidance of cheap journalistic tricks, qualities rare in early Indian journal-ism.

Three years later, Sayyid Ahmad found himself involved in an unedifying wrangle with the protagonists of Hindi who were determined to do away with Urdu as the language of the law-courts in Upper India. This together with his visit to England in 1286-87/1869-70 gave a fresh orientation to his ideas and a new direction to his efforts and he dedicated himself to the social and intellectual regeneration of the Indian Muslims.

On his return to India Sayyid Ahmad brought out his magazine, the Tahdhib al-Akhlaq, with the sub-title Mohammedan Social Reformer. This bright periodical had a chequered career and ultimately its publication ceased in 1311/1893. Sayyid Ahmad himself was its principal contributor. The essays that he wrote for it are universally acknowledged among the classics of Urdu literature. They examined the foundations of Muslim society and subjected Muslim institutions to a powerful searchlight.

Whereas Bentham inquired into the utilitarian bases of institutions, Sayyid Ahmad applied to them the test of reason and religious sanction. The Tahdhib gathered round itself a select and highly discriminating readership that shared Sayyid Ahmad's zeal for reform. It countered on the one hand the forces of scepticism and irreligion unleashed by Western influences, and on the other beat down the firmly entrenched opposition to Western education.

Towards the end, Sayyid Ahmad devoted himself more and more to the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, which was, an imaginative educational experiment intended to develop into a character-building residential institution. The College produced a unique community of alumni and in due season Aligarh became the political and educational capital of Muslim India.

The cognate organization, the All-India Mohammadan Educational Conference, founded by Sayyid Ahmad in 1304/1886, became a lively forum for the discussion of social and educational questions and proved to be an important factor in promoting Muslim solidarity in the sub-continent.

Sayyid Ahmad resolutely declined to be drawn into politics. "Educate, educate, educate..." was his watchword. His decision to hold aloof from the political movement has been often maligned and caricatured as a counsel of political reactionism. The misunderstanding arises primarily from an attempt at studying his ideas out of context and disregarding the circum-stances of the times.

A more realistic appraisal of his political creed in the context of contemporary events is urgently called for. Be that as it may, Sayyid Ahmad's political testament prevented the absorption of the Muslim community into Hindu nationalism and finally resulted in the partition of the Indian sub-continent into its Hindu and Muslim zones. He was knighted in 1305/1888, and after a long intellectual and political career passed away at Aligarh in 1315/1898 at the ripe age of eighty-one.

B: The Sayyid as a Historian

Sayyid Ahmad had the intellectual make-up of a true historian and his entire thinking was coloured with a deep sense of obligation to the past. But

he was seldom obsessed with it, and did not become, like Burke, one of its unreasoning worshippers. Indeed, he could distinguish between its healthy and injurious legacies. He viewed political and social problems in the light of history and his ideas bore a close resemblance to the findings of the historical school in political science.

As a historian he was concrete and objective. His monograph on the history of the Mutiny in the district of Bijnaur, entitled *Tarikh-i Sarkashi-i Bijnaur*, opens with the following observations about the responsibility of a historian:

“The contents of this book mostly deal with what I saw with my own eyes and did with my own hands. I have taken great pains to ascertain the truth of events and incidents beyond my own experience. Tampering with historical truth is a fraudulent enterprise. (It damages the truth and) its evil influence works forever. Thus, the sinful irresponsibility of the historian be-comes everlasting.”

A resume of Sayyid Ahmad’s historical writings must naturally begin with the *Athar al-Sanadid* that deals with the ancient buildings and historical monuments of Delhi and its suburbs. The city of Delhi is one of the oldest capitals and can boast of a hoary antiquity. It is the graveyard of dynasties and empires. Time has hallowed almost every bit of its territory.

When Sayyid Ahmad entered the field of historical research he was fascinated by the wealth of its unexplored archaeological remains. He personally surveyed some one hundred and thirty sites, measured their dimensions, transcribed their inscriptions, and reconstructed their original plans. He experienced considerable hardship in getting at the inscriptions located in different parts of the column of Qutb Minor.

The researcher in him was undeterred by hindrances. He tried heroically and managed to reach its height by the use of an ingenious but dangerous device. He also made a careful study of the mass of related historical materials in print as well as in manuscript and spun the data thus collected into a lively narrative of an almost encyclopedic range. While the account of the relics constitute the central theme of the book, some of its sections deal with the Fort, the aristocratic quarters, shopping centres, natural springs and the climate of Delhi, and the origin and evolution of the Urdu language.

The first edition of the *Athar* included the life-sketches of the celebrities of Delhi, both dead and living, each as the heads of religious orders, poets, calligraphists, painters, and musicians. This part was omitted from later editions. The book was translated by a French Orientalist. The translation introduced Sayyid Ahmad to the scholars of Oriental history in Europe.

It is interesting to note that this clear narrative was poorly paragraphed, contained practically no punctuation marks from beginning to end, and was characterized by a certain lack of restraint in presentation. The book went through a second edition in 1270/1853, when its grosser flaws were eliminated. Its language was simplified and new material introduced. Probably the only extant copy of this edition is to be found in the Panjab University Library, Lahore.

Sayyid Ahmad next turned his attention to the *Ain-i Akbari*, the principal source book for the colourful reign of Akbar who presided over an

administra-tion remarkable for its efficiency as well as its complexity. (The land-revenue system built up under the British was faithfully raised upon the foundations laid in the reign of this renowned monarch.) But the available copies of this classic were full of errors and were positively unserviceable for an under-standing of an important epoch.

Sayyid Ahmad sought to establish the text of the great work. The job was undertaken at the request of a merchant prince of Delhi. He collected all the manuscripts within his reach and prepared his own version. To this he added a glossary of difficult phrases, unfamiliar names, and obsolete terms. Legends of the coins of different denominations were reproduced together with detailed particulars about the utensils, implements, arms, and jewellery current in Akbar's time. He also corrected, wherever he could, the inaccuracies of the author himself. All this represented an immense improvement upon the utility of the original work. But unluckily a good part of the manuscript together with its printed portions was destroyed during the Mutiny.

The reign of Firuz Shah Tughlaq is another brilliant interlude in the annals of Medieval India. Firuz Shah was the creator of what may be described as a welfare State, and his fame justly rests on a mild and humane administration. The record of Firuz Shah's life and achievements was preserved by a con-temporary named Dia al-Din Barni.

Sayyid Ahmad prepared a collated manuscript of Barni's work after consulting the four available manuscripts, one of which belonged to the private library of the Mughul royalty and was highly prized for its authenticity. In the preface of the printed book Sayyid Ahmad gave an extensive bibliography of the historical literature of the period and set down all that he had been able to gather about the life of Barni himself. The monograph, published by the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1279/1862, was encumbered with numerous printing errors for which, a high authority informs us, the responsibility must be fixed on the press and not on the editor.

Two other pamphlets reminiscent of Sayyid Ahmad's family affiliations with the Court of Delhi deserve a passing mention. The first one, entitled Jam-i Jam, was a brief tabulated account of the kings of the House of Timur, beginning from the founder and ending with Bahadur Shah II. The reign of each king was described under seventeen columns. It also carried a bibliography and was noticed in Elliot and Dawson's History of India as Told by Its Own Historians. The second brochure catalogued the kings of Delhi from 1400 B.C. listing Queen Victoria as the 202nd sovereign in the chronological order.

A few years before the Mutiny Sayyid Ahmad offered to compile a history of the district of Bijnaur, an offer heartily accepted by his official superiors. The self-imposed obligation led him, after a diligent search for materials, to the original records on the subject dating from the times of Akbar and Jahangir. This was an achievement by itself. The work was duly completed but was lost in the rising of 1273-74/1857, like some of his other works.

Jala al-Qulub bi Dhikr al-Mahbub was a biographical account of the Prophet (S), old fashioned but based on authentic sources, written to repair the deficiency of suitable reading texts at the annual birthday celebrations of the Prophet (S).

Tarikh-i Sarkashi-i Bijnaur is a history of the Mutiny in a particular sector. This is, in fact, an uninterrupted day-to-day diary maintained by Sayyid Ahmad that goes into great detail about the military and related events that took place in the district of Bijnaur between May 1857 and April 1858. He recorded all that he witnessed and preserved all that he wrote amidst the death-dealing conflagration.

The fact that he had numerous enemies about him and lived in hourly peril of his life and yet kept calm enough to make regular entries in his journal is significant. One has to be a historian to the marrow of one's bone to enter into the stream of history with a stoic indifference to one's personal circumstances.

Risalah Asbab-i Baghawat-i Hind is an outstanding contribution to con-temporary history. It has been written with a sense of perspective, which almost invariably eludes those who chronicle the happenings they have lived through. The pamphlet represents an important landmark in the evolution of Sayyid Ahmad's mind. His former concern with history was in the nature of a disinterested intellectual and cultural pursuit. But the horrifying and humiliating consequences of the Mutiny taught him, consciously or uncon-sciously, to resort to history for more practical ends. One of these new motiva-tions was to promote accord between the rulers and the ruled.

The British rule in India has a credit as well as a debit side. However admir-able the qualities of the British mind, it has been too sensitive about its own prerogatives and too much off the balance to make a fair estimate of the inten-sity of Indian feeling and sentiment. No alien rule can be popular, and even when the British acted with the best of motives they earned little or no gratitude from the subject populace.

Like all foreign masters they were prone to dwell glibly on the benefits and blessings of their own domination, but their claims were summarily dismissed by the Indians as mere hypocrisy. Some members of the ruling class who thought over the matter felt exasperated at the want of "appreciation"; others never bothered about questions of human psychology and declared bluntly, like Sir Micheal O'Dwyer half a century later, that the dominion in India had been carved by the sword and that it could not be retained by the faint-hearted.

Sayyid Ahmad knew the British well enough and when he sat down to record his own views about the causes of the Mutiny, the psychological factor was uppermost in his mind. But this was not all. In order to provide his readers with a panoramic view of the catastrophe he gave due weight to the sociological, economic, and historical factors in formulating his view. The product exhibits a robust sense of pro-portion and the skill of a craftsman in making use of the raw materials of history. The book would show that Sayyid Ahmad had almost an intuitive grasp of the techniques of

scientific history writing that were being de-veloped in Europe about this time.

In *Risalah Asbab-i Baghawat-i Hind*, Sayyid Ahmad spotlighted the errors of the administration of the East India Company and brought home the manifold Indian grievances against foreign rule. He called attention to the utter futility of a system of law-making which operated, so to speak, in a vacuum, unconcerned with the state of society; the unrestrained and irritating proselytizing zeal of the Christian missionaries who followed in the wake of the conquest; the well-founded popular suspicion about the Government's planning a wholesale conversion of the Indians to Christianity; the mistaken zeal of the Company's functionaries in helping missionary propaganda; and the mortal injury that all this inflicted on the pride of a people deeply attached to their religious creeds.

In the economic sphere the Company rule had created financial and fiscal monopolies. The local industries had been crushed out of existence to create a market for British imports. A high-handed revenue settlement in Upper India and the escheat of freeholds had caused widespread misery.

The disbandment of princely Courts and armies had restricted the scope for Indian talent. The officials of the East India Company showed little sympathy for the people over whom they ruled. They loved to assert their authority and savagely suppressed all manifestations of discontent. Sayyid Ahmad explained all this without mincing words and attributed the outbreak to the ferocity of the British rule. Viewed differently, it was a powerful plea for humanizing the administration and making it responsive to the urges of the people.

Vast tracts of the country were subjected to declared or undeclared martial law in the months following the suppression of the Mutiny. Ruthlessness of the rulers was proverbial. Freedom of expression and opinion was unthinkable. It was an act of cold courage to have drawn up this indictment. Any English-man who read it was likely to brand it treasonous and inflict the direct chastisement upon its author.

Sayyid Ahmad had the pamphlet printed in a limited number and was on the point of sending it to the Viceroy and members of the British Parliament when some of his friends dissuaded him from the course. But Sayyid Ahmad disregarded the friendly pressure though he experienced some difficulty afterwards in clearing himself of the charges of disloyalty brought against him by his British critics.

Dr. Hunter's *The Indian Musalmans*, published in 1289/1871, was avowedly intended to pave the way to a better understanding of a "persistently belli-gerent" class of Asiatic subjects (i.e., the Indian Muslims), to bridge "the gap between the rulers and the ruled" and, thus, to safeguard the British power in India against the "chronic peril" facing it. Basing his assertions on the evidence adduced at successive State trials, he concluded that there was a close causal connection between the Wahabi activities and the perennially disturbed state of the North-Western Frontier.

The underground movement, he went on to say, was skillfully organized, and its leaders arrogated to them-selves all functions of sovereignty over their constituents. The ties that bound the members of the secret order were

of extraordinary toughness and endurance. The central office, located at Patna and controlling the permanent machinery throughout the rural areas for spreading disaffection, sent out a multitude of lonely, melancholy, and wandering zealots carefully indoctrinated with treason and equipped with extensive literature on the duty of waging war against the British. An uninterrupted stream of money and ardent recruits sworn to extirpate the infidel flowed towards the frontier.

This vivid portrayal of Wahabi transgressions against law evoked a sharp protest from Sayyid Ahmad, who characterized the book as mischievous and unhistorical. In a lengthy review of *The Indian Musalmans*, he pointed out several inaccuracies in Hunter's statement of Wahabi tenets, and critically surveyed the history of the movement from 1239/1823 up to the publication of this book.

The relentless trans-border hostility to British rule, Sayyid Ahmad declared, could not be ascribed to Wahabi fomentations. It was largely prompt-ed by the continued presence on the Frontier of a large, disloyal, and terror stricken population (both Hindu and Muslim), who had fled from the British territory after the Mutiny to escape the wrath of the conqueror, sought asylum with the tribes and started life afresh amidst unfamiliar surroundings. There was nothing unusual in these migrants' receiving visitors and gifts of money from their relations in India.

Finally, the tribal enmity against the con-stituted authority in the country to the east of the river Indus became a recurring phenomenon of Indian history. The expeditions sent in the past by the Emperors Akbar, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzib (all Muslims) had failed to subdue the over-refractory highlanders. Studying *The Indian Musalmans* and its review by Sayyid Ahmad together, it would appear that he had the better of the argument and many fair minded Englishmen were convinced of the invalidity of Dr. Hunter's deductions.

It has been sometimes suggested that Sayyid Ahmad disengaged himself from historical studies after the Mutiny and that he was engrossed more and more in the advancement of social reform and the preaching of political "quietism." But that is wide of the mark. It is true that the results of his later interest in history did not issue in big volumes. But numerous later articles from his pen deal with historical subjects, and a subtle sense of history pervades the rest of his writings.

In one of his letters he spoke of the unsavoury fruit of history. The phrase was interpreted to mean that an excessive contemplation of the past was likely to act as a dope and lead the people away from the task of reform and reconstruction. A careful study of the context, however, makes it clear that this was far from his mind. He only called for a rational approach to history and a proper evaluation of its bequests.

It would be more appropriate to say that Sayyid Ahmad discovered new uses of history. He informed one of his friends from abroad that the vilification of Islam and distortion of its history in the West were directly responsible for the political adversities of the Indian Muslims. A more objective approach to the past, he felt, would go a long way in conquering the deep rooted aversion of the West for Islam and its followers.

While the nostrum was sorely needed for the West, it was about as necessary for the Muslims themselves. As a people they had to rediscover their own identity and their own ideals. What can be done depends much upon what has been. History, thus, became an instrument of Muslim renaissance in Sayyid Ahmad's hands. History, he was careful to emphasize, was not to be treated as a jumble of useless information crammed in dusty volumes but as a continuous and meaningful record of man, living in association with his kind and toiling for the satisfaction of his material needs.

This could best be brought about by integrating history with sociology. Therefore, history had to be reapproached, refathomed, and rechronicled. Sayyid Ahmad was probably the first man of letters in the Indian sub-continent to make out a case for the reformulation of historical values. The task has been going on steadily. Still a lot remains to be accomplished. The same cry is heard from different platforms and institutions even today.

Sayyid Ahmad had his ideas not only on the content of history but also about its form. He made a sharp distinction between history and fiction: the two belonged to different departments of literature, each with a method of its own. Historical romance was fatal to history and fiction alike. The mere stylist must never be entrusted with the job of putting history into shape. He may be tempted to sacrifice accuracy for the sake of a few smart phrases.

Sayyid Ahmad did not have a high opinion about Macaulay's talent as a historian because he (i.e., Sayyid) did not look upon history as an affair of chiselled idiom. The historiographer, according to him, must cultivate the art of expressing himself in inornate and exact prose.

Sayyid Ahmad's own contribution to history was not inconsiderable. But the inspiration which two prolific yet conscientious historians received from him is equally important. The first among them was Shibli Numani, Professor of Oriental Languages at the M.A.O. College, who came into contact with Sayyid Ahmad while he was yet deeply imbued with the orthodox tradition. But he gradually outgrew his narrowness of vision under the liberalizing influence of the Master.

In addition to a comprehensive biography of the Prophet (S), he wrote a series of works on some of the leading personalities of Muslim history such as the Caliph Umar, al-Mamun, Rumi, al- Ghazali, and the like, and set their achievements in a clear light. He had to undertake an expensive journey to Turkey and other Muslim countries in search of material for his volumes.

Written in accordance with the principles of historiography laid down by Sayyid Ahmad, Shibli's works had a great vogue and constituted an important force behind the Muslim renaissance in India initiated by the Aligarh Movement.

The other scholar to imbibe Sayyid Ahmad's methodology was Professor Zaka Allah of the Central Muir College, Allahabad, whose greatest achievement was a voluminous history of India. The preface of this work reaffirms the validity of Sayyid Ahmad's thinking and the author hastens to impress upon his readers that a fruitful study of history should enable discerning minds to discover the laws of human development. Maulawi Mehdi Ali, better known as Muhsin al-Mulk, reviewed ibn Khaldun's

“Pro-legomena” in the Tahdhib al-Akhlaq and introduced Urdu readers to the theories of the medieval savant. This served to induce realism about the past among later Indian Muslim writers.

C: The Sayyid as a Reformer

The revolutionary changes, social and political, which came over the sub-continent in the thirteenth/nineteenth century disorganized the spiritual no less than the mundane life of the Indian Muslims. The central Muslim problem was one of adjustments to an adamant political dispensation. The process entailed a fight against the persistent antagonism between the Christian rulers and their Muslim subjects.

The political rivalry between Islam and Christendom was a legacy of the past and began as far back as the second/eighth century when Muslim conquests in Europe and Africa brought the followers of the two faiths in close geographical proximity. The Crusades deepened the fissure. The European Powers felt the Turkish conquest of Constantinople as a thorn in their side.

No wonder that the majority of European scholars looked at Islam through coloured glasses; they were loth to make a dispassionate study of its tenets and institutions and were content to repeat popular distortions about it. Such crudities which represented Muhammad (S) as an idol in the temple of Mecca and Muslims as bloodthirsty destroyers of the peace of the world and the cultures of its peoples gained wide credence.

With such prepossessions, the rulers of the country were suspicious of Muslim loyalty towards the new order. There was much in Muslim thinking and conduct to confirm their misgivings. Consequently, the British would not feel secure unless they liquidated the Muslim menace. The Hindus who had lived under Muslim rule for many centuries and nursed real or fancied grievances against their former rulers were attracted by the opportunities for advancement provided by the change of masters.

The leaders of thought among them discarded their ancient caste scruples and went forward to meet the British conquerors more than half way. The alliance was advantageous to both. The Muslims were slowly crushed between the two pincers. The British ignored the very existence of Muslims and felt no qualm in sacrificing Muslim rights to advance Hindu interests. As Hindu subjects drew closer and closer to the British rulers, the Muslims drifted apart. In course of time the estrangement was complete and the two found themselves separated by an unbridgeable gulf.

Sayyid Ahmad was a realist. He had been through the Mutiny and watched at close quarters the outcome of the conqueror’s unappeasable wrath against the Muslims. He had witnessed vast sections of Muslim aristocracy being either obliterated or utterly impoverished. He was convinced that the British had come to stay in India and that their supremacy, along with that of the Western way of thinking, could not be challenged in any foreseeable future.

The Muslims must, therefore, refashion their lives as Muslims. If they did not, they would go deeper down into the morass of degradation. In his opinion the Christian-Muslim rancour was based merely upon mutual ignorance and prejudice. His effort to mediate between the two religions

took the form of an unfinished commentary on the Bible, which, among other things, sought to establish that both Islam and Christianity were fed from the same spiritual spring.

The identity of their history and family resemblance between their doctrines could be readily understood by anyone who studied and compared their contents. Sayyid Ahmad also allowed, against the accepted Muslim belief, some sort of integrity to the existing Biblical text and showed that Christianity was a humanitarian religion that forbade all kinds of cruelty and all forms of wanton bloodshed. It would be interesting to note that this was the first commentary on the Bible in any Asian language. For obvious reasons the exposition found no favour either with Christians or with Muslims.

The Muslim society in India tabooed social intercourse with Christians under a mistaken interpretation of religion. In order to remove this social barrier, Sayyid Ahmad wrote a pamphlet, entitled *Ahkam-iTaam-i Ahl-i Kitab*, to explain that Muslim Law does not prevent Muslims from dining with Jews or Christians provided prohibited foods or drinks are not served.

Periods of transition are inevitably attended by confusion and perplexities. New education was a powerful ally of all isms opposed to religion and ethics. As Dr. Hunter had put it: "No young man ... passes through our schools without learning to disbelieve the faith of his forefathers. The luxuriant religions of Asia shrivel into dry sticks when brought into contact with the icy realities of Western science."

There is nothing unusual in a conservative community rejecting all new ideas that threaten its homogeneity. The older generation among Muslims had no sense of direction. It scouted all current scientific ideas as incompatible with religion. While the Hindus took to the new education avidly, it stuck in Muslim throats. The Muslim child who went to a West-oriented school was deemed to have crossed the limits of the Holy Law and placed himself outside the pale of Islam.

This was the way to extinction. With his usual foresight Sayyid Ahmad grasped the nature of the issue and devised a solution. In the first place, he attempted a new synthesis of religious thought in Islam the central doctrine of which was that Islam was not opposed to the study of science and had nothing to fear from its impact; secondly, he conceived of a new system of education in which the responsibility for educating the coming generations would be thrown on the community itself and in which the scholars would receive instruction in Islam along with a grounding in Western sciences.

This was the basic principle of Aligarh education that brought influential elements in the Indian Muslim society into the current of modernism. If Aligarh did not develop on the lines envisaged by Sayyid Ahmad, the failure cannot be ascribed to him. Though he said many hard things about the system of Muslim education received from the Middle Ages, it is unfair to suggest that he had set his heart on a total breach with the past.

He advocated, for instance, the retention of self-perpetuating and inexpensive arrangements for elementary education. In respect of female education his ideas were not much in advance of his times. He would first

have the men educated and leave the problem of women's education to solve itself.

The proselytizing activities of Christian missionaries were giving an acute cause of anxiety to the Muslim society. The missionaries who had been allowed to settle down and pursue their vocation in the territorial possessions of the East India Company by the Charter Act of 1813 enjoyed Government patronage and used a variety of methods to secure conversions.

The missionary ingress virtually became an invasion. They spread a network of schools where the Bible was placed in the hands of young pupils and its study encouraged by pecuniary rewards. Their hospitals gave free medicines to visiting patients along with doses of Christian teaching. The field behaviour of missionaries was arrogant, offensive, and aggressive. In the course of their preaching they freely entered into religious and theological disputations and indulged in intemperate language about founders of other religions and their teachings.

Islam was an unflinching target of their platform invective. It was also vilified in leaflets and pamphlets. The Muslim youth was confronted with a mutilated presentation of Muslim history and doctrines to shatter his faith and breed a sense of inferiority in him. The core of missionary preaching was that Islam had outlived its day, that it could not stand scientific and intellectual scrutiny, that its appeal lay to the grosser impulses of human nature, and that it had kept the Muslim communities all over the world in a state of chronic back-wardness.

The Life of Mohammed (S) written by Sir William Muir, at the instance of a veteran missionary, amplified this thesis. The book based its argument on the information collected from a close study of some Muslim sources and was acclaimed as a great help to the missionary in his spiritual onslaught on Islam. Sir William had pointed to the institutions of divorce, polygamy, and slavery with the finger of scorn, though towards the end he was constrained to admit that Islam had "banished for ever many of the darker elements of superstition.... Idolatry vanished before the battle cry of Islam; the doctrine of the Unity and infinite perfections of God ... became a living principle in the hearts and lives of the followers of Mohammed (S).... Brotherly love is inculcated ... within the circle of the faith ... orphans to be protected, and slaves treated with consideration; intoxicating drinks prohibited, so that Mohammadanism may boast of a degree of temperance unknown to any other creed."²

Sayyid Ahmad wrote a refutation of this book under the title Essays on the Life of Mohammed (S) and Subjects Subsidiary Thereto. This was a scientific historical study characterized by rigorous reasoning and can be rightly regarded as a specimen of the author's ripe scholarship. The materials needed for the work could not be found in India. Sayyid Ahmad undertook a voyage to Britain where he studied in the British Museum and the India Office Library, sent for rare works from Turkish and Egyptian libraries and had numerous passages from the works of European scholars translated into English for his own use. The work proved costly. He had to sell his household effects and borrow heavily to meet the expenses of the publication.

Sayyid Ahmad dug deep into the canonical literature of Islam. But he was no mere respecter of authority. He freely questioned the credentials of reputed commentators. In his way of thinking Hadith did not furnish an adequate basis for the understanding of Islam. He held that the brilliant allegorical method of the Quran made it plain that every age had to understand the Book in the light of its own requirements.

Religion, Sayyid Ahmad opined, had gathered a good deal of mass in its sojourn through time. It had been inextricably mixed up with the judgments of its exponents. It needed to be combed of all exotic ideas and placed in its proper perspective. In questioning sanctified opinions Sayyid Ahmad emancipated the Muslim thought in India from the bondage of prescription and in this lies his monumental achievement.

Sayyid Ahmad can justly be regarded as a maker of Urdu prose and the first real prose-writer in this language. Born out of the confluence of Persian and local Indian dialects, Urdu is a cultural heritage of Muslim rule in India. But it was as yet in a state of comparative infancy. Its thought had been enriched and mode of expression refined by a long line of illustrious poets. Its prose, however, was under-developed.

Its intellectual content was small and its vocabulary could grapple only with a narrow range of subjects, like religion, history, and mysticism. Written in rhymed prose, the early Urdu books abounded in similes and metaphors and represented an unscientific and lifeless assemblage of facts with a strong didactic and otherworldly flavour. Most of the writers were old-fashioned Arabic scholars whose ponderous Urdu was beyond the comprehension of those unacquainted with that language. Their phraseology leaves the modern reader cold and sneering.

Sayyid Ahmad worked a veritable revolution in literature. Primarily a reformer who wanted to raise his community to the intellectual level of the more advanced Western peoples, he sought to propagate his ideas through workmanlike, unvarnished Urdu prose. This purpose could be served only if the language was stripped of its medieval trappings and invested with a sufficiently sensitive and expressive vocabulary to absorb and expound all shades of meaning on different subjects connected with contemporary life.

He made his first effort in this sphere by founding the Scientific Society at Muradabad in 1281/1864. The Society was later headquartered at Aligarh, where it published very readable translations of standard English works on history, political economy, agriculture, mathematics, and other useful subjects. The Society also ran a weekly journal, the Aligarh Institute Gazette, in which appeared articles of popular interest on social, educational, and scientific subjects. The translations issued by the Scientific Society are far more service-able than the unreadable laborious work done later under princely auspices and at fabulous cost.

As a writer Sayyid Ahmad dealt with momentous issues of the day. He often wrote on controversial and debatable subjects and began them with a provocative statement. Master of a smooth and matter-of-fact style he never burdened his writings with unfamiliar terminology. His romanti-cism was very much subdued and was under the control of a conscious classicism. He seldom played with the feelings of his readers. He could enliven almost any

subject that he chose for discussion and had all the qualities of penman-ship that distinguish the true artist from a mere scribe.

As he wrote he appeared to be engaged in an intimate conversation. By inimitable inductive methods he built up his arguments bit by bit with the help of shared experience leading the reader to his own conclusions and communicating to him his personal enthusiasm for social improvement. The galaxy of talent that sur-rounded Sayyid Ahmad included renowned intellectuals who made valuable contributions to the Urdu language in history, criticism, mathematics, and even science.

Sayyid Ahmad made no direct contribution to poetry. With him, and after him, prose became a vehicle of awakening and instruction.

To sum up, before Sayyid Ahmad's day Urdu was not much above the status of a dialect. It was he who transformed it into a language pulsating with life and capable of meeting the demands of a complex modern society.

An idea of Sayyid Ahmad's notions about the mental and moral equipment of a social reformer and his duties and obligations can be gained from the following extracts taken from one of his best known essays:

“Most people believe that they can rid themselves of social evils by common action.... I do not subscribe to this view. The way to reform lies through discord and not through unity. Reformist ideals call for courage and perse-verance of a high order. It is for the reformer boldly to violate the customs of his group.... In this he will incur a lot of odium and popular disappro-bation. But ultimately he will succeed and win converts. Though he provokes opposition in the beginning he is acknowledged a benefactor in the end.”³

“I wish to point out to my countrymen the futility of condemning and cursing our social heritage in the privacy of our conclaves. It is vain to look for friends and supporters in the task of regeneration. One who wishes well of his people should come out in the open, break his own chains, and put heart into others to do the same.”⁴

Sayyid Ahmad himself lived up to these professions. He was fully imbued with the impatience of a zealot and the fervour of an iconoclast. At times he was forthright to the point of wounding others' feelings. In his reformist programme he included freedom of opinion, a critical approach to religion, the discarding of social evils imbibed from Hindu contacts, the elimination of the less desirable traits of human character such as flattery, insincerity and selfish individualism, proper observance of the cleanliness of person and environment, reforms of dress and manners of eating, the recognition of women's rights and the simplification of current forms of address in cor-respondence.

D: The Sayyid as a Politician

Sayyid Ahmad never presented himself as a politician. At the conscious level his life work was primarily educational and reformative. It is usual to study his political views within a narrow sector and speak of them in colourful and hostile adjectives. It is, therefore, necessary to review his political doctrines in the context of problems facing him. This alone can make his thought intelli-gible.

For one thing, Sayyid Ahmad was often reticent on politics. But whenever he spoke he was far from polemical. His opinions were characterized by the same candour and empirical quality that permeated his discussion on social and religious questions. A recent Indian publication has pointedly stated that each one of Sayyid Ahmad's major projects (i.e., the Scientific Society, the M.A.O. College, the commentary on the Bible, the plea for social reform, the commentary on the Quran) was inspired by political considerations and was, directly or indirectly, designed to lead to the political rehabilitation of the Indian Muslims.

This view is correct if the term "politics" is meant to include all that it conveyed to the ancient Greeks. But if we choose the narrower meaning, the view, though arguable, is directly disputed by his friend and biographer, Altaf Husain Hali, who has explained at some length that Sayyid Ahmad's love of religion alone supplied the dynamic for all his activities.

The best theoretical statement on Sayyid Ahmad's politics is contained in a communication that he addressed to one of his English friends. He says, "I am a Musalman domiciled in India. Racially I am a Semite: the Arab blood still courses in my veins. The religion of Islam in which I have full and abiding faith preaches radical principles. Thus, both by blood and faith I am a true radical.... Islam is opposed to all forms of monarchy, whether hereditary or limited. It approves of the rule of a popularly elected president; it denounces the concentration of capital and insists upon the division of properties and possessions among legal heirs on the demise of their owners.

(In this way) even a mine of wealth would suffer countless subdivisions in the course of two generations. But the religion that teaches me these principles also inculcates certain other principles. First, if God wills our subjection to another race, which grants us religious freedom, governs us justly, preserves peace, protects our life and belongings, as the British do in India, we should wish it well and owe it allegiance...."⁵

The latter part of this declaration has invited strongly worded and un-deserved criticism. Some have spoken of it as a new version of the divine right of rulers. But it should be clear, as we proceed, that the loyalty of which Sayyid Ahmad spoke was the loyalty of free men and not of helots. Sayyid Ahmad throughout prided himself on his radicalism. But, generally speaking, the content of radicalism is relative to time and place. A radical of yesterday may be the conservative of today. But Sayyid Ahmad's liberalism has an objective stamp that will be recognized by anyone who follows his opinions carefully.

In post-Mutiny India the ruling race, with rare exceptions, displayed ab-normal racial arrogance. In part this could be attributed to the Mutiny that furnished a grim background to the era that it opened. Old memories rankled on both sides. The Indians soon reconciled themselves to British rule as to a decree of fate. But the British, drunk with the pride of conquest, were always squaring the past accounts with the subjugated populace.

They treated their Indian subjects as half-savages and were quick and demonstrative in heaping indignities on their heads. All Britons deemed it a national duty to exact all external courtesies from the Indians they were forced to meet in the ordinary business of life. There were few points of

social contact between the two. The ruling race lived a life of its own and behaved like an army of occupation.

“Apartheid” was practised by rulers in India in an obnoxious form before it made its appearance elsewhere. Whatever his rank or birth, no Indian was allowed to enter restaurants, public parks, or railway compartments frequented by Englishmen. If he did so even unwittingly, he found himself rudely thrown out. The passage of time did nothing to soften the haughtiness of the ruling class.

Sayyid Ahmad reminded them of this weakness of theirs in 1294/1877 in these words: “For a whole century and more, you, gentlemen, have lived in the same country; you have breathed the same air; you have drunk the same water; you have lived on the same crops that have given nourishment to the millions of your fellow Indian subjects, yet the absence of social intercourse, which is implied by the word friendship between the English and the people of this country has been most deplorable.”⁶

The controversy which centred round the Ilbert Bill (a legislative measure which sought to extend the jurisdiction of Indian magistrates and judges of a certain standing by investing them with the power of trying European criminals) called forth an aggressive and noisy agitation from the British community resident in India, who thought that the world would end if a white man was made to stand in the dock before a magistrate with a tanned complexion.

Sayyid Ahmad committed an irredeemable sin in their eyes by recording his vote in favour of the Bill. In the course of his speech before the Legislature, on the occasion, he made out a weighty case for equality before law and observed, “I am convinced that laws based on racial discrimination will prevent the growth of friendship and amity between our two peoples. Pleasant social life and political equality are born out of subjection to a uniform system of law. It is time that all subjects of the Crown, Hindus, Muslims, Europeans, Eurasians, should enjoy the same political and constitutional rights, and be subject to the same disabilities.”⁷

Towards the end of his life, Sayyid Ahmad grew pessimistic about the likelihood of Englishmen learning to conduct themselves differently. He gave expression to his despondency in an article, a part of which runs as follows:

“In my opinion the time has not yet come, and perhaps will never come, when our European friends, conquerors of this country... will condescend to sit on the same bench with a conquered and naturally hated Indian.... If the Indian wants to keep up his self-respect... his life becomes unbearable.... If an Indian desires to obey the dictates of his conscience... he cannot perform his duties.... It is no secret that the treatment which English people accord to their own countrymen and that which they accord to Indians are as different from one another as black is from white.”⁸

Sayyid Ahmad’s dealings with the British fail to corroborate the legend of “servility” assiduously circulated by an extremely vocal coterie of propagandists in the following generation. His opposition to certain policies of the Government was constant, consistent, and unsparing. He never hesitated to cross swords with insolent and ill-mannered bureaucrats and

was impatient with the widespread habit of suffering official high-handedness meekly.

He advised his countrymen not to put up with injustice and indignity even if it came straight from Caesar. Said he, “They (the Indians) have at present little or no voice in the management of the affairs of this country; and should any measure of the Government prove obnoxious to them, they brood over it, appearing outwardly satisfied and happy, whilst discontent is rankling in their hearts. You are in the habit of inveighing against various acts of Government in your homes, and amongst your friends, (but) in the course of your visits to (officials), you represent yourselves as quite satisfied with the justice and wisdom of the same acts.”⁹ Sayyid Ahmad did not consider such a temper dignified or helpful.

The part played by the Urdu-Hindi controversy in shaping Hindu-Muslim relations on the political plane has often been overlooked. Sayyid Ahmad was the first Muslim to sense the political implications of the linguistic wrangle. The dispute, the ashes of which have not yet been buried, forced itself on public attention in 1284/1867.

The Hindus were determined to undo Urdu and have it replaced by Hindi as the language of the law-courts. They opened the front at Benares. Gradually, their demand gathered strength and momentum. The methods by which the friends of Hindi pursued their ends ripped open the wounds of the past and portended the inevitable conflict.

Sayyid Ahmad abandoned all hope of co-operation between Hindus and Muslims and read with uncanny sureness the writing on the wall. His oft-quoted letter, written from London in 1286/1869 in which he talked of Hindus and Muslims parting company for good, can be read as a veritable political prophecy about the 1366/1947 partition of the Indian sub-continent.

In 1295/1878 Sayyid Ahmad was nominated as a member of the Indian Legislature and sat in this body for a little over four years. As a legislator he took his duties seriously and spoke practically on every bill that came up for discussion. He was the first Indian to introduce a private bill into the Legislature that eventually found place on the statute book. His speeches displayed a firm understanding of social questions underlying legal issues. He also interested himself in the waning fortunes of the once prosperous Muslim families and sought to arrest by legislation their increasing impoverishment. But his draft bill was not taken up on technical grounds.

The earliest political movements in India were local in character. But they soon coalesced under the auspices of the Indian National Congress. This body was actually founded by an Englishman, A.O. Hume, a retired member of the Bengal Civil Service, with the active encouragement of the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin. It was almost a Government sponsored body and its relations with Authority were cordial in the earlier phase of its stormy career.

The Congress met once a year and its annual festival of speech making lasted for three days. Year after year, it passed resolutions demanding the introduction of Western electoral and representative institutions in India. As time went by, the influential reform movements in Hindu society were integrated with the political creed of the Indian National Congress that

became the market-place of Hindu ideologies and the forum of Hindu aspirations.

Sayyid Ahmad counselled Muslims to keep away from the Congress for several cogent reasons. In education and enlightenment they were sadly behind the times and were not experienced enough for the game of politics. They had large gaps to fill and big deficiencies to make up; politics, at this stage, would prove a distracting pursuit and upset plans of educational reform and social uplift.

There was nothing baneful in asking an educationally backward and economically poor people to attend to first things first. He further argued that no political movement in India could be depended upon to produce worthwhile results in the face of growing estrangement between Hindus and Muslims. Fruitful politics could only be raised upon consensus of opinion.

The conclusion is as valid in the fourteenth/twentieth century as it was in the thirteenth/nineteenth. Experience has taught the Muslims, if they are at all prepared to heed its warning, that consensus alone can give substance and reality to democratic forms and not a mechanical manipulation of the will of those in majority.

Finally, India's size and racial and cultural diversities will always militate against the success of Western democratic institutions. He expressed this line of thought in one of his articles thus: "I seriously pondered over the suitability (or otherwise) of the representative system of government in India long before the Congress took up the matter. Having carefully gone through the (clearly expressed) opinions of John Stuart Mill, I am convinced that where majority vote is a decisive factor in a political system, it is essential for the electors to be united by ties of race, religion, manners, customs, culture, and historical traditions. In the presence of these conditions, representative government is practicable and useful. In their absence it would only injure the well-being and tranquillity of the land."¹⁰

The Muslim community could not agree to sacrifice its historic identity on the altar of a nationalism with which it had no affinities. That the Muslims formed a nation by themselves by virtue of their common adhesion to the Muslim faith, is the most recurring refrain of Sayyid Ahmad's speeches and writings. A typical extract culled at random from an address to Muslim students at Lahore is as follows:

"I use the word community to include all Musalmans. Faith in God and His Prophet (S) and proper observance of the precepts of the faith are the only bonds that hold us together. You are irrevocably lost to us if you turn your back on religion. We have no part or lot with transgressors and derelicts even if they shine like the stars of the firmament. I want you to dive deep into European literature and sciences but at the same time I expect you to be true to your faith."¹¹

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Chapter 81: Renaissance in Indo-Pakistan (Continued): Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan as a Religio-Philosophical Thinker

It was the experience of the Indian Revolt that made Sayyid Ahmad Khan what he is for us today. He realized the dangers that were inherent in the situation for the future welfare of the Muslim community in India, and decided to take the challenge boldly. He wrote *The Causes of Indian Revolt* (1276-77/1859) and *The Loyal Mohammedans of India* to counteract the growing anti-Muslim attitude of the British rulers and hostile propaganda of the Hindus.

On the positive side he tried to acquaint the Muslims with the wealth and richness of the new learning of the West. He set up his Scientific Society in 1281/1864 first at Ghazipur and then at Aligarh with the purpose of translating English books into Urdu so that the common people might become aware of the advance in knowledge reached by the West. In 1283/1866 he started a bi-weekly, *The Aligarh Institute Gazette*, to enlighten the public on the aims of the Scientific Society.

His visit to England in 1286/1869 proved very helpful in convincing him that the only way to rehabilitate the Muslims was to provide them with the weapons of Western learning through modern education. But this very introduction of Western learning brought with it the intellectual ferment which compelled Sayyid Ahmad Khan to address himself to the reinterpretation of the whole cultural and religious heritage of the Muslims.

For this purpose he started the famous periodical *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq*, in the first issue of which he set forth in detail its aims and objects. "The aim of this periodical is that the Muslims of India should be persuaded to adopt the best kind of civilization so that the contempt with which the civilized people look upon the Muslims should be removed;... it is true that religion plays a great part in making a people civilized. There are, no doubt, some religions that stand in the way of progress. It is our aim to judge where Islam stands in this regard."¹

The spread of Western education among Muslims and the general enlightenment that the introduction of modern science brought about in the public was the greatest challenge. In one of his lectures he refers to the spread of doubt and misgivings in the hearts of the people about Islam.² Discussing the spread of belief in naturalism, he said, "Today we are in need of a modern *Ilm al-Kalam* by which we should refute the doctrines of modern science and undermine their foundations, or show that they are in conformity with the articles of Islamic faith. While I am endeavouring to introduce these sciences among the Muslims, it is my duty to defend the religion of Islam and to reveal its original bright face."

But the important question was how to prove the validity of a particular religion in the face of so many claimants. He came to the conclusion that "the only touchstone of a true religion can be this: if it is in conformity with human nature or with nature in general, then it is true. This would be a clear proof that the religion in question has come from God, the Author of nature both in man and outside.

I am fully confident that the guidance that He has given us is absolutely in conformity with our constitution and our nature and this is the only

touchstone of its truth. It would be clearly absurd to assert that God's action is different from His Word. All creation including man is the work of God and religion is His Word, so there cannot be any contradiction between the two."³

What is nature? Sayyid Ahmad Khan interprets it in the sense in which the thirteenth/nineteenth century scientists interpreted it as a closed system of the universe which obeys certain laws of mechanics and physics and which is characterized by a uniformity of behaviour to which there cannot be any exception. All inorganic, organic, and human behaviour is subject to these mechanical laws.

In one of his articles, he says, "In the beginning this knowledge of nature was limited. But with the increase in knowledge, the sphere of nature has correspondingly increased and, thus, seems to have become co-extensive with what we find in the universe, what we see or feel, so much so that the actions and thoughts of man and even his beliefs are all different chains in the inexorable laws of nature."⁴

But this mechanical conception of nature, as James Ward put it, is totally antagonistic to the spiritual inter-pretation of life, and, therefore, cannot be upheld by a person who is advocating the truth of any theistic religion. In the writings of Sayyid Ahmad Khan we meet with both types of naturalism, mechanistic and antitheistic on the one hand and teleological and theistic on the other, and he often passes from the former to the latter without any thought to consistency or logic.

In the same article he says that "just as among us some people are religious and others irreligious, so among the naturalists there are several people who begin to think that when we find the laws of nature permeating every sphere of the universe, then there is nothing but nature, and so come to deny God. Perhaps such were the people whom our ancient Muslim thinkers called naturalists (dahriyyun).

But there are some people among the modern scientists who in their intensive researches in the laws of nature came to the conclusion, on the basis of nature's magnificent display of design, that there must be some designer, the Cause of causes, whom we usually call God. These scientists traversed the same path as the youth of Chaldea, well known as Abraham, had followed."

Thus it is clear that Sayyid Ahmad starts with a mechanical and quantitative conception of nature and passes on to a teleological interpretation of it without realizing the inconsistency involved. He interprets the experiences of Moses (as) and Abraham (as) in the same spirit. "None of the prophets," he says, "came to realize God except through this process. Moses (as) expressed his wish to see God; he got the reply: 'By no means canst thou see Me but look upon the mount' (7:143).

What was on the mountain? It was nature, a manifestation of the law of nature. God could not manifest Himself direct; the way He pointed out was the way of nature.... When asked, 'What art Thou?' He invariably refers to the laws of nature and implies that it is He who changes night into day and day into night and gives life to the dead and death to the living."

Secondly, he refers to the spiritual experience of Abraham (as) as recorded in the Quran (3:75-79). "From nature he went to God, from the uniformity of the laws of the physical universe, he was able to transcend to the spiritual reality behind. He saw the stars, the moon, the sun, that appear and disappear, rise and set according to fixed immutable laws, and was able to penetrate behind the veil of these laws of nature to their Author. He declared, 'I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him who created the heavens and the earth.'"⁵

This identification of Islam with nature implied that true religion consists in the belief in one God only and that all those people who accept this doctrine of the unity of God are Muslims, however different they may be in the rituals and other religious observances. In an article "Islam is Nature and Nature is Islam," he says, "Islam is such a simple and useful religion that even irreligiousness is included in it.... What minimum beliefs an irreligious person may hold must be the basic creed of Islam.

Every religion has certain special rituals and creeds on account of which it is differentiated from others, and anyone who does not believe in and follow these rituals is called irreligious, though we have no right to call him so, for religion pure and simple is above all these rituals and formalities with which it comes unfortunately to be bound up. He who does not believe in any prophet, avatar, revealed Scripture, or the ritualistic formalities but believes only in one God is a Muslim in the true sense of the word."⁶

By reason Sayyid Ahmad Khan means the empirical reason, to which the Quran appeals. He calls it human reason or aql-i kulli. "It is that inherent capacity in man by which he draws conclusions on the basis of the observation of objective phenomena or mental thinking processes, and which proceeds from particulars to generalizations and vice versa.... It is this capacity of man which has enabled him to invent new things and led him on to under-stand and control the forces of nature; it is by this that man is able to know things which are a source of his happiness and then tries to get as much profit out of, them as possible; it is this which makes a man ask the whys and the wherefores of different events around him."⁷

In a very illuminating article, "Thoughts of Man," Sayyid Ahmad Khan discusses the problem of reason in detail. After defining reason as above, he says that man is distinguished from animals on account of rationality, which imposes on him duties and responsibilities far in excess of those on animals. The main function of reason, according to him, is to acquire knowledge about the nature and reality of things. But this knowledge is intimately related with certitude (yaqin).

"I fully realized," he says, "that without certitude know-ledge is possible neither in the sphere of the world nor in that of religion. But what kind of certitude do we need? I know, for instance, that ten is more than three. If someone states to the contrary and in proof of his statement changes a stick into a snake, I would, no doubt, be utterly surprised at his strange feat but it would never shake me out of my belief that ten is more than three. Without a certitude of this kind it is not possible to proceed further."

But the important question is how and where to get this kind of certitude. He examines the beliefs of different people. A Christian, for instance,

believes in the doctrine of the Trinity, because it is claimed to have been taught by Jesus (as) and Jesus (as) is credited to have wrought many wonderful miracles. But such beliefs, based as they are on the authority of a particular individual and supported by the miraculous performances, cannot stand on any sure ground.

In order to be acceptable they must have the sanction of reason and common sense. He concludes, "I come to the conclusion that reason alone is the instrument which can decide the matter, and bring about the necessary conviction. But is not reason fallible? Yes, it is, and we cannot help it. As reason is used almost universally, so the reason of one man can be corrected by that of another and the reason of one age by that of another age. Without it nothing can be achieved."⁸

In the history of Muslim thought and especially among the mystics, however, reason has often been placed subordinate to intuition or mystic disclosure (kashf). Ghazali, for instance, whose line of argument (as developed by him in the *Munqidh*), is adopted by Sayyid Ahmad Khan, holds that there is a higher stage beyond reason where reason appears as fallible and defective as sense perception is at the bar of reason.

But Sayyid Ahmad is not willing to accept this argument. He says that supposing such a state exists, how can we judge the validity or otherwise of the knowledge yielded by it? The contradictions in the reports of mystic experience are proverbial. What criterion is there by which we can determine which of them are true and which false? Naturally, we have nothing else but reason to decide the matter.⁹

There is, however, no qualitative difference, according to Sayyid Ahmad Khan, between reason and revelation. He does not admit the usually accepted distinction of natural and revealed religions, for it would mean that revealed religion is something different or in certain respects even antagonistic to the natural and rational demands of man. He looks at the problem of their re-relationship biologically and makes inspiration a natural development of man's instinctive and rational capacities.

All insects and animals possess instinctive power that the Quran calls wahi, revelation (16:68), and thus makes instinct, reason, and revelation belong to the same category, though with a difference of degree at each grade of being. It is as a result of man's natural aptitude that he calls wahi that people in different ages and regions have been able to evolve an almost universal standard of moral values.

Those who are endowed with reason to the highest degree are the guides and leaders of people whom Shah Wali Allah calls the *mufhimun*. According to Sayyid Ahmad, these guides and leaders appear in all spheres of human life, secular as well as religious, and they all, without any distinction, receive divine illumination or wahi.

An inventor of a new mechanical device, a discoverer of hitherto unknown and unexplored regions of the universe, a composer of beautiful symphony, are all recipients of spiritual revelation in their different spheres. The difference between the prophets and other geniuses, according to him, is due to the difference of the spheres in which they work. The prophets are

spiritual healers and their primary and sole function is to reorientate the spiritual and moral life of the people.

Sayyid Ahmad Khan totally rejects the view of the theologians according to whom a person attains prophethood merely because God, in the arbitrary exercise of His power, confers this rank on him. According to them, there is no difference between the prophets and other mortals except that the former occupy a particular rank conferred on them by the favour of God. The relationship between the prophet and his followers is envisaged as that between a king and his subjects, a difference depending in most cases merely on the accident of birth.

But, according to Sayyid Ahmad, this relationship can be better understood in terms of the relation that holds between a shepherd and his sheep. "Though the prophet and his followers both belong to the category of humanity, as the shepherd and the sheep belong to that of animality, yet the possession of prophetic faculty marks off the prophet from the rest of humanity just as the possession of rationality marks off the shepherd from the sheep."¹⁰

Thus, according to Sayyid Ahmad Khan, prophethood is a special natural faculty like other human faculties and capacities which blossoms forth at the opportune time as flowers and fruit ripen on a tree at a particular time. There is nothing strange about it. Sometimes a particular individual comes to possess a certain faculty in such a perfect form that the people recognize him to be a genius in that particular branch of art or craft.

A poet, a physician, or a blacksmith can become the master of his art and craft. One who possesses extraordinary natural powers of healing spiritual maladies and is thereby able to bring about moral regeneration of mankind is called a prophet. When these natural aptitudes ripen and mature at the proper time, he feels called upon to declare to the people his new mission of moral and spiritual regeneration.

The Sayyid rejects the mechanical interpretation of the way revelation came to the prophets; it was the logical consequence of his view of prophet-hood. According to him, there is no intermediary between God and the prophet. He receives all revelation direct from God. Gabriel is in reality a symbolical representation of the prophetic faculty.

"His heart is the mirror which reflects the divine illuminations. It is his heart that carries the message to God and then returns with the divine message. He is the being from whom the words of God's speech emanate, he is the ear which hears the wordless and noiseless speech of God. From his heart gushes forth, like a fountain, the revelation and then it descends on him. His spiritual experiences are all the result of human nature. He hears his spiritual message (kalam-i nafsi) by his physical ears as if somebody else is saying something to him; he sees himself with his physical eyes as if another person is standing before him."¹¹

Thus, according to Sayyid Ahmad Khan, revelation is not something which comes from outside. It is the divine mind working through human consciousness. The intensity of the feeling which moves and vibrates the deepest chords of human personality makes the recipient feel as if he is re-receiving something from outside; in fact, revelation is the projection of his

inner consciousness when it is in deep contact with the spiritual reality in which he lives, moves, and has his being.

The Sayyid derives support for his theory from the fact that the Quran was revealed to the Prophet (S) not as a whole but piecemeal as and when occasion demanded. All human faculties come into operation only in reference to certain situations and practical needs. The human mind is a storehouse of several ideas, memorized verses and remembered events, but they all lie dormant in it. When the occasion demands, say, the recall of a verse, it comes into consciousness and we quote it. The same is the position of the prophetic faculty. When circumstances demand, the prophetic consciousness comes into operation and gives expres-sion to what is needed at the moment by direct revelation from God.¹²

Sayyid Ahmad Khan believes that the prophetic faculty is present in all men without distinction, though there may be differences of degree. The revelations of God are open to all men. The deeper recesses of the human heart are always susceptible to the spiritual call; it is due to this that man is able to penetrate through the world of nature to God. What has come to an end is, according to him, the role of prophethood.¹³

There was a time when people were not mature rationally and they needed the guidance of prophets, but with the passage of time and development of human reason, this guidance was discontinued and, as the last favour of God, the moral and spiritual values enunciated by Islam were fully disseminated.

“Therefore, he [Muhammad (S)] is the last of the distributors of these divine gifts, not only because he came in the last period, not only because there would come none after him for the distribution of divine gifts, and both of these meanings form the very connota-tion of finality, but also because with him these divine gifts were fully distributed and there was left nothing to be distributed.

As Islam is the most valuable gift of all, its distributor must be looked upon as the highest of all; and because divine gifts were distributed in stages and the Prophet Muhammad (S) came to distribute them the last of all, his prophethood is also the last. So it was declared in the Quran (5:5): ‘Today I complete for you your religion and complete My favour to you and have chosen for you your religion, Islam.’”¹⁴

According to Sayyid Ahmad, this finality of prophethood lay in clarifying the conception of tauhid on which alone depends the ultimate salvation of man.¹⁵

But if religion is so natural and simple as Sayyid Ahmad holds, the question naturally arises: what is the necessity of prophetic guidance? It is true, he admits, that a man can attain moral truth by a reflective study of the laws of nature. But this possibility is realizable only after men have explored these laws of nature in their totality and unravelled their mystery and secrets.

In spite of spectacular advances in the different fields of science and technology, modern man still feels that he has not been able to reach the core of the mystery. It is due to this difficulty in attaining moral and spiritual truth through a purely scientific understanding of nature that,

according to Sayyid Ahmad Khan, mankind needs the divine guidance of prophets who, due to their natural aptitude and spiritual vision, are able to arrive at moral truths which are universally valid. Like geniuses in other branches, prophets are geniuses in the spiritual field and mankind has been able to make progress both in the material and in the spiritual world through the appearance and work of these geniuses.

In conformity with his view of religion as an aspect of nature, Sayyid Ahmad Khan looked upon God as the Author of nature and as the First Cause. The relation of God to the universe is analogous to the relation of the watchmaker to the watch. As the craftsman is responsible for the peculiar make-up of the machine, the correlation of its parts, and its overall function, so is God the Creator of the universe. It is He who gave it the laws according to which it continues to work.

As God is unchangeable, so are the laws that operate in the universe. As the Quran (48:23) asserts, "No change shall you find in the habit of God." Just as the material world works and operates in accordance with immutable laws, so there is in the moral sphere an absolute law of right and wrong that knows no exception whatsoever. Pains and pleasures follow logically the kind of acts performed by men and there is need for divine interference neither in the physical nor in the moral sphere.

It was as a result of this deistic view of God's nature and His relation to the universe that Sayyid Ahmad Khan denied the possibility of miracles and efficacy of prayer. He could not accept miracles as violations of the laws of nature for "the law of nature," according to him, "is a practical promise of God that something will happen so, and if we say it can happen otherwise we are accusing Him of going against His promise and this is inconceivable."¹⁶

He continues, "I do not deny the possibility of miracles because they are against reason, but because the Quran does not support the happenings of events or occurrences that are against the laws of nature or those that violate the usual course of things."¹⁷

In a way, Sayyid Ahmad was correct, for the Quran emphatically and repeatedly refuses people their request to Muham-mad (S) to show miracles in proof of his veracity. To all such demands the Quran replies, "Say: Glory to my Lord! Am I aught but a man, an apostle?" (17:90-93). But he was wrong in a way, for the Quran is full of the accounts of miracles of earlier prophets. In order to substantiate his stand, he made an attempt to explain these miracles by reference to natural laws, an attempt that was perhaps the only cause why his Tafsir did not gain among the Muslims the popularity it deserved.

By the same line of argument, Sayyid Ahmad Khan denied the efficacy of prayers (dua) as it is usually understood. The laws of nature are in-violable and nothing can change them; even God cannot go against them. The utility of prayer should be measured, according to him, not by its acceptance or non-acceptance by God, for that acceptance is out of question, but by the psychological effect it has on the individual in relieving him of the pains and an-xieties attendant upon certain unfortunate events in his life.

But Sayyid Mahdi Ali made a very penetrating criticism of his views on God and His relation to nature. He rightly said that if God is the mere Cause of causes and cannot rise above the laws of nature and the absolute law of right and wrong, then he is God only in name, a being devoid of personality and all feelings of love and affection towards human beings.

“God is really dethroned and all religious life becomes extinct. Prayer would become a cold attribute of perfunctory worship of a being whose arm is never stretched out in answer to prayers, whose ear is never open to the supplications of the penitent.” If such is the case, then man has no need to look to God in time of suffering; he has only to get as much detailed knowledge of the laws of nature as possible and then adapt his life mechanically to the requirements of the external world and, thus, attain success in life in proportion to his efforts.

This philosophy of life leads not to the broadening of human outlook but to the spirit of self-sufficiency and self-centredness, which is the enemy of spiritual life. Sayyid Mahdi refers to verses 25-35 of the twentieth Surah of the Quran where Moses (as) is said to have prayed to God for granting some specific requests, and the reply was “Granted is your prayer, O Moses.” In view of this episode Sayyid Mahdi Ali rightly infers that Sayyid Ahmad Khan’s conception of God and the function of prayer (dua) does not accord with religious consciousness at all. He points out that if we accept this position, it will mean that man has no significant part to play in the world and everything is tied to the inexorable necessity of mechanical laws.¹⁸

Sayyid Ahmad Khan tried to explain the emergence of man on this earth as a specific event in the long and laborious process of evolution, though, he adds, the process was originally started by God Himself when He uttered the creative word “Be.” Man is the result of the chemical processes that went on in the universe, and at a particular moment he appeared as a form of animal life.

In order to explain the complex nature of man as he is at present, he gives his own interpretation of the legend of Adam’s (as) Fall as related in the Quran. He thinks that its presentation in a dramatic form is only a literary way of placing before us certain basic truths about man. It is wrong, he thinks, to take it as a literal account of a dialogue between angels and Satan on the one hand and God on the other.

The word “angel”, according to him, stands for the limitless power of God and potentialities of things. The solidity of mountains, the fluidity of water, the power of growth in vegetation, the power of attraction and repulsion in electricity, in short, all powers that we see manifested in different things of the universe, are signified by the word “angel”.¹⁹

Similarly, Satan, according to him, is not a being who exists outside us; it stands for evil forces in the universe. Man is angel and Satan combined. God’s command to the angels to bow down before Adam (as) signifies that the angelic or good forces of the universe will be obedient to man and ever willing to help him.

The same divine order to Satan means that man has the power to control the evil forces in him but the refusal of Satan in obeying the order of God signifies that the baser passions of man are not easily susceptible to control,

and, therefore, man has to exert the full force of his personality to keep them in check.

There are two other things in the legend that need explanation. One is the reference to the forbidden tree. According to Sayyid Ahmad, this signifies reason and self-consciousness, which enable man to distinguish between good and evil. God's order and man's disobedience mean that man is able to make full use of his powers independently of what anybody may order him to do, even though he may be led astray thereby.

The other thing referred to in the same context is Satan's stripping Adam (as) and Eve "of their raiment and exposing the shameful parts of their bodies" (7:27). The word "raiment," according to him, means virtue and the "shameful parts" stand for evil, thus implying that man's virtuous acts can cover up the nakedness of man's evil deeds.²⁰

With regard to the problem of freedom of will, Sayyid Ahmad's position is based on his naturalistic study of man. He thinks that man is determined in his actions partly by external causes such as society, environment, and training and partly by internal causes such as the peculiar physiological and psychological structure that he possesses. But, in spite of this, he holds, man does possess a faculty by which he can discriminate between good and evil. He calls it "fight of the heart" or "light of nature" which enables a man to rise above the prejudices of his age.

This intellectual power of breaking with the past and introducing new value-judgments is present, according to him, potentially in all men though it matures and comes into play in the case only of a few gifted persons who unfold before the people new dimensions of life. It was this faculty of discriminating between right and wrong which helped Abraham (as), the youth of Chaldea, as Sayyid Ahmad puts it, to experience and declare: "I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I ascribe partners to Him" (6:89).²¹

Everybody possesses the capacity to follow the good as well as to do evil; well-being results when the tendency towards good outweighs the tendency towards evil. It is possible that in a certain person inclination towards evil may predominate, yet he need not be condemned, for if he brings into play the little tendency towards good that he possesses to counteract the effect of evil deeds, he is sure of salvation.

Salvation does not depend on the amount of virtuous deeds a person is able to perform; it rather depends, according to Sayyid Ahmad, on the honest efforts that he makes to put to full use all the powers that he is endowed with. What is demanded by God from all of us is the sincere effort directed towards the realization of well-being and good in preference to doing evil.

If we continue using this "light of the heart" and look upon evil deeds as evil and feel repentant of them, then surely a day will come when our lower impulses will weaken and the tendency towards good will predominate. There is no sin for man in that over which he has no power; sin follows only when man does not put the tendency towards good to full use.²²

Man's freedom follows, as a matter of course, from his very nature, which, in the words of the Quran, is patterned after the nature of God

Himself. This capacity of man for free spontaneous action does not set any limitation to the omnipotence of God, for God gave this freedom to man of His own accord and not under any compulsion.

Sayyid Ahmad Khan also takes up the problem of the reconciliation of man's freedom with God's prescience. Like many thinkers of the past and of the present, he does not deny the omniscience of God in order to safeguard the freedom of man. To him there is no incompatibility between the two.

He gives the example of an astrologer who predicts that a certain man will die by drowning, and this comes out to be true. Can we say, asks Sayyid Ahmad Khan, that the astrologer has been the cause of this man's death? What is in God's knowledge, which he called fate (taqdir), is inevitable, and yet it does not involve or impose any restriction on the freedom of man. Whatever necessity there is it is in the knowledge of God, in taqdir, not in man. In spite of this knowledge, man still retains his freedom of actions.²³

Sayyid Ahmad believes in the existence of the soul, for, according to him, on no other premise can we explain the existence of reason and will in men and animals. He does not go into any details about the nature of the soul, for, according to him, it is not possible for man to unravel the secret of this mysterious entity. He believes that it is a self-existing substance of a subtler matter and not a mere attribute. Qualitatively, the souls of animals and men are alike; differences arise from the peculiar structure of the bodies that are the instruments of their souls.

The soul is definitely immortal and does not die with the death of the body. Sayyid Ahmad Khan derives support for this position from the scientific doctrine that nothing perishes in the world, the quantity of matter remains unchanged, and only its form is changed. As to the Resurrection he refers to many theories but accepts the one according to which both body and soul will emerge.

The soul at the time of death acquires a certain physical medium distinct from the present body and so at the Resurrection there will be no new life but a continuation of the old. He argues that wherever the Quran refers to the reality of the Resurrection, its real purpose is to refute the belief of those who deny the existence of the soul and identify life with life on this earth only. The various analogies employed by the Quran refer to the fact of the Resurrection; they are not intended to describe and reveal its nature and character.²⁴

He holds that paradise and hell described in sensuous terms in the Quran are mere symbolical representations of the psychological states of individuals in the life after death. The Quran says, "No soul knoweth what joy of the eyes is reserved for the good, in recompense of their work" (32:17). It is impossible to express the reality of super-sensuous things in words, even though those be the words of God.²⁵

The impact of the new learning and the spread of scientific knowledge created many problems for religious thought not only in Europe but also in India. The Christian missionaries who had already met the onslaughts of the challenge of modern science in the West began to approach and study the religious thought of Muslims in this new context.

The tradition-ridden ‘ulama’ who were unfortunately completely unaware of the new currents of thought released by science and also of the new moral outlook on life proved incapable of meeting this challenge. Sayyid Ahmad Khan was, thus, forced to take up this challenge. He had to rethink the whole cultural heritage of Islam and reinterpret it in the light of modern developments.

The first main hurdle in his way was the general belief among the Muslims of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent that the door of ijtihad had been closed forever. No religion, if it is to be progressive and dynamic, can ignore the importance of change and development in human thought and knowledge, and so it is necessary that people in every age should give all basic moral and spiritual values a new interpretation.

During the creative period Muslim thinkers continued to think and expound the problems of their religious thought in consonance with the spirit of the changing times, but after the fall of Baghdad, when political and social life was disrupted, the doctrine of taqlid was put forth with the intention of arresting any further deterioration and disintegration. Even Iqbal accepted this plea and in Rumuz-i Bekhudi advocat-ed taqlid, blind allegiance to authority, during a period of decline. Later on, however, he repudiated this stand.

A blind reverence for the past cannot help people overcome their shortcomings. The only thing that can counteract the forces of reactionism is the freedom of expression enjoyed by creative individuals. It was this truth that Sayyid Ahmad Khan realized, and he strove hard to convince others of it. He advocated that the door of ijtihad should be thrown open and every person who is qualified for it should be prepared to rethink and reinterpret the problems of life and religion in accordance with the circum-stances of his age.

In every religion there are certain truths that form the very basis of spiritual life. Such principles are eternal verities that cannot change with the change of time and place. Thus the Quran (30:30) says, “Set your face towards the right religion which is based on the nature of God on which is patterned the nature of man. There is no change in the creation of God: this is the right religion.” This verse refers to that aspect of religious faith that is above spatial and temporal vicissitudes.

For Sayyid Ahmad Khan the basic aspects of a religion such as Islam are belief in the unity of God (tauhid) and moral behaviour which springs forth from the depth of one’s heart and the light of which radiates in all directions. But religion, as usually under-stood, is much more than this; it includes also what is usually called Shariah.

Shah Wali Allah was the first thinker in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent who realized the necessity of clarifying this important issue. Discussing the role and function of a prophet, he pointed out that reforms and social and moral reorien-tation carried out by a prophet should always be considered in the context of the type of social atmosphere in which he is born, and the cultural and intellectual stage of the people among whom he appears. It is not his aim, nor is it possible for him, to bring about a total change in the social and legal practices of his people. His main object is to build a society

on moral and spiritual principles and for this purpose he keeps intact almost all that he finds in his environ-ment except what is inconsistent with his ideology. He scrupulously tries to maintain whatever is compatible with moral principles and modifies the rest as little as possible; so as to avoid introducing unnecessary changes such as his contemporary society cannot easily assimilate.²⁶

Accepting this explanation of the role of a prophet, Sayyid Ahmad made a distinction between Din, Shariah, and worldly affairs. In the first category he includes belief in God and in His attributes, as well as acts of worship. In the second category he includes those matters that deal with moral and spiritual purification of mankind. He denies that a prophet is concerned at all with matters relating to our daily life.

Din is not subject to change, but our needs and the way we satisfy them depend on differences of time and place. If we include these things within the sphere of prophetic function, then with the change of time we shall need another prophet, which is contrary to the spirit of the finality of prophethood.

What is claimed to have been perfected and finalized by Islam is Din and not the Shariah. If the Shariah is not final, it logically follows that it is the duty of Muslims in every age and every country to deal with their problems in the light of their needs in accordance with the basic moral and spiritual tenets of Islam. For this purpose he took the step that ibn Taimiyyah had taken in the seventh/thirteenth century. Like him he revolted against the dogma of the finality of the four schools of jurisprudence and went back to the very source in order to make a fresh start.

With regard to Tradition, Sayyid Ahmad Khan's attitude was unequivocal. When the collections of Hadith were compiled in the second/eighth century, political and social conditions of the time helped in the fabrication of in-numerable traditions ascribing them to the Holy Prophet (S). He was, therefore, not willing to accept Tradition as a valid source of religious knowledge.

Our traditionists gave all their attention to developing the science of rijal that deals with the biographies of all the various transmitters of traditions. But the most important work to be done was a critical appraisal of Traditions with regard to their content, a task that was unfortunately not undertaken as diligently as it should have been.

According to Sayyid Ahmad, it is the duty of Muslims now to take up this important work. As the situation stands, he would accept only those traditions that are compatible with the letter and spirit of the Quran. He approvingly quotes the statement of ibn Taimiyyah that "the truly traditional is truly rational." There is no other way out of this situation. In case by a critical analysis a tradition is proved to be true, Sayyid Ahmad would be willing to accept it as a valid basis for religion. Still he makes a distinction between traditions that deal with purely religious matters and those that deal with non-religious matters. The latter, he thinks, we are not bound to follow at all.²⁷

Sayyid Ahmad Khan was not satisfied with the numerous available com-mentaries of the Quran. According to him, they contained nothing but

fabricated stories and accounts of alleged miracles. Moreover, in the interpretation of the Quranic verses, they invariably referred to particular historical events in the context of which alone, it was claimed, their real meanings could be grasped. The result was that the universal and eternal significance of the Quranic verses was sacrificed at the altar of historical erudition.

To him the interpretation of the Quran by a standard (of traditions) which was itself doubtful could not be the best way of approaching the study of the Holy Book. He says, “When I am not willing to accept abrogation (or modification) of one verse of the Quran by another for the reason of its being against the wisdom or omniscience of God, how can I accept the abrogation or modification of the Quranic verses by any tradition, howsoever trustworthy it may be claimed to be by any standard? I am not willing to accord to the tradition any right of abrogation even in the secondary sense, of progressive revelation, which I have accepted with regard to the verses of the Quran. If there is any such contradiction, I would reject the tradition outright as untrue.”²⁸

Sayyid Ahmad Khan critically reviews the work done by the ancient jurists. In the Khutubat his attitude towards their achievements is appreciative. He explains in details how they derived rules and laws from the Quran and the Sunnah for the regulation of social, political, and religious life of the people. In view of the spread, of Islam, it was necessary that the political and social life of the Muslim community should have been built up in accordance with the spirit of the Quran and the example set by the Holy Prophet (S).

This magnificent work was successfully undertaken by our early jurists. But at present we must distinguish between what the Quran says and the rules and regulations which the jurists have formulated through inference. Sayyid Ahmad is of the opinion that howsoever praiseworthy and commendable the efforts of the jurists may be, we are not bound to accept their conclusions, for after all these are no more than man-made regulations which can and must be altered with the change of circumstances.

In one of his articles, “Uncivilized Countries,” Sayyid Ahmad Khan rebukes Turkey for her negligence in the matter of legal reform. He holds that back-wardness and weakness of Turkey in his time were due solely to the obsolete legal code that was prevalent there. According to him, it is one of the causes of the decline of the Muslims that they are still following legal codes that were formulated to satisfy the demands of a bygone age.

Every age presents new problems; and even though some old problems recur, yet their form is quite different and, therefore, the solutions they demand must be totally new. Nothing old can fill the place of the new without adaptation and proper amendment. The present age demands a totally new legal system pertaining to social, political, and administrative affairs.

Unfortunately, the political decline of the Muslims, instead of giving rise to a spirit of critical appraisal of the situation and a demand for a dynamic adaptation to the new environment, has produced an attitude of passive obedience to a static ideal of taqlid, i.e., blind allegiance to an authority

which is no longer valid and useful in the new circumstances. Thus, according to Sayyid Ahmad, the spirit of taqlid in the sphere of jurisprudence produced the following evil consequences:

(1) People wrongly came to believe that all worldly matters were covered by religion and, therefore, nothing could be done without first obtaining sanction from the 'ulama'.

(2) The decisions of the jurists gradually came to be identified with Islam itself. As a matter of fact, they were the expressions of opinion by different individuals within the context of their own time and place and were not meant to be applicable to all times. The result of this was that any attempt to modify them or replace them with better decisions was looked upon as a revolt against Islam itself.

Sayyid Ahmad thinks that it is the duty of the Muslims to rethink the whole legal system, civil and criminal, and rewrite their trade and revenue codes in the light of modern knowledge.²⁹

Like ibn Taimiyyah, Sayyid Ahmad refuses to accept ijma as the source of Islamic Law. According to the former, it was the cause of all superstition and un-Islamic practices. Sayyid Ahmad's passion for ijihad could not brook any limitations imposed by the so-called unanimity of jurists on certain matters. This unanimity may be the result of certain peculiar circumstances of a particular period.

With the change of time and circumstances, the validity of such decisions loses its force. Even the ijma of the Companions of the Prophet (S) does not possess any overriding importance for Sayyid Ahmad. We can certainly make full use of the decisions of these and other scholars in the reformulation and reinterpretation of the Islamic legal code in the modern age, but none of these, according to him, can impose any limit on the judgments of modern jurists who can arrive at decisions which they consider to be compatible with the demands of the time and in consonance with the spirit of Islam and the Quran.³⁰

For this purpose Sayyid Ahmad decided to go back to the Quran as the only valid and sure ground of all our attempts at modern interpretation of Islam. In *Khutabat-i Ahmadiyyah*, he developed this view and supported it by the famous saying of the Caliph Umar that "God's Book is sufficient for us."

He boldly claimed to ignore all the mythical stories that had become current among the Muslims due to their having been incorporated in the vast store of commentaries on the Quran and, thus, taken for the scriptural text, i.e., the very Word of God. It did not mean that he was breaking with the past, for in his own *Tafsir* he discussed the views and opinions of almost all-important commentators and accepted and followed those that he thought were true.

What he wished to emphasize was that the altered conditions of modern life, the advance in and development of human knowledge, and the peculiar position in which the Muslims were placed, all demanded an effort on their part to solve their problems in the light of their own experiences unhampered by what the ancient doctors and thinkers had said. In several matters he refused to accept the views commonly held as true among

Muslims because, in his view, they were neither supported by the Quran nor were practicable in the context of the changed circumstances.

For instance, he held that rajm (stoning to death), the accepted punishment for fornication, could not be accepted because, first, the Quran did not mention it, and, secondly, the traditions, on the basis of which the ancient jurists accepted it, seem to uphold the custom prevalent among the Arabs of those days in imitation of the Jews.

Again, there was a custom among Arabs to pay ransom money (dit) to the relatives of the deceased in case of murder. This custom is referred to in the traditions. But Sayyid Ahmad could not accept this as legally practicable and, therefore, tried to prove that the Quran did not sanction it.

It is commonly held on the basis of traditions that a will executed in favour of legal heirs is null and void. But Sayyid Ahmad followed the Quran in this respect. He strongly advocated that dividing of property by will is as valid according to the Quran as its distribution by the law of inheritance.

In one respect Sayyid Ahmad's work certainly proved epoch-making. Before him it had been generally held on the basis of the Quran (2:106; 12:39; 16:101) as well as traditions that some of the Quranic verses stood abrogated. The number of such verses came to hundreds, though Shah Wali Allah held that they were only five.

Sayyid Ahmad gave a serious thought to this problem and came to the conclusion that the Quran being the eternal Word of God could not be looked upon as the notebook of a whimsical poet. He held that the Quran as actually recited by the Muslims was exactly as it was revealed to the Holy Prophet (S); not a word or jot of it was omitted and no verse of it stood abrogated.

For Sayyid Ahmad the abrogation to which the verses of the Quran refer relate to the laws of the previous prophets like Moses (as) and Jesus (as). A certain law is said to be abrogated only when, in spite of the continuity of the circumstances in which it was first promulgated, it is withdrawn, waived, and replaced by another law.

To Sayyid Ahmad such abrogation was totally foreign to the spirit of the Quran. The possibility of abrogation would be against the omniscience and wisdom of God. But if the conditions and circumstances themselves changed, then the promulgation of a new law instead of an old one would not be abrogation of the latter at all; it would rather be the sign of God's wisdom which expresses itself in progressive revelation.

According to Sayyid Ahmad, what have been abrogated are the laws of previous prophets and those laws of Islam itself that ceased to be operative on account of change in circumstances and conditions, so that if these conditions recur, the previous order would automatically become operative.

The attitude of Sayyid Ahmad was not merely theoretical; he was principally a man of action and by circumstances he was forced to put his ideas into practice. Just as he did not rest till he had set up the college at Aligarh for the education of Muslims, so in religious matters his purpose could not be fulfilled unless he could give satisfactory answers to some of the concrete problems of the Muslims in those days.

The Christian polemic had questioned the utility and moral value of such institutions as polygamy, divorce, and slavery. He tackled each problem in a scientific way, studied its pros and cons and gave a most judicious solution. It is important to note that in our own times many follow the course set up by him in this field. Similarly, with regard to the problem of inheritance, will, riba, and certain penal injunctions, his solutions are being accepted and advocated by all the progressive and liberal schools of thought in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent.

There is no gainsaying the fact that by his scientific and critical thinking he became the first great thinker whose patterns of thought proved very fruitful. He was the first Muslim in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent who was able to see the potenti-alities of the contact of Western culture with Islamic way of life and suggested the ways and means to meet the challenge of modern ideas for the future development of Muslim thought.

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Notes

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18. Tahdhib al-Akhlaq, Vol. 1, pp. 387, 396, 397, 407, 426, 428, 429; Tafsir al- Quran, Vol. 1, pp. 12-13.
19. Tafsir al-Quran, Vol. 1, p. 56; see also Vol. 3, pp. 37-38.
20. Ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 52-77; Vol. 3, pp. 75-78; Tahdhib al-Akhlaq, Vol. 2, pp. 183-200.
21. Tafsir al-Quran, Vol. 1, pp. 19-25.
22. Tahdhib al-Akhlaq, Vol. 2, pp. 220-21.
23. Tafsir at-Quran, Vol. 6, pp. 140-45; Tahdhib al-Akhlaq, Vol. 2, p. 219.
24. Tafsir al-Quran, Vol. 3, pp. 84-119.
25. Ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 39-47.

26. Hujjat Allah al-Balighah (Urdu translation, Lahore, 1953), Vol. 1, pp. 521-23.
27. Khutabat, pp. 203-04, 215, 225-26; Tahdhib al-Akhlaq, Vol. 2, pp. 164-69.
28. Tafsir al-Quran, Vol. 1, pp. 162-69.
29. Tahdhib al-Akhlaq, Vol. 2, pp. 141-42.
30. Tafsir al-Quran, Vol. 1, pp. 217-18; Tahdhib al-Akhlaq, Vol. 2, p. 487.

Chapter 82: Renaissance in Indo-Pakistan (Continued): Iqbal

Muhammad Iqbal was born, in 1289/1873, at Sialkot. His ancestors were Kashmiri Brahmans of the Sapru caste. His great-grandfather migrated to the Punjab sometime in early thirteenth/nineteenth century and settled down in Sialkot, a historical town that has produced many great scholars. His father Nur Muhammad was a saintly man for whom religion was a matter of living experience.

As related by Iqbal himself, he had distinct tendency towards mysticism. Heredity and parental influence made Iqbal in-herit and imbibe this tendency that continued to mature throughout his intel-lectual and spiritual development. The father used to earn his modest living by the labour and skill of his own hands and originally had the intention of giving the son some instruction in the mosque and then making him a helper in his own craft.

It has been reliably stated by many contemporaries of his father that it was Maulawi Mir Hasan who seeing great promise in this intelligent child persuaded his father to let him enter an ordinary public school which followed methods of teaching and curricula introduced by the British Indian system of education.

A ceremonious initiation into needlework proposed by the father was not approved by the learned Mir Hasan and the father accepted his advice. The boy started wielding the pen instead of the needle, a pen destined to exercise a marvellous creative influence.

Like many a person of sensitive mind and spiritual leanings, the father had faith in prophetic dreams. He related a dream that he had shortly before the birth of Iqbal.¹ He saw that there was a bird of exquisite plumage flying low in the air and hovering over the heads of a crowd of people who were jumping up and stretching their arms to catch it. While he stood looking and admiring the beauty of the bird, it dropped into his lap of its own accord.

When the genius in Iqbal began to sprout forth and receive early admiration from great scholars and poets, the father was convinced that it was the spirit of Iqbal that had been symbolized in his dream as a beautiful bird. We find the same symbolism in the New Testament where it is related that the Holy Ghost descended in the shape of a dove.

The school that Iqbal attended still exists almost unchanged even after the lapse of three quarters of a century. Its curriculum consisted mostly of reading, writing, and arithmetic with an uninspiring emphasis on cramming, meant for passing examinations and moving from grade to grade. Shabby surroundings and poorly paid, under-educated teachers could have only cramping effects on the mental and moral growth of young pupils.

But Iqbal was rare type, which goes its own way and carves its own destiny under all systems, good, bad, or indifferent. Mir Hasan, a scholar of distinction and a man of sterling qualities of personality, was deeply impressed by the liberal cultural movement of the celebrated Sayyid Ahmad Khan. He was not a teacher in the school where Iqbal completed his secondary education, but it appears that Iqbal's spirit began to be nourished by him very early and his influence had a long, lasting effect on him.

When the British Crown proposed to confer Knighthood on Iqbal, he suggested that Mir Hasan, to whose scholarly influence he owed so much, had a better right to recognition by a title. For his graduate studies Iqbal came over to Lahore, which was then developing as a centre of higher learning. He chose philosophy as his major subject for which he had a particular bent of mind. He was fortunate in studying philosophy under Thomas Arnold who was no ordinary teacher. An intimate teacher-pupil relationship soon developed between the two to which Iqbal's poem on Arnold, included in the collection of *Bang-i Dara*, bears evidence.

Iqbal's grateful recognition of what he received from Arnold is also expressed by him in his dedication to him of his book, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*. It runs as follows: "This little book is the first-fruit of that literary and philosophical training which I have been receiving from you for the last ten years, and as an expression of gratitude I beg to dedicate it to your name. You have always judged me liberally; I hope you will judge these pages in the same spirit."

Arnold before coming to Lahore had been a Professor at Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, where he had written his famous book, *The Preaching of Islam*. It was Sayyid Ahmad Khan to whom he owed his keen interest in Islamic studies. On his return to England he achieved distinction as a great scholar and was knighted.

When Iqbal went to England for higher studies in Western philosophy, he re-established his contact with him. Iqbal enriched his knowledge of Western philosophy under McTaggart who was his guide for his research thesis in philosophy.

Having saturated himself with whatever Western philosophy, past and present, had to offer, Iqbal went to Germany for a doctorate because the British universities at that time had nothing higher than Master's degree in philosophy. Having received the philosophical lore of the West, Iqbal decided to repay the debt by acquainting the West with some currents of philosophical thought in pre-Islamic and post-Islamic Persia.

Even while Iqbal was completing his formal academic education his genius had already developed, a creative synthesis of the East and the West. Before Iqbal went to Europe for higher philosophical studies he had already become famous as a poet. The literary critics of his nation had acknowledged him as a new star on the firmament of Urdu poetry.

His poetry from the very beginning was rich in thought. In this respect among the Urdu poets only Ghalib could be considered to be his forerunner, but in the choice of themes his predecessors were also Azad and Hali who had revolted against the degenerate traditional trends and had introduced into Urdu poetry new forms as well as new content under the impact of English literature.

Azad had predicted in his book *Nairang-i Khayal* that the future development of Urdu literature would be brought about by those who would have in their hands keys of the East as well as of the West. Hali was also of the same opinion and in his *Muqad-dimah*, a critique of poetry; he freely borrowed the tenets of literary criticism directly or indirectly from Western

writers, although he took his illustrations also from Arabic, Persian, and Urdu literature.

The ideal thinker and literary genius that Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Azad, and Hali had visualized was embodied in Iqbal. The, Sayyid was a liberal rationalist, influenced by the Western naturalism that held its sway in the later half of the thirteenth/nineteenth century due to the rise and achievement of physical sciences. Convinced of the truth of Islam in embodying eternal verities, he felt no opposition between reason and revelation or science and religion and he aimed at a synthesis of them both.

Iqbal was a great admirer of this all-round reformer and in a poem, which belongs to a very early period of his poetic production, while paying a heart-felt tribute to him, he makes the spirit of the departed leader advise the young poet to inspire his nation with broad, liberal, and rejuvenating ideals, a task which Iqbal adopted as his divinely ordained mission and fulfilled in a manner that placed him in the galaxy of the great literary geniuses of all times.

Iqbal was an heir to a very rich literary and philosophical scholarship. He imbibed and assimilated all that was best in the Islamic and Oriental thought to which he added his extensive knowledge of Western literature, philosophy, and culture both of the past and the present. His range of interests covered religion, philosophy, art, politics, economics, nationalism, the revival of Muslim life, and the universal brotherhood of man.

He was capable of writing power-ful prose not only in his own national language but also in English, which he could wield with a masterly pen; the language of his two books in English is that of a skilled English writer. But he continued to use poetry as his medium of expression because he was a born poet and everything that he thought or felt almost involuntarily shaped itself into verse.

Many poems flowed from his pen, which a protagonist of “art for art’s sake” could relish and admire, but he himself was a strong opponent of those who thought that art could or should be divorced from the stern realities of life. He traversed the whole gamut of the problems of human life, and a comprehensive survey of his thoughts, ideals, and sentiments could fill several volumes.

Books on exposition of his ideas have appeared during the last two decades and numerous articles in journals have assessed his contributions. The stream of appreciation and criticism is still flowing unabated and thesis after thesis is being offered in the universities as a dissertation for a doctorate degree.

The inspiring message of his poetry, responsible for his extensive and intensive influence, cannot be trans-lated into a cold prosaic survey. His poetry throbs with soul stirring life and a prosaic paraphrase has the same poor relation to this pulsating life as post-mortem has to a living organism. Goethe said that the tree of life is green but the theory about it is grey like autumn leaves.

A great Urdu poet, a friend of Iqbal and his co-eval, said that if the Quran had been revealed in the Urdu language, it would have been poured in the mould of Iqbal’s poetry. And about the Quran the great Western scholar of

Arabic and Islamic studies, Sir Hamilton Gibb, observes that translating it into any other language is turning gold into mud.

Iqbal himself says in one of his verses that truth without feeling and pathos becomes philosophy but when it stirs the heart it becomes poetry; in this respect he compares a typical representative of the intellect, ibn Sina (Avicenna), with a typical mystical poet, Rumi, both pursuing a camel carrying a veiled beauty (the hidden truth); the former is enveloped and lost in the cloud of sand raised by the speeding camel but the latter leaps forward with un-calculating courage and unveils the veiled beauty.

Iqbal has persistently advocated his conviction that intuition is more basic than intellect, and that the intuitions about life if at all could be expressed better through arts than through other media. Among the arts Rumi considered music to be a more adequate medium to touch the essence of reality, and Schopenhauer is of the same view even though their conceptions of reality are diametrically opposed.

Iqbal might have endorsed this view of Rumi about music but human souls require communication not only with the Ultimate Reality but also between themselves; for this purpose there is no better medium than language, and language reaches its perfection in poetry which is thought tinged with emotion.

We have already said that nothing human was foreign to Iqbal; there is hardly any problem of human life that he did not grapple with to find a satisfactory solution. Let us pick up a few basic problems of life and note some of Iqbal's ruling ideas.

In the early period of his poetic production we find him in general a free-lance poet, expressing in verse whatever impressed him; he poured out the stirrings of his heart freely, without concentrating on any particular mission or message as he did in the later decades of his life. We find in this early phase stirring poems on territorial nationalism, and a burning desire for political freedom from the yoke of British imperialism that was at its height during this period.

He believed at that time that multi-communal and multi-credal conglomeration of the teeming masses of the Indian sub-continent, although riddled with caste and religious cleavages, could be welded into a nation of the Western type; the people could not be freed unless they felt a psychological unity based on a common love for the motherland.

He exhorted the polytheistic idolatrous Hindu masses to discard their old gods and worship the motherland instead, raising new temples wherein all the worshippers, irrespective of their creeds and castes, could join in a common worship. This phase of Iqbal ended when he went to Europe for the study of Western philosophy and culture.

Many a student during this period returned from Europe either completely denationalized, becoming by blind imitation a travesty of a Westerner, or fired with the idea of territorial nationalism. They came back Westernized in their whole mode of living. Overwhelmed by the achievements of the West in science and technology they belittled even the good aspects of their own cultural heritage. They desired their society to

become dynamic and pro-gressive, and the only way that they considered to be effective was to adopt Western attitudes uncritically.

Iqbal was one of those few observers of Western civilization who saw also the seamy side of it. It was a ruthlessly competitive society split up into antagonistic nations bent upon exploiting not only their own working classes, but also making all unorganized, technically backward people of Asia and Africa victims of economic imperialism.

Iqbal was convinced that Europe was heading towards a catastrophe, because of its purely materi-alistic outlook divorced from ethical and spiritual values. Jingoistic territorial nationalism had for long been hypocritically masquerading as patriotism. National lust for power had replaced the ethics of Jesus with the machinations of Machiavelli.

The worship of the State to which Hegel had given a philo-sophical grounding was producing thinkers like Nietzsche and Trotsky for whom the power of the superman or super-nation had become the ultimate goal of individuals as well as of nations. Iqbal was disillusioned by a closer study of the West and some of the poems that he wrote in Europe expressed dark prophesies about the fate of this hectic civilization.

He said that Western nations were building their nests on very slender and weak branches and were heading towards mass suicide. Carlyle had seen it much earlier than Iqbal when he prophesied about half a century before the First World War that if Britain persisted to move on the path that she had chosen for herself she was bound to plunge into hell within fifty years.

The period of Iqbal's stay in Europe almost coincided with the time when Spengler, an obscure school-teacher, was quietly engaged in a monumental historical survey of the rise and fall of cultures through the millennia of civilized life to establish his thesis of the Decline of the West which was published shortly after the termination of the First World War.

Iqbal returned to his country in 1327/1908 with a new outlook that was neither Eastern nor Western. He came to the conclusion that as the lop-sided material progress of the West was unethical and unspiritual so the religiosity of the East was a hollow and life-thwarting force. The realm of the spirit had to be rediscovered by the East as well as by the West.

A good deal of science and technology of the West was valuable and the East was to learn it and adopt it to eliminate poverty, squalor, and disease, but the East must not repeat the mistake of worshipping material power as an end-in-itself. Physical sciences and the tremendous forces that they have unleashed must be harnessed to ethical and spiritual aims.

A religious outlook alone can save humanity but this outlook itself requires re-examination and reconstruction. Iqbal not only gave up writing inspiring songs about national-ism and patriotism but began to denounce these narrow urges of collective egoism that are idealized by patriotic songs.

He now decided to devote his philosophy and his art primarily to rejuvenating the dormant Muslim com-munity. Territorial or racial nationalism is foreign to the spirit of Islam; it originated in the West. He was convinced now that it would be a tragically retrograde step if the

Muslim world began to try to remedy its frustrations by replacing the global Islamic sentiment by aggressive nationalism of the Western type.

He conceived of Islam as a universal religion that envisaged all humanity as a unity. But the Islam of his time had become narrow, rigid and static. He conceived of life as evolutionary and dynamic. He came to the conclusion that a fossilized religious dogmatism could not generate an outlook that would lead to the self-realization of individuals and communities.

But it was not only the narrowness of religious dogmatism but also a mecha-nistic materialism that was responsible for a false view of reality. Iqbal became an iconoclast, bent upon demolishing all orthodoxies and idolatries. Religious dogmatism had debased religion, territorial or racial nationalism had split up humanity into hostile aggressive groups, and materialistic philosophy had made the spirit an epiphenomenal and evanescent manifestation of matter.

He continued developing an ideology the basic concepts and corollaries of which would purify and advance human life in every direction. It would be difficult to sum up his ideology in any one ism.

You could call him a spiritualist because he held the spirit to be the basic reality or you could call him an idealist. With greater definiteness one could hold him to be a creative evolutionist. As a staunch believer in a personal God, he was also a theist. Believing that all existence is constituted of egos or selves one could class him along with Rumi and Bergson as a monadologist.

A question is often raised about Iqbal's originality. Was he merely an eclectic bringing together various trends of thought without any successful attempt at harmonizing them into an intellectually consistent organic system or did he succeed in removing the fragmentariness of different systems of thought and belief, dissolving half-truths into the unity of one great truth?

Here we have a thinker who, though a theist, could heartily appreciate a good deal even in the keen though incoherent utterances of an atheistic thinker like Nietzsche, about whom he said that he had the heart of a believer but the head of an infidel. He believes with Nietzsche that present day humanity must be transcended in a further evolutionary leap; but Nietzsche's super-man appeared to him to be only a super beast because Nietzsche had drawn his speculative conclusions from Darwinian biology.

The concept of the superman had been developed by Muslim mystical metaphysicians like ibn Arabi, Rumi, and Jili but from quite different starting points and on quite different lines. In the development of his ideology we can see that he is indebted to many a great thinker of the past and the present but never does he submit wholeheartedly to any one of them. He goes a part of the way with one or the other but then suddenly stops and parts company with him.

For instance, he would feel exhilarated by Nietzsche's notion of power as an intrinsic value and end-in-itself but he would soon say that Nietzsche had a poor conception of the infinite potentialities of the human self, which, having originated in the Cosmic Self, progressively assimilates divine attributes.

Nor could he agree with Nietzsche in his view of existence as eternal recurrence. If life were eternally creative, it would never repeat itself. Nietzsche's superman is ruthless and loveless, riding roughshod over all tender emotions in his advance towards greater biological fitness.

Among his contemporary thinkers Iqbal felt a much keener kinship with Bergson who successfully demolished mechanistic material-ism and Darwinian biological philosophy along with intellectualism that attempted to subject creative life to rigid moulds of syllogistic logic. Bergson had repudiated not only mechanism but also teleology.

According to Bergson, life does not create according to any eternally preconceived plan existing in the Cosmic Mind. Iqbal supports Bergson in this view and thus runs counter to the orthodox Muslim conception of taqdir or destiny, which envisages an eternal pre-ordination of all happenings in the universe, even to the minutest details.²

According to the orthodox conception, serial time only unfolds what was eternally present in the mind of God. But after complete agreement with many parts of Bergsonian philosophy he parts company with him. Bergson conceived of reality as creative duration. For him, at the centre of existence there is nothing that he could call a self.

For Iqbal, life, though not teleological in the sense of being implemented according to a preconceived plan, is purposive activity. The concept of self too implies purposiveness. In his lecture on "The Philosophical Test of the Revelations of Religious Experience," he criticizes Bergson as follows: "Purposes colour not only our present states of consciousness, but also reveal its future direction. In fact, they constitute the forward push of our life, and thus in a way anti-cipate and influence the states that are yet to be.

To be determined by an end is to be determined by what ought to be. Thus past and future both operate in the present state of consciousness and the future is not wholly undetermined as Bergson's analysis of our conscious experience shows. A state of attentive consciousness involves both memory and imagination as operating factors. On the analogy of our conscious experience, therefore, Reality is not a blind vital impulse wholly unilluminated by idea. Its nature is through and through teleological."³

Iqbal summarizes his criticism of Bergson's non-purposive clan vital in a few lines: "In Bergson's view the forward rush of the vital impulse in its creative freedom is unilluminated by the light of an immediate or remote purpose. It is not aiming at a result; it is wholly arbitrary, undirected, chaotic, and unforeseeable in its behaviour.

It is mainly here that Bergson's analysis of our conscious experience reveals its inadequacy. He regards conscious experience as the past moving along with and operating in the present. He ignores that the unity of consciousness has a forward aspect also. Life is only a series of acts of attention and an act of attention is inexplicable without reference to a purpose, conscious or unconscious.

Even our acts of preception are determined by our immediate interests and purposes. The Persian poet Urfi has given a beautiful expression to this aspect of human perception (by pointing out that): 'if your heart is not deceived by the mirage, be not proud of the sharpness of your

understanding; for your freedom from this optical illusion is due to your imperfect thirst.”⁴

Iqbal conceived of God or the Cosmic Self primarily as Creator and of the egos or the selves that He has created or that have emerged out of His eternally creative activity as potentially creative at various levels of con-sciousness. Even the poorest potter or craftsman is a creator but if he is shaping his material only according to a set plan or pattern his creativeness is of the lowest order.

The best example of a creative genius is the musical composer or the poet. When a Beethoven or a Mozart composes a symphony he has no chart before him; the creative urge or emotion creates its own body as it proceeds and the musical genius views his own creation objectively after it has assumed a visible or audible shape.

Others who play that symphony try to create that emotion by reproduction; they are not creating but re-creat-ing. Iqbal was an extremely gifted poetic genius; he knew not how and from which source a great poem emerged. The poet cannot himself know in advance the words that his inspiration brings forth. He often wonders at the unforeseen beauty of his own creation.

In the book of Genesis in the Bible it is said that God after having created saw and appreciated His own creation. Iqbal could not attribute to the Cosmic Creative Genius anything less than what he had experienced in the process of his own poetic creation. The embodi-ment of a genuine creative urge or inspiration must be unpredictable.

There are no eternal patterns or archetypal ideas such as we find in Plato's meta-physics. Plato's creator god, the Demiurge, is not a real creator; he materializes only the forms or ideas that were never created and were meant only to be imitated or partially assimilated. Iqbal could have considered Bergsonian ontology and epistemology a great and revolutionary advance on Plato's conception of a static Ultimate Reality.

Plato relegated all movement and change to the unholy alliance of Being with Non-Being. According to him, the Real does not move or create; movement results only from the effort of Non-Being at imperfect participation in the reality of eternally static arche-types.

Aristotle too likens God to a beautiful statue to which the appreciating people are drawn; there is no movement or volition in the statue itself. The first great revolt in Western philosophy against this classical and Greek con-ception of Ultimate Reality was Hegel's dialectic wherein nothing remains itself and every thing or process is moved by implicit and internal contradic-tion into its opposite to achieve a synthesis with it, which synthesis also cannot rest in itself but becomes in its turn a thesis which begins to develop an antithesis already inherent in it.

But Hegel's Absolute too is eternally what it is and is not a free creator in the sense in which theism conceives a Creator God. Hegel's Absolute is not a creative, purposive self, engaged in actualizing Its infinite potentialities. Hegel's dynamic dialectic also follows an eternal pattern that is being unfolded in time.

This conception of God and the universe does not appeal to Iqbal. He does not follow either Plato or Hegel or Bergson. As William James, another great philosopher of creative life, said, the universe in which we live is not a block universe; reality is itself in the making and the truth about reality too must constantly conform to new manifestations of the reality that follows no logic.

Iqbal believed that the Quran supported him in this dynamic view of reality "To my mind," said he, "nothing is more alien to the Quranic outlook than the idea that the universe is the temporal working out of a pre-conceived plan.... The universe, according to the Quran, is liable to increase. It is a growing universe and not an already completed product which left the hand of its maker ages ago, and is now lying stretched in space as a dead mass of matter to which time does nothing, and consequently is nothing."⁵

If Iqbal had produced only philosophical poetry, it would have been a very difficult task to collect his scattered thoughts and weave them into a self-consistent philosophy. Fortunately, he undertook to perform that task him-self in his lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam. In these lectures he has done intensely concentrated thinking. These lectures are themselves a summary, and the attempt to summarize them further would leave out much that is essential for an intelligible exposition. But, however inadequately, the attempt has to be made.

His first lecture deals with knowledge and religious experience. Iqbal is a poet as well as a philosopher, but temperamentally he is a religious man for whom religion is a vital experience as well as an intellectually establishable reality.

He holds that in human life religion is more central and vital than philosophy because, in the words of a great modern philosopher, Whitehead, whom Iqbal has quoted more than once in his support, religion is a system of general truths which have the effect of transforming character when they are sincerely held and vividly apprehended.

But man being a rational creature cannot be satisfied with faith unless he finds reason also to be in agreement with it. In view of its function religion is in greater need of a rational foundation than even the dogmas of science. Reconciliation of the oppositions of experience is an inescapable necessity for a man who is religious as well as rational.

Thought and intuition (or faith) need each other for mutual rejuvenation. Bergson, a great protagonist of intuition as more basic than intellect, has, nevertheless, expressed the view that intuition also is a higher kind of intellect.

The Greeks deified the logical intellect, despising the study of reason in nature. On the other hand, religions before Islam rooted themselves in faith not demanding its conformity with the logical intellect or reason in nature. Islam preached the basic conformity of reason and revelation.

Reason as informing the phenomena of physical nature as well as the mind of man has been presented by the Quran to be in complete agreement with faith in God. The Quran uses the same word for revelation granted to saints and prophets and the instincts of animals whose unconscious

rationality appears to be miracu-lous; it sees in the humble bee a recipient of divine revelation and constantly calls upon the reader to observe the perpetual change of the winds, the alternation of day and night, the clouds, the starry heavens, and the planets swimming through infinite space.

Why should the intuitions of a prophet and a saint be less related to reality than the instincts of lower animals? Iqbal sees no unbridgeable gulf between intellectual knowledge and religious experience. Plato had despised sense-experience as a source of knowledge; the modern irrationalist has looked down upon the intellect as an instrument for the knowledge of reality.

Iqbal's view is integrative, considering sense perception, intellect, and intuition to be different modes of apprehension of the same reality. His outlook is unmistakably Quranic, not only appealing to reason in support of revelation and faith but also regarding hearing and sight as the most valuable divine gifts and declaring them to be accountable to God.

Iqbal accuses the early Muslim scholastics of having missed the spirit of the Quran under the spell of Greek speculation. Ghazali revolted against Greek intellectualism and moved to mystic experience as the sole avenue for the knowledge of Ultimate Reality. In spite of his deep appreciation of Ghazali, Iqbal disagrees with him about the relation of thought and intuition and says that Ghazali "failed to see that thought and intuition are organically related and that thought must necessarily simulate finitude and inconclusive-ness because of its alliance with serial time."⁶

Kant, who did splendid work in analysing the logical and scientific intellect establishing its limitations, could not rest in its inadequacies and was compelled to postulate reason as standing above the categories of understanding, pointing towards ultra logical realities like God and free will.

Long before Kant, Rumi had reached a similar conclusion in repudiating the claims of the logical intellect and spatio-temporal categories to be the sole determinants of reality. What Kant termed the intellect, Rumi called "particular reason" which he contrasted with universal reason, which latter is one with the intuition of total reality.

Iqbal's view coincides entirely with Rumi's. He recognizes the inadequacy of the logical understanding; it finds a multiplicity of mutually exclusive par-ticulars with no prospect of their ultimate reduction to a unity and this makes him sceptical about the conclusiveness of thought. He is fully aware of the fact that the logical understanding is incapable of seeing this multiplicity as a coherent universe.

The generalizations of inductive logic are fictitious unities that do not affect the reality of concrete things. But human reason is not confined merely to discursive thinking and is not wholly exhausted by its processes of induction and deduction. "In its deeper movement thought is capable of reaching an immanent Infinite in whose self-unfolding movement the various finite concepts are only moments."

Thought is potentially infinite and contains infinitude as the seed carries within itself the organic unity of the tree as a present fact. Thinking would not point towards its own limitations and inadequacies if it were not haunted by infinity, with which it implicitly compares every finite percept and

concept. "It is the presence of the total infinite in the movement of knowledge that makes finite thinking possible."

Iqbal says that "both Kant and Ghazali failed to see that thought, in the very act of knowledge, passes beyond its own finitude."⁷ Many creeds and philosophies created a cleavage between the ideal and the real and could not see the bridge that unites the two. The ideal and the real are as much inter-penetrating as the finite and the infinite.

"It is the mysterious touch of the ideal that animates and sustains the real.... The life of the ideal consists, not in a total breach with the real, which would tend to shatter the organic wholeness of life in painful oppositions, but in the perpetual endeavour of the ideal to appropriate the real with a view eventually to absorb it, to convert it into itself and to illuminate its whole being."⁸

Iqbal has an organic view of life and existence in which heaven embraces earth, intuition and faith are reconciled with universal reason, science ceases to be antagonistic to religion, and infinity informs and animates finitude. His view of existence is based on a conception of the unity and continuity of all aspects of Being with no breaks, gulfs, or gaps.

He tries to point to the organic unity of all aspects of Being which creeds, philosophies, and sciences have sundered by analytic thinking. One can sum up his whole philosophy as a philosophy of universal integration. The Ultimate Reality reveals its symbols both within and with-out. The empirical, no less than the rational attitude, is an indispensable stage in the spiritual life of humanity.

Iqbal gets solid support from the Quranic verses for his philosophy of integration wherein senses, reasons, and intuition springing from what the Quran calls fuad or the heart, all offer valid and legitimate approaches to the Ultimate Reality which, being a self-consistent unity underlying all diversity, relates organically the findings of all the three sources of knowledge.

"God hath made everything which He hath created most good; and began the creation of man with clay; then ordained his progeny from germs of life, from sorry water; then shaped him (in due proportion), and breathed of His spirit unto him, gave you hearing and seeing and heart: what little thanks do ye return?" (32:6-8)."⁹

Quoting Rumi, Iqbal says the "heart" is a kind of intuition or insight that feeds on the rays of a super-sensuous sun, and brings us into contact with aspects of reality other than those open to sense-perception or ratiocination. Primitive gropings of religious consciousness are as little indicative of the unreality of religions consciousness in its higher and purer forms as primitive views about the phenomena of physical nature are in proving the invalidity of all scientific thought.

Iqbal's conception of God is a corollary of his view of the nature of the Ultimate Reality because he identifies God with the Ultimate Reality. But he is a theist and not a monist of any of the different types or a pantheist. It is not only God who is real but the egos created by God are also real and they share both the essence and the creative urge of the Cosmic Creator.

God is the Perfect Ego, the Perfect Self, or the Perfect Individual; for all created egos, individuality is an aim to be progressively realized. He agrees with Bergson that individuality is a matter of degrees and is not fully realized even in the case of an apparently closed-off unity as that of the human self.

The tendency to individuate is present everywhere in the organized world but it is always opposed by the tendency towards reproduction by which detached parts of the organism begin to live separately and independently. Says Bergson, "In this way individuality harbours its own enemy at home."

Iqbal derives his conception of God from the Quran wherein God is immanent as well as transcendent, personal as well as impersonal. There are verses in the Quran which apparently lend support to a pantheistic view of reality; pantheistic Sufism has raised a magnificent superstructure on these foundations. For instance, it is said, "He is the beginning and He is the end, He is without and He is within."¹⁰

In the famous Sarah a-l-Nur it is said that "God is the light of the heavens and the earth."¹¹ This simile is developed further and it is said that this light emanates from a lamp in a niche and the lamp is encased in a glass as if it were a star that is self-luminous. The lamp is fed from the oil of a tree that is neither in the East nor in the West.

Iqbal says that the Quranic simile is meant to convey the idea that God is a spiritual reality which is not spatial and yet it is not a vague, undetermined infinite suffused in all existence as a selfless impersonal entity. The enclosed lamp in a niche is meant to point to God as an individual self.

God, the Ultimate Ego, is infinite but His infinitude is not temporal or spatial but consists in the infinite inner possibilities of His creative activity, of which the universe, as known to us, is only a partial expression. God's infinity is intensive and not extensive; it involves an infinite series but is not that series.

Iqbal does not conceive of the world to have been created at a point of time, lying in infinite space outside the being of God as a manu-factured article. It is in the nature of God to be eternally creative; the universe does not confront God as His "other". Space, time, and matter are inter-pretations which thought puts on the free creative activity of God.

The relation of God to His creation, if conceived under these categories, would lead to antinomies compelling the mind to accept both affirmations and denials, and be content with contradictions in the matter of faith about God and His relation to the creation, as was forcibly pointed out by Kant. If Iqbal refuses to accept the naive orthodox theistic view of creation in time, he, at the same time, cannot accept that the world of matter is co-eternal with God, operated upon by Him, as it were, from a distance.

With respect to God's knowledge, Iqbal says that human thought is dis-cursive but knowledge in the sense of discursive knowledge, however infinite, cannot be predicated of God because His knowledge is also creative of the objects that He knows. Iqbal does not conceive of God's knowledge as omniscience in the sense of an immediate awareness of the entire sweep of history, past, present and future, regarded as an order of specific events in an eternal ever-present "now".

It was thus that Jalal al-Din Dawwani, Iraqi, and Josiah Royce conceived God's knowledge. Iqbal does not agree with them in this view. To him it appears that it suggests a closed universe, a fixed futurity, a predetermined, unalterable order of specific events, which, like a superior fate, has once and for all determined the direction of God's creative activity. Iqbal is not a believer in the correspondence theory of knowledge for which truth is nothing but an exact mirroring of reality.

A thinker for whom the Ultimate Reality, which is phenomenal as well as noumenal, is a Creative Self, perpetually creating and objectifying ever-new possibilities, could not conceive of God, the Perfect Ego, as omniscient, as one that knows in details not only the past and the present but also the not-yet-happened future events. Such a static view of reality would nullify God's creative activity that would no longer be conceived of as free but as eternally determined.

God's knowledge is not a sort of mirror passively reflecting the details of an already finished structure of things that the finite consciousness reflects in fragments only. God's foreknowledge as conceived in orthodox theology could be conceded only by sacrificing His freedom.

We may repeat here that Iqbal, in thinking of God as an ego or self, has conceived of Him on the analogy of a creative human self, creative either in the realm of intellect or in that of aesthetics. He says that a fruitful idea pregnant with great wealth of its possible applications emerges in consciousness all at once but the intellectual working out of its numerous bearings is a process in time.

Sometimes it takes many generations before the possibilities that were inherent in it from the very beginning actualize themselves completely. The same is the case with poetry or musical composition; the pattern of verses or tones implicit in the creative genius becomes explicit by unfolding itself. For Iqbal God is an infinitely creative genius creating novelties at every moment.

The problem of free will in man offers no great difficulties to Iqbal. The difficulties are created by mathematically determined, mechanistic determinism that Iqbal repudiates, seeking support from the view of matter and material causation presented by philosophers of science like Einstein and Eddington.

Determinism has been advocated not only by mechanistic material-ists but also by the theistic theologians. Further, the modern age has produced theories of physiological and psychological determinism. Theistic theology has not been able to reconcile God's infinite freedom and foreknowledge with human freedom. Iqbal solves the problem by denying foreknowledge to God and by making God grant freedom to human egos who are to share His creative activity.

He admits that the emergence of egos endowed with the power of spontaneous and hence unforeseeable action is in a sense a limitation of the freedom of the all-inclusive Ego, but this limitation is not externally imposed. It is born of God's own creative freedom whereby He has chosen finite egos to be participators in His life, power, and freedom.

Iqbal considers the prevalent idea of God's absolute omnipotence to be a misconception. According to him, all activity, creational or otherwise, is a kind of limitation without which it is impossible to conceive of God as a concrete operative Ego. Omni-potence, abstractly conceived, is a blind capricious power without limits. Omnipotence so conceived would make it impossible to think of God as possessing the attributes of reason, love, or justice.

As a theist, Iqbal has also to deal with the problem of evil. He realizes that if the rationally directed divine will is good, a serious problem arises, unless we close our eyes to the presence of physical and moral evil. We have before our eyes the tragic spectacle of universal suffering and wrongdoing. Pain is an inevitable concomitant not only of wrong actions but even of attempts to do what is right.

The course of evolution has involved endless ruthlessness. Iqbal is not an optimist of the type that says "whatever is, is right" and that from a cosmic viewpoint all is well with the world. Nor is he a pessimist of the Schopenhauerean type who, like many Indian philosophers, views life to be essentially an evil that must be ended because it cannot be mended.

God does not create evil; in the words of the Quran, "He holds all goodness in His hand." Existence or life could not be possible if it did not meet resistance, but the goodness of God lies in the fact that existence contains forces that can overcome evil. No evil is absolute; the alchemy of life is capable of converting evil into good. If the character of the ego can develop only by struggle against thwarting forces, the presence of resistance to the realization of goodness cannot be deplored.

Iqbal agrees with Fichte that life creates resistances in the interest of its own development. Whoever asks why there is evil in life wrongly imagines that there could have been life without pain and evil, resistance and frustration. If moral and spiritual development is good, how could anyone achieve it if there were no internal or external opposition to its realization?

Those who want life without its hurdles are, according to a simile used by Kant, like birds that would resent the resistance of the air as if they could fly in a vacuum. Flight is the result of the effort of the wings to overcome the resistance of the air. Iqbal is neither an optimist nor a pessimist of any extreme type; he is a meliorist.

It may be asked if Iqbal believes in an eventual victory of good over evil at any point of time in the future course of evolution. Consistent with his view of life as a perpetually creative activity his vision of life after death, even for the blessed, is not a paradise where all unfulfilled desires are eternally fulfilled.

For him the reward of goodness is not an epicurean paradise where all motivation for further development ceases in a bliss of eternal satisfaction. The reward of life is a higher life with higher actualities and deeper potentialities, and yet, according to his conception of life, the ego must meet resistance at every level and, therefore, pain must remain an eternal element of life.

Iqbal has produced very intriguing and exhilarating poems in praise of Satan, the personification of evil and resistance. In a dialogue between Satan

and the archangel Gabriel, he seems to be the advocate of the former. In a verse he exhorts lovers of life not to aspire for life on any plane of existence where Satan, the principle of resistance, does not exist.

Life cannot rest in any of its achievements; every goal is the starting point of a new venture. He would have greatly appreciated the sentiment of Lessing which the latter expressed by saying that if God offered him truth in one hand, and search for truth in the other, he would accept the eternal search, saying, "O Lord, keep the truth for Thyself because only Thou canst have the truth and live; as for myself, only seeking can keep me alive."

Iqbal's paradise is neither the one from which Adam and Eve were driven out for an act of disobedience nor the vision of unfulfilled earthly desires. He gives his own interpretation of the legend of the Fall of Man that he believes to be the true meaning of the Quranic version of this legend. He says, "The Quranic legend of the Fall has nothing to do with the first appearance of man on this planet. Its purpose is rather to indicate man's rise from a primitive state of instinctive appetite to the conscious possession of a free self, capable of doubt and dis-obedience.

The Fall does not mean any moral depravity; it is man's transition from simple consciousness to the first flash of self-consciousness, a kind of waking from the dream of nature with a throb of personal causality in one's own being."¹² There was a paradise that humanity left behind on its course of evolution and there is a paradise that awaits it which will unfold further possibilities in other dimensions of being, but at every stage it will be aspiration more than fulfilment; life is a perpetual revelation of the infinite possibilities of existence. Iqbal has no desire to come to a state of rest by merging the self in a static Absolute, because for him the static Absolute does not exist.

Summing Up

There is no doubt that Iqbal is the most versatile genius that the modern Muslim world has produced. He is a well-cut diamond whose many facets reflect rays of truth from all directions. It will be difficult to find many who are his equals as poets in any language of the East or the West. He did not build any great system of philosophy like Kant or Hegel but his philosophic thinking was extensive as well as intensive.

He felt his kinship with some great geniuses of the past and the present. In one of his poems he compared himself with Goethe and deplored that he himself was sprung from an almost defunct culture, a solitary plant growing, as it were, by fluke from a dead earth, while Goethe was born in a nation pulsating with the throbs of a new life.

As his inner life was enriched by increasing knowledge and deepening intuition he began to feel, with ample justification, his kinship with Rumi, the creative evolutionist mystic poet of the seventh/thirteenth century. As Rumi's religious consciousness was paralleled with intellectual consciousness so was the case with Iqbal; both preached the gospel of a rich integrated life embracing matter, life, mind, and spirit, a life in which not only the individual and social selves are harmonized but in which the developing ego also makes an attempt to attune its finitude with the Cosmic Infinite Spirit.

For both of them the elan vital is essentially the urge of love that spreads in concentric circles to that Ultimate Reality which is the centre as well as the circumference of all existence. Rumi took up the Hellenistic instruments of intellectualism and wielded them to support an outlook that transcended all Hellenism.

Iqbal did the same with the rich heritage of ancient and modern philosophy. Many modern thinkers have been moving in the same direction, so we often find him in company with Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Nietzsche, Bergson, William James, Whitehead, and Eddington; but these tributary streams seem to have converged in his genius in a deep and broad river.

Malak al-Shuara Bahar, the great poet-laureate of modern Iran, said of Iqbal's poetry that it was the fruit of eight centuries of the development of Persian poetry and cultural heritage. During the last decade of his life Iqbal refused to be classed among the poets. He felt that he was using poetry only as a medium and a vehicle for a message.

He had become a teacher, a preacher, a critic of life, and a reformer with a vision of a new renaissance. This message was addressed directly to the Muslim nation, but what he conveyed was a matter of universal import. The broad universal religious outlook that he presented in his poetry as well as philosophical writing was meant for the whole of humanity. He made an attempt to revive the entire Muslim world by a liberal and dynamic view of Islam.

He deplored the geographical and racial divisions of humanity and attacked bitterly the jingoistic nationalism that had resulted in the suicide of a whole civilization. He was an enemy of Western economic and political imperialism and colonialism and a bitter critic of Western materialism and naturalism, which, overwhelmed by the achievement of physical science, has lost faith in the reality of the spirit.

He was equally critical of the religiosity of the East which has become rigid and empty and is worshipping the dead past. He wanted to give an ethical and spiritual basis to politics and economics that, left to themselves, become destructive forces. He preached the gospel of self-realization, but his concept of the self was no mystically transcendent concept.

His ideal man was a man of intuition as well as of intellect, wedding reason to revelation. If he had written philosophy like a professional philosopher only, as he was impelled to do in his Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, he could not have stirred the souls of his readers to the extent that he has done by using poetry as his medium.

His critics are still disputing whether he was primarily a poet or a philosopher, a mystic, a preacher, or a reformer. But the fact is that he was an uncommon synthesis of all these. He was no mere eclectic. All the various trends were organically related in his rich personality; they did not lie in his mind unrelated in unharmonized juxtaposition. He sang of cosmic creative love that transcends and resolves the contradictions of natural and personal life. He was a genius of life and love and recognized no boundaries and considered no oppositions to be final. His message was a rich integrated life constantly actualizing its immense potentialities.

Most of Iqbal's thoughts and sentiments are expressed within the frame-work of Islam, and a substantial portion of his message is directly addressed to the Muslims, to whose regeneration and awakening he had dedicated his life. But there is nothing sectarian or parochial in his broad and liberal ideology. As Plato and Socrates, though dealing primarily with the intellectual, moral, and social problems of Athenian and Greek life, spread messages of universal import, so does Iqbal.

His Javid Nameh, in which in the realm beyond he meets the glorious and the inglorious souls of the departed who had influenced humanity for good or for evil, is certainly richer than Dante's Divine Comedy which reflects only medieval thoughts, beliefs, and prejudices. His criterion of judgment and criticism remains constant whether he is discussing meta-physics or religion, science or art, economics or politics.

He stands for the dignity of life and its perpetual creativeness and richness. Whatever strengthens and advances life in its various aspects is appreciated and whatever impoverishes or negates it is to be rejected. Throughout his thought and poetry there runs a mystic strain, but his mysticism is not quietistic and otherworldly.

Like the ethical monism of Fichte, his mysticism is dynamic. Long before Bergson came to this conclusion Iqbal had identified the creative urge of life with love, which is a matter of intuition and ruling passion with saints and prophets. He was a great artist, yet he did not believe in art for art's sake, nor did he believe in knowledge for the sake of knowledge like the great Greek philosophers for whom the contemplation of eternally static ideas was the acme of well-being, making God Himself a Self-thinking Thought.

His basic conception is life, not thought; thought is only one of the many useful instruments of life, and as such must never be segregated from the life it is meant to serve and advance. There is more healthy dynamism in his thought and poetry than could be found in any poet of the past or the present. Whenever he talks of self-abnegation it is always in the interest of a richer self-realization. His deepest thoughts and intuitions are of immortal significance; he belongs to all times and to the entire humanity, because he imbibed the best that humanity could offer and pointed to goals towards which all creation moves.

Below is given a free rendering in English of some of the poems of Iqbal.

Reason and Heart: A Dialogue

“Once Reason made this claim before the Heart: ‘I am a guide for those who have lost their way. Though working on this lowly earth, all heavens do I survey. Look, how far-reaching is my vision. Guidance is my mission like that of Khidr (the Prophet Elias), the immortal sage. I write a commentary on the Book of Life, and the glory of Love do I manifest. Thou art only a drop of blood, but priceless diamonds envy my effulgence.’

“The Heart replied, ‘Thy claim I don't contest but look more closely into my nature too. Thou probest by thought the mystery of existence, but I see directly what thou only knowest; is not seeing more revealing than mere knowing? In the realm of appearances dost thou roam, but I contact the reality behind. Thou art only a seeker of God, but I reveal Him. Mine is

knowledge of reality, thine is only knowledge about it. Thy knowledge ends only in restlessness; for this malaise I am the sovereign cure. If thou lightest the hall of truth, I am the illumination of Eternal Beauty. Thou beatest thy wings like a captive bird against the cage of space and time, but my flight in eternity is free and unrestrained. I am the Exalted Throne of the Glorious Lord, placed above all creation.”¹³

The Odyssey of Man

“Forgetting my eternal covenant with my Lord I wandered away from Him. The heady wine of consciousness made me restless even in the Garden of Eden and drove me away from that abode of bliss. Heaven-surveying thought urged me to pry into the secret of existence. My lore of change afforded me no rest in any state. I filled the temples with idols of gods of my own creation, but then in disgust ousted them from the Kabah, the place of worship of the Only God.

Desirous of conversing with Him, face to face, I ascended Mount Sinai; and the hand illumined with light divine I hid in my sleeve. My fellow beings nailed me on the cross; so leaving the ungrate-ful world I went to heaven again. Coming down I hid myself for years in the cave of Hira till I was commissioned to deliver a final message to mankind. Sometimes a song celestial did I chant in the land of Hind and I also resorted to wisdom-loving Greece. When Hind paid no heed to my message I was welcomed in China and Japan.

Contrary to the spirit of all true religions, I also ventured to construct a universe with mindless atoms. I take the blame of starting a ruthless strife between reason and faith reddening the earth with the blood of humanity. I spent many sleepless nights as a stargazer to wrest from the shining orbs the secret of existence.

The sword of the Church militant could not make one desist from teaching that the earth moves round the sun. My telescopic reason discerned the Law of Uni-versal Gravitation. I captured rays of light and waves of magnetism making impetuous lightning an obedient slave; I converted the earth into a paradise by controlling the powers of nature. But alas! Though I had subdued the world of nature, nothing could reveal the meaning of existence to me.

“Finally returning into myself and turning my eyes inward I found Him there in the sanctuary of my own heart, Him who is the Source and Meaning of all that exists.”¹⁴

The Nature of Life

“The motionless bank of the river said, ‘In my long existence I have con-templated much to know what I am, but the meaning of my existence has not been revealed to me.’ Hearing this the fast-moving and tumbling wave replied, ‘The secret of life and the essence of it is movement; I exist so long as I move; when I cease to move I shall cease to be.’”¹⁵

“The love that paints with charming colours the leaves of the tulip creates a painful turmoil in my heart; even in the veins of this pale earth, the red life-blood of love doth flow.”¹⁶

“Man is an instrument for the melodies of love; God created the world and man improves on it. Is not man, then, a partner in creation?”¹⁷

“If the heart too had been only clever like reason, no spark would have been kindled in our clay; and in the tavern of life deadly silence would have reigned if love had not been there with its turmoil.”¹⁸

“It is the fire of pathos that lights my heart; the tears of blood in the eyes make their sight keen to survey existence; he who calls Love madness, remains estranged from the secret of life.”¹⁹

“In the garden, breezes in spring are the gifts of love; and in the fields, love brings up buds like stars. The rays of love’s light penetrate the deep sea and make the fish see their way in the dark.”²⁰

The Birth of Man

“Love exclaimed, ‘Lo! The lover is there who will welcome my painful shafts,’ and a tremor passed through Beauty that a great appreciator is born. In the closed sanctuary of the mysteries of being, the warning went round that eternal secrets are going to be unveiled. Nature got perturbed that the dust of an unfree world has brought forth a being who shall freely make and break himself, a self-knowing and self-determining being. The unconscious urge that slept in the lap of life has opened its eyes thereby heading to a new vista of existence. Life said, ‘Long was I immured in a closed dome of clay, restless to venture out; but now I see the door that offers a chance to escape.’”²¹

“Our body is an old vessel of clay but is brimful of the wine of life; life pulsates secretly even in what seems to be death. When, in autumn, leaves from the branches fall, it is like the dropping of toys from the grip of infant hands loosened by sweet and restful sleep.”²²

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Notes

1. Khalifah Abdul Hakim states that Iqbal's father personally related this dream to him.
2. The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1958, p. 49.
3. Ibid., p. 53.
4. Ibid., pp. 52-53.
5. Ibid., p. 55.
6. Ibid., pp. 5-6.
7. Ibid., pp. 6-7.
8. Ibid., p. 9.
9. Ibid., p. 15.
10. Quran (57:3).
11. Ibid., (24:35).
12. Iqbal, op. cit., p. 35.
13. Bang-i Dara, Lahore, 1949, p. 28.
14. Ibid., p. 80.
15. Ibid., p. 150.
16. Ibid., p. 13.
17. Ibid., p. 16.
18. Ibid., p. 20.
19. Ibid., p. 12.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid., p. 97.
22. Ibid., p. 165.

Chapter 83: Renaissance in Indonesia

A: Introductory

The three centuries during which it was ruled by the Portuguese, the Spaniards, and the Dutch form the dark age of Indonesia's history. All the energies of the Indonesian leaders were concentrated during these years on the problems of political emancipation on one side and social and religious reform on the other. This account of the modern renaissance in Indonesia is, therefore, an account of the political renaissance of that country and of the modernist movements, which indirectly influenced the course of that long-drawn and bitter struggle.

The memories of that conflict and the experience gained during this period influenced the present generation in its religious and cultural outlook and its approach to social and economic problems. As religion played an important part in the movement for political emancipation, reference will also be made here and there to religious reforms.

At present ninety per cent of the population of Indonesia professes the religion of Islam but it took several centuries for Islam to become the main religion in that country. As it has been shown in an earlier chapter, the credit for the spread and popularization of Islam in Indonesia goes to the Sufis of various orders.¹

The Sufi interpretation of Islam very well suited the cultural background of the Indonesians in whose life and thought the deep influences of Hinduism and Buddhism, which had at one time been the principal spiritual forces in Indonesian society, were deeply embedded.

The commercial intercourse between Indonesia and other Islamic countries, particularly India, Arabia, and Egypt, led to a closer cultural collaboration with the Muslims in other parts of the world. Many Indonesians went to holy places for the annual pilgrimage and some of them stayed there to complete their studies or to settle down there permanently.

It was these Indonesians who imbibed deeply the tenets of Islamic religion and later on tried to combat the un-Islamic practices that had crept into Islam in their home country. This led to a purist movement in the country insisting on a closer conformity with Islam. "Mecca," says Snouck Hurgronje, "has been well said to have more influence on the religious life of these islands than on Turkey, India, or Bukhara."²

How deeply attached to their old customs and traditions even the modern educated Indonesians are is well illustrated by the statement of a prominent Indonesian lady who, while addressing the members of the British Women Association, remarked "that the Indonesians were indeed proud of their old customs and traditions and wished to preserve them in spite of their Islamic religion adopted about seven centuries ago."³

The Indonesian national movement is of recent origin. Before the beginning of the fourteenth/twentieth century, there had been isolated and sporadic outbursts of armed resistance to the rapacious exploitation of the Indonesians by the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the British, such as those of Dipa Nagara, in the province of Djocjkarta,⁴ Tenku Umar,⁵ Imam Bondjol,⁶ etc.

The first organized political movement started in the first decade of this century. There were many factors responsible for the development of Indonesian nationalism and political consciousness which materially affected the course of the Indonesians' struggle as also the political structure of Indonesia after it had been won.

Of the modern Islamic reform movements in other countries that of Muham-mad Abduh in Egypt had a very deep influence on Indonesian thought and way of life. The Dutch tried to prevent the inflow of books and newspapers published in Egypt and other Arab countries, as they were afraid of the "dangerous pan-Islamic ideas" which these writings contained.

In spite of their vigilance the Egyptian periodicals al-Manar, al-Urwat al-Wuthqa, al-Muyyad, al-Siyasah, al-Liwa, and al-Adl were smuggled into Indonesia and were widely read. Scholars like Imam Bondjol, H. Jalal al-Din Tayyib, Mukhtar Lutfi, H. H. Amarullah brought back with them modern Islamic ideas current in Islamic lands and particularly those introduced by Muhammad Abduh and Jamal al-Din Afghani in Cairo. Indian modernist writings were equally welcome and widely read.⁷

The main aim of the Indonesian Muslims who were caught up in the current of modern reformist movements in Islamic countries was to purify Indonesian Muslim society from the indigenous unorthodox practices. They had to combat at the same time the Dutch educated intelligentsia who were gradually becoming indifferent towards religion, and regarded Islam "as a religious and cultural anachronism and an obstacle to progress."

The Christian missionary activities and the large number of missionary schools subsidized by the Dutch posed another difficult problem for the Indonesian religious and educational reformers. "Every new period in the history of civilization obliges a religious community to undertake a general revision of the contents of its treasury," remarks Snouck Hurgronje, "and the situation in Indonesia called for the establishment of religious, social, and political organizations to rehabili-tate Islam and combat the contaminating influences of Western impact."

The "pesantran" or madrasah which followed the traditional Muslim pattern of education played a very important role in building up the Islamic character of the Indonesian Muslims, while the Western system of education which touched only the upper stratum of Indonesian society did much to broaden their outlook, rationalize their thought, and prepare them morally and intel-lectually to fight for the liberation of their country from centuries of colonial exploitation.

One of the most active and popular organizations for socio-religious reform was Muhammadiyah founded by Kiaja Haji Ahmad Dachlan in November 1912 at Jogjakarta, which met with a relatively wide response. It rapidly grew in popularity as is shown by the large number of its branches in various parts of the country.

The objectives of the organization were similar to those of the Salafiyyah in Egypt - the purification of Islam as practised in Indonesia of the customs, rituals, and beliefs which were derived from the Hindu and Buddhistic religions and also from the debased Sufi doctrines; a rationalized

interpretation of orthodox Islamic doctrines; the reformation of Muslim educational system; and the defence of Islam against external attacks.

This movement aiming at a rationalist interpretation of orthodox Islamic doctrine built up a network of schools. The organization later included a wide range of social services; free clinics, relief for the poor, orphanages, and publication of the Quran. The organization, as a matter of policy, did not take active part in the political problems with which the Indonesians were faced.

In practice, however, “the progressive Muslim social concepts which it sought to advance could not be divested of the political consciousness of its members and of the pupils taught in its many schools. It was a still, but deep, tributary of the stream of political nationalism and quietly but substantially nourished and strengthened that stream.”⁸

B: National Movement in Indonesia

The degree of religious homogeneity in Indonesia that Islam had brought about was an important factor in the growth of national movement. Islam served both as a symbol of social unity and as an ingroup solidarity against imperialistic foreign aggressors in a country where, in spite of diversity of race, language, and religion, the national feeling was strong.

While the Dutch Government and the Christian organizations in Holland gave moral and material assistance to the Christian missions established in Indonesia, the Government did not allow the purely Muslim societies or organizations to propagate freely the principles of Islam. Besides the Muslims, there are in Indonesia about two million Chinese Buddhists, two million Christians, one million Hindus especially in the Island of Bali, and a large number of animists.

According to Wertheim, “it was possible to sustain the paradox that the extension of Islam in Indonesian Archipelago was due to the Westerners. The arrival of Portuguese power in the area made the princes embrace Islamic faith as a political move to counter Christian penetration.”⁹

Islamic modernist movements, especially in Cairo, as already mentioned, found ready response in Indonesia. In 1329/1911 the Indonesians studying in the international Islamic milieu of Mecca and Cairo came back saturated with pan-Islamic ideas that made them ill-disposed towards the European administrative system and the European way of life.

The Dutch Government, too late in the day, decided to give the Indonesians the benefit of Western education and greater association with the government of the country in the hope of neutralizing the influence of Islamic revivalist movements. By giving the Indonesian population, at least its elite, a Western education, it was hoped, the new generation would turn away from Islam towards cultural association with the Dutch. It was hoped that “the pan-Islamic idea which has not yet taken a great hold on the native aristocracy of Java and the other islands will lose all the chance of existence within this milieu when those who compose it have become the free associates of our civilization.”¹⁰

The struggle of the Philipinos, the success of Kemal Ataturk in Turkey against Western military powers, the activity of the Congress party in India, the rising tide of anti-Western Chinese nationalism represented by Dr. Sun

Yet Sen, the industrialization of Japan and that country's victory over Russia in 1323/1905, all combined to quicken the rising tide of national movement in Indonesia.

Indonesian students studying in the Netherlands in particular and in Europe in general were strongly impressed by Dutch political ideas of civil liberties and the democratic flavour of the government there. The writings of Bukharin, Karl Marx, Hegel, and Stalin influenced the handful of Indonesian students studying in continental Europe. The American Revolution of 1192/1778, the French Revolution of 1204/1789, and the Russian Revolution of 1336/1917 had a profound effect on the Indonesian people and shook them out of their apathy and complacency.

C: Effect of the First World War on Indonesia

The First World War considerably strengthened national consciousness in Indonesia. Numerous national organizations and parties throughout the country took a leading part in giving shape to their latent aspirations and canalizing the pent-up discontent in a nation-wide struggle for freedom.

The organizations included the Budi Utomo (1326/1908), Minahasa Association (1330/1912), Nena Muria Organization (1331/1913), Muhammadiyah Move-ment (1337/1918), National Indies Party (1338/1919), Indonesian Social Democratic Association or N.I.V.B. (1335/1916), Sumatra Association (1337/1918), Society of Students (1338/1919), the Christian Ethical Party of Miai (1341/1922), and the Nationalist Party of Indonesia (1346/1927).

The Jambi revolution of 1345/1926, the Padang Congress of 1341/1922, the Pan-Islamic Congress of 1344/1925 at Bandung, the Budi Utomo Congress of 30th July 1924, and the Indonesian Students' Association in the Netherlands, all struggled for national emancipation. Freedom from economic stranglehold of the colonial government was the common objective of most of these organi-zations.

The war led to the loosening of the ties that had formerly bound Indonesia to Europe and consequently Indonesia formed mercantile connections with other countries round the Pacific Ocean.

Even before and during the war, demand for political freedom of Indonesia was openly voiced by the Indonesian leader, Tjokroaminoto, at the first National Congress of 1335/1916. The war compelled the Dutch Government to change its policy towards Indonesia. In 1335/1916, the Netherlands Parliament passed a bill for the institution of the Volksraad at Jakarta.

In May 1918, van L. Stirum remarked, "...the road has been taken, never to be abandoned, toward the goal of responsible government in Indonesia itself which, in concert with the Volksraad, shall have the right to take final decisions in all matters which are not of general imperial (State) concern. In proper time and degree, so far as is compatible with due appreciation of the consequences of each new step, we must proceed directly toward this end."

The National Indonesian Party and the Budi Utomo demanded the con-vocation of a provisional parliament to frame a new democratic constitution. For this purpose, the Revision Commission was appointed by the Government on 17th December 1918. In June 1920, the Commission

submitted its report to the Government and the following main proposals were made to be included in the Constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands:

(1) Recognition of Indonesia as an independent part of the kingdom, the centre of gravity of the government being shifted to Indonesia itself.

(2) Elevation of the Volksraad to the status of a general co-legislative representative body to be constituted by election.

In the military field, the World War had increased the importance of the defence problem in Indonesia. Compulsory military service was introduced in Indonesia in 1339/1920, but, by the regulations of 1341-42/1922-23, it was imposed only upon Europeans and not upon natives or foreign Orientals. As a result of the war, an energetic propaganda for an Indonesian army was carried on by an Indonesian Committee of Defence.

Economically, the war had far-reaching consequences in the economic life of the country. In Indonesia the price of foodstuffs rose and this made the Government intervene to prevent the rising spiral of prices.

D: Factors Promoting National Sentiments

The adoption of Malay as the national language was another important factor in the development of national movement. The extensive use of the Indonesian language as the medium of expression throughout Indonesia was made progressively. Kia Hadjar Dewantoro, the founder of Taman Siswa, introduced it first in his school curriculum.

In 1347/1928, the Indonesian youth at their Congress swore to have one country, Indonesia; one nation, the Indonesian; and one national language, the Indonesian language. In 1344/1925, the Indo-nesian members of the Volksraad demanded the recognition of Indonesian as the official language of the country. In October 1942, an Indonesian Language Commission headed by Dr. Muhammad Hatta, was founded by the Japanese. In August 1945, the Indonesian language was formally declared the State language.¹¹ The national Red and White flag of Indonesia became the symbol of the patriotic liberation movement.¹² The Indonesian Raya (Indonesian National Anthem) acted as an inspiring and unifying factor.

The proclamation of the Republic of Indonesia in 1364/1945 was made an official national movement and its visible symbols, the national flag and the national anthem, helped to join the Archipelago's many local patriotisms together into an all-embracing patriotism.

The discriminatory policy employed by the Dutch in the political, economic, social, and cultural fields and the consequent resentment against colonialism fanned the flames of discontent.¹³ Discrimination in the economic sphere was even more galling and filtered down to the masses. The economic exploitation of the national wealth of the country by the Dutch capitalists and the increased poverty of the vast population living on rich soil provided another source of discontent.

In education, the Indonesians were provided with far fewer facilities than European children, for in the quick growth of Western education amongst the masses the Dutch saw a potential danger to the continuance of their dominant position.

The nationalistic educational institution, commonly known as Taman Siswa (Children's Garden School) established by Kia Hadjar Dewantara on 3rd July 1922, served as the training ground for the ideological preparation for the popularization of the Indonesian national movement. Kia Hadjar Dewantara maintained that the culture of a nation could be bent but could never be broken.

Wisdom, beauty, art, and science from abroad were welcome. Everybody, he said, who learns a foreign language gains access to a new world, but foreign elements should be absorbed into native life, enriching the already existing treasures of national civilization. He built up at least 250 schools all over Indonesia without any government or foreign help.

Muhammadiyah institutions developed the political consciousness of its members and its pupils. The Muhammadiyah movement, founded by H. Ahmad Dahlan on 18th November 1912, had established 29 branches with 4,000 members and built about 55 schools in 1925; 150 branches with 10,320 members in 1928; 209 with 17,550 members in 1929; 267 with 24,383 members in 1931; and 750 (316 in Java, 326 in Sumatra, 79 in Celebes and 29 in Borneo) with 43,000 members in 1935.

It had set up 126 schools and as many clinics in Java which treated 81,000 patients in 1929. In 1930, there were considerable Muhammadiyah schools and colleges in Sumatra. The Dutch colonial government tried to hamper the development of national educational institutions by issuing an Ordinance in 1342/1923 under which the Government assumed control of all privately owned schools, numbering about 2,000 - 2,500 in 1357/1938 with 100,000 to 500,000 pupils.

The Dutch administration had deliberately starved the educational system. "This tended," says John Gunther, "to keep the people in subjection, and to prevent the normal growth of political aspirations. Dutch policy, it has been said, was 'to keep the bellies of the people full, their minds empty.' Indeed, the record of the Dutch in education was indifferent, and illiteracy reached ninety-five per cent."¹⁴

The growth of the national press and radio was the chief means for the propagation of the ideals of nationalistic struggle for freedom and emancipation of the fatherland.

The appearance of the newspaper Madan Pryayi (Civil Servants' Paper) at Bandung was indicative of the desire of the Indonesians to have their own periodicals and dailies as vehicles of expression of their desire for independence.

In 1340/1921, when the National Movement made itself felt in Sumatra (west coast), appeared the newspapers Banih Merdeka (The Seed of Freedom) at Medan, and Sinar Merdeka (The Ray of Freedom) at Padang Sidenpau. The Apirakjat (The Fire of the People), Sinar Hindia (The Ray of Indonesia), the Api (Fire), the Njala (Flame), and several other newspapers made their appearance. The very names of these papers were symbolic of the passionate and all-absorbing desire for freedom.

The Indonesian journalists like R. M. Titoadisuyo, right down to young journalists like Hatta, Subardjo, Nazir Pamontjak, Mustafa, were pioneers in the fight for national emancipation and independence. Articles on the

Indonesian struggle for independence were published by them in European newspapers and magazines, while the Indonesians abroad served as foreign correspondents of Indonesian newspapers.

During the Japanese occupation (1361/1942 - 1364/1945) the national press was involved in the Japanese pro-paganda machine. It played an important role during the national revolution against Dutch imperialism and inspired the masses with the spirit of self -determination and national self respect.

The development of transport, communication, and the increased geo-graphical mobility of the people as well as ideas of modern economic organi-zation in Indonesia were equally helpful in the spreading of the national movement. Frequent contacts with the nationalist leaders of different countries in international conferences and the League of Nations had stimulating effects in promoting discontent among Indonesian intelligentsia and patriots. In 1341/1922, the Sarekat Islam (S.I.) led by Abd al-Muiz and H. Salim established close relations with the Indian National Congress and adopted the policy of non-cooperation. The S.I. also sent delegations to the World Islamic Conference at Mecca in 1343/1924 and at Cairo in 1345/1926.¹⁵

E: The Role of National Parties (1345/1926 - 1361/1942)

Nationalist Party of Indonesia

The Persatuan National Indonesia (P.N.I.) was founded in July 1927 by Dr. Soekarno at Bandung. This party was essentially nationalistic, with a definite aim, Indonesia Merdeka, that is, the liberation of Indonesia from the colonial yoke through a popular movement deriving its strength from indigenous force and ability.

The moving spirits behind the P.N.I. were the repatriated members of the Perhimpoean Indonesia (Indonesian Union)¹⁶ in Holland and other members of General Study Club at Bandung. Soekarno was the leader of the propaganda activities of the party and he soon made his mark not only as a great orator but also as the natural leader of the masses.

In 1347/1928, the propaganda activities of the P.N.I. were extended to cover small towns and villages, and leaders were sent out to remote places to meet and talk with the masses at their native haunts. For this purpose, the P.N.I. set up a sort of People's University, in which members were given courses in propaganda work. Within one year the party had as many as 600 members.

The P.N.I. leaders now stressed the idea of Indonesian unity in their speeches, using the Indonesian language and adopted for their party the white and red flag with the symbol of a bull's head on it.

The P.N.I. endeavoured to form a national front. For this purpose, they took the initiative in the organization of a federation of nationalist societies, composed of political parties, in December 1927, in order to unify and co-ordinate the activities of the member societies. The Indonesian Association in Holland was meanwhile appointed as their advance post for foreign pro-paganda.

In May 1928, in his speech before the Volksraad, the Governor-General alluded to the propaganda carried on by the P.N.I., calling it "a

revolutionary nationalistic propaganda,” and hinting that its revolutionary nature would hurt its own cause. In December 1929, the Government searched the houses and offices of the P.N.I. leaders. Eight persons were arrested, four of whom including Soekarno were later prosecuted.

The members of the P.N.I. split up into two groups after the official dissolution of the party. Those rallying around Sartono organized a new party called the Partai Indonesia (Partindo) at the end of April 1931. The Partindo had the same aim as the dissolved P.N.I., that is, to strive for a free Indonesia.

Other members formed the Indonesian National Education Party (New P.N.I.) in November 1931, under the leadership of Muhammad Hatta. Soetan Sjahrir joined the party in 1351/1932. Early in 1357/1938, Soekarno was re-arrested and interned, and this was followed by the arrest of both Hatta and Sjahrir.

Communist Party of Indonesia (P.K.I.)

After the failure of the Sarekat Islam (S.I.) to accept the extreme proposals of Semaun's faction, he and other leaders of the Social Democratic Association converted their organization into the Communist Party of Indonesia in May 1920.

The P.K.I. developed a close relationship with the Comintern that it joined at the end of 1339/1920. In August 1923, Semaun was arrested and forced to leave the country or face exile to Timor. By the end of the year all Dutch leaders of the party had also been forced to leave. According to Semaun, the departure of the Dutch leaders from the party raised the prestige of the party in the eyes of the masses, because of the popular prejudice against the Dutch, whatever their attitude towards colonialism.

Due to his failure to wrest control of the organization from the S.I., Semaun was successful in setting up a rival association of the trade unions, the Revolutionary Trade Union Central, in June 1921. Within four years the communists could control most of the local branches of the S.I., but most of their large peasant membership melted away. This was due to two reasons: (i) the Government's effective barring of contact between the leaders and peasantry and (ii) the communists' alienating of the peasant members by violating their religious sensitivities.

During 1344/1925, the extreme elements within the Indonesian Communist Party came under the control of Dahalan Sukara. The leaders of this party refused to take orders from the regular party leadership and continually agitated for revolution. They resorted to terroristic methods in order to dominate the party.

The failure of the communist revolutionary effort was due mostly to the great schism in the ranks of the Indonesians. Tan Malaka, a prominent member of the party, founded a new organization, Partai Indonesia. The Republic Party (Indonesian Republic Party) was established by him and his two lieutenants, Tamin and Subakat, in Bangkok in 1346/1927. Partai's immediate objective was the training of Indonesian underground workers in Bangkok, who were to return to Indonesia and there train more members and build up underground cadres.

The Communist Party was forced by the vigilance of the Government to operate more and more underground, while it was deprived of its ablest leaders.

During the first ten month of 1345/1926, more and more of the communist leaders were arrested. Intra-organizational contact was progressively disrupted, as was attested by uncoordinated sporadic outbreaks of violence at widely isolated places throughout Java.

With the failure of the revolutions of 1345-46/1926-27 the communist organization was crushed, as a large number of communist, nationalist, and religious leaders were arrested and deported to a concentration camp in New Guinea. After their arrest the power of the communists was broken for the remainder of the period of Dutch rule.

Partai Indonesia Raja (P.I.R.) (The People's Party of Indonesia)

The Indonesian Study Club, formed by Dr. Sutomo in October 1930 at Surabaya, was changed to the Persatuan Bangsa Indonesia or P.B.I. (Indonesia Association) in January 1931. At its congress of April 18-21, 1935, at Surabaya, the P.B.I. decided to form the Budi Utomo. As a result of the Solo Confer-ence, Partai Indonesia Raja or P.I.R. (Greater Indonesia Party) came into being on December 26, 1935, at Surabaya, under the presidentship of Sutomo. The P.R.I. was founded by Tabrani in September 1930 at Jakarta, aiming to achieve the independence of Indonesia through a parliamentary system and dominion status for her.

Sarekat Islam

The name of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce (S.D.I.), founded in 1329/1911 by H. Samanhudi, was changed into the Sarekat Islam in 1330/1912 under the leadership of H. Umar Said Tjokroaminoto. In the years 1331/1913 and 1332/1914, the people joined en masse this party based purely on Islamic principles.

By 1333/1915 it had established fifty branches and later, by June 1916, it claimed eighty branches with 360,000 members. In 1334/1916, it became a fully-fledged political party struggling for free Indonesia (dominion status) and adopted a policy of co-operation with the colonial government.

In order to achieve Muslim unity, a pan-Islamic movement, al-Islam, was organized by H. A. Salim. The second congress which al-Islam held from May 19 to 21, 1924, at Carut, was attended by most of the Muslim leaders of Islamic organizations, except the Nahdat al-'Ulama'.

The S.I. formed a Majlis 'Ulama'-i Indonesia in January 1928 which in 1929 was changed into Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia or P.S.I.I. (Indonesian Islamic Party).

On account of disagreement with Dr. Sukinan's group at the Jakarta Con-gress, Partai Islam Indonesia (P.I.I.) was founded in December 1928 at Solo under the presidentship of K. M. Misono.

The Muslim Union of Indonesia (Parmi) was founded in 1349/1930 in central Sumatra on the initiative of Mukhtar Lutfi Jalal al-Din Tayyib; it was based on Islam and nationalism with the ultimate object of achieving independence for Indonesia.

The Nahdat al-'Ulama'

The Nahdat al-‘Ulama’ (Islamic Conservative Party) was formed in January 1926 at Surabaya. It organized its first Congress in October 1928 at Surabaya and was opposed to the modernist movement. The Congress of 1359/1940 set up a Women Organization (Nahdat al-‘Ulama’-i Muslimat or N.U.M.) and a Youth Movement (Ansar) in 1354/1935, under the leadership of Tohir Bokri. Among the most outstanding leaders of the N.U. were Hasjim Asjari, Abd al-Wahhab, Mahfuz Siddiq, and Wahid Hasjim.

Budi Utomo (High Endeavour)

The Budi Utomo formed in 1326/1908 had established forty branches with 10,000 members by 1332/1914 and held a congress in August 1915.

Indonesian Youth Movement

The formation of the Student Association in 1330/1912 was followed by Tri Koro Darmo (Student Movement) in March 1915 based on “strength, character, and service.” In 1337/1918, its name was changed to the “Young Java” under the presidentship of R. Satiman Wiryoso-joyo. Its objective was to promote solidarity among the students.

The third Indonesian Youth Congress of December 1939 decided to pursue a literacy campaign with a view to helping the farmers, fighting youth un-employment, and promoting rural uplift and reconstruction.

Indonesian Women Movement

The first women’s organization was started by R. A. Kartini in 1319/1901. The first school for women was founded in 1319-20/1901-02 and another in 1321/1903. R. A. Kartini became the pioneer of female education, and though she died young her influence has lived after her. This school was followed by Puteri Merdeke (1330/1912) and Keutamaan Isteri Minagkabau (1330/1912).

A Women’s Congress, the first of its kind, was held from December 22 to 25, 1928, at Jakarta. The Congress was attended by thirty Indonesian women’s organizations. The main aim of the Congress was to coordinate the working of several Indonesian women’s associations and promote the interests of the Indonesian women.

Cooperation and Non-Cooperation Movements

The year 1349/1930 marks the lowest ebb of national movement in Indonesia, as expressed in a general mood of depression both in economic and in social life. The communist revolution of 1345-46/1926-27, made the Government adopt repressive measures that forced the Indonesian political movements to go underground; prominent leaders were either imprisoned, interned, or exiled.

The demand for responsible government and for parliamentary self-government for Indo-nesia had been the main demand of the political leaders. On 15th July 1936, Mr. Sutardjo along with many other representatives of the Volksraad asked for an Imperial Conference to discuss the best method by which self-govern-ment for Indonesia within the limit of Article I of the Netherlands Constitution of 1341/1922 could be realized and to fix a time limit within which this self government could become effective.

When the Nazi armies invaded the Netherlands on 10th May 1940, the Dutch Government fled to England and the States General ceased to function. The exiled Government continued to direct the international relations of Indonesia from London. All power in Indonesia was vested in the hands of a Governor General, who carried on the government in a despotic fashion.

During this international crisis, the Dutch Government promised to consider constitutional changes in Indonesia at the end of the war on the ground that the situation in the world was undergoing a change and the shape democracy would take after the war was not known. Further, there had to be introduced changes in the law of the Netherlands in order to alter the constitution in Indonesia.

F: The Japanese Occupation

The Second World War marks a turning point in the history of Indonesia. As in other belligerent countries it brought great misery and suffering to the people but at the same time it loosened the colonial grip and ushered in a new era of revolutionary struggle for freedom.

Soon after the capitulation of the Dutch in March 1942, the Japanese military authority was established in Indonesia. The Japanese were anxious to completely eradicate the Dutch influence in Indonesia and to win over public opinion in Indonesia in order to utilize its manpower for forced labour as well as for food supplies for their armies.

Political concessions to the nationalists were, therefore, regarded by the Japanese as the means to achieve the main economic goal and to enlist popular support for total economic mobilization. The principal leaders who were either in exile or had been interned were given considerable freedom of movement, but all political parties and political meetings and propaganda were banned by the Japanese authority.

The Japanese realized, however, that an outlet must be created for absorbing the political tensions and passions. Within two months after all political activity had been prohibited, a Peoples Movement was initiated on 29th April 1942. This was intended to unite all political forces into one powerful movement, directed towards the elimination of the pernicious Western influences which had corrupted the Eastern soul and also towards the indoctrination of the entire population of the Archipelago with the slogans: "Asia for the Asiatics" and "Japan as the mother of Asia." They, however, proceeded cautiously and avoided giving rise to any premature independence movement. They wanted to Japanize Indonesia under the slogan: "Japan the leader of Asia, Japan the protector of Asia, Japan the light for Asia, and Asia for the Asiatics."

In order to influence the Indonesian people, the Japanese made a friendly approach to the "four-leaved clover" of the Indonesian leaders: Soekarno, Hatta, Dewantara, and Mansur. These four men accepted the new role, as, in the words of Sjahrir, "it gives the nationalist struggle a broader legal scope and presses the Japanese for political concessions."¹⁷

The Pusat Tenaga Rakjat or Putera was organized by the Japanese in March 1943. Dr. Soekarno was made president of the new organization (Central People's Power). The Japanese policy, thus, indirectly encouraged

contact between nationalist leaders and the masses, which the repressive government of the Dutch regime had so severely limited.

In September 1943, a volunteer army of “Defenders of the Fatherland,” a Japanese trained but Indonesian officered military organization, was created to help the Japanese defend Indonesia against the Allied invasion. By the middle of 1364/1945, it numbered about 120,000-armed men. This was the “Peta” which was to become the backbone of the Indonesian Republic’s army. By 1363/1944, the average “Peta” member was consciously a strong nationalist, anti-Japanese, and anti-Dutch, but for the most part favourably disposed towards the other allies, particularly the United States.

The Japanese also established several youth organizations. They were given political indoctrination and some military training. The first of them, the “Seinendan,” was established at the end of 1361/1942, as a mass youth organization based particularly on the village.

The Japanese military command dissolved the “Putera” and replaced it with a new organization called Djawa Hokakai (People’s Loyalty Organization) on 1st March 1944. To help neutralize and limit the force of the nationalists the Japanese insisted that it should represent the Chinese, Arab, and Eurasian community as well as the Indonesians, and forced it to submit to a much closer supervision and control than had been the case with the “Putera.”

The Japanese attempted simultaneously to win the support of Indonesian Islamic leaders. They established towards the end of 1362/1943 a large Islamic organization subsuming all the existing ones of a non-political nature, including Muhammadiyah, Nahdat al-‘Ulam’ and M.I.A.I. (Council of Indonesian Muslim Association). Thus, they welded the Indonesian Muslims into a greater unity, bringing the Muhammadiyah and the Nahdat al-‘Ulama’ into a single Muslim mass organization, Masjumi.

At the same time they sharpened the long-standing divisions between the active Muslim community and the less positively Muslim social groups who found political leadership in aristocratic and secular nationalist elements. But soon the ‘Ulama’ refused to lend them-selves as instruments of Japanese aims, frightened as they were by the clumsy handling of religion by the Japanese. The Japanese order to the Indonesians to bow towards Tokyo rather than Mecca and to exalt the Emperor to a religious plane were particularly odious to them.

In June 1943, Tojo, the Japanese Premier, in a speech to the Diet, promised to allow the people greater participation in their government. The first concrete steps to carry out this promise were announced in Java on 5th September 1943. An advisory system was introduced whereby Indonesians were appointed as advisers to the various departments of the Government, advisory councils were established and Vice-Governors appointed in eight of the provinces.

Under increasing pressure both from the Indonesian national-ists and deteriorating military situation in the Pacific, the Japanese made the first formal promise of independence to the Indonesians in September 1944.

In March 1945, the Japanese, realizing the urgency of a compromise with the leading national organizations in order to stabilize their rule in Indonesia

and mobilize the rich resources of the country for their war effort against the Allies, appointed a committee representing various political and ethnic groups for political and economic organization of an independent Indonesia.

Soekarno was the leading exponent of the hopes and aspirations of his country-men. By careful enunciation of his own “ideological synthesis” he succeeded in bringing about a measure of agreement amongst the various groups, parti-cularly the leaders of the doctrinaire Islamic group. His principles of Pantjasila were accepted as the official Indonesian national philosophy. The five principles were, “Nationalism, internationalism (or humanitarianism), representative government, social justice, and belief in God in the context of religious free-dom.”

On 7th July 1945, the Japanese military administration announced the decision of the Supreme War Council to the effect that the Indonesians should be given their independence as soon as possible. Soekarno, Hatta, and Wedio-diningrat were flown to Tarauchi headquarters to receive the Imperial decree directly.

On 7th August 1945, the Japanese appointed an All-Indonesia Independence Preparatory Committee with Soekarno as Chairman and Muhammad Hatta as Vice-Chairman to make preparations for the transfer of government authority to the Indonesians. When the Japanese finally decided to surrender, Soekarno and Hatta proclaimed Indonesia’s independence on 17th August 1945. The Indonesians proudly and justly claimed that the Republic was neither a gift from Japan nor from any other foreign country. “It is the reward,” it was claimed, “of the great sacrifices in blood and material suffered by the Indonesians before and during the Second World War.”¹⁸

Effects of the Japanese Occupation

The Japanese interlude ended as abruptly as it had begun. The harsh and arbitrary rule of the Japanese and their crude attempts at conciliation affected almost the entire population. It aroused a consciousness of common suffering and humiliation and a common resentment against the Japanese. Further, it enormously strengthened the already existing national consciousness of the Indonesians.

As Soetan Sjahriar observed: “During the three and a half years of Japanese occupation, the foundation of rural society was shaken and undermined by forced regulations, kidnapping from homes for conscription as labourers abroad or as soldiers, compulsory surrender of harvest crops, compulsory planting of designed crops, all imposed with limited arbitrariness.”

As a reaction of and in order to resist the heavy demands of the Japanese, the peasantry became much more politically conscious than it had ever previously been.

The Indonesians gained experience in administration during the occupation. Dr. Hatta correctly pointed out that “while under the Japanese, we laid plans for achieving our independence and when, on 17th August, the last Japanese surrendered and were unable to act effectively, we declared our independence.”

The Japanese established special schools for the training of political leaders from among whom were to be recruited native officials for political affairs. A training institute was set up at Jakarta to give three week courses to the “Kias” and the ‘Ulama’ in order to enable the Japanese to choose those who were willing to cooperate with them and were also promising propagandists.

In 1363/1944, shock brigades, the Hizb Allah, numbering 50,000 were organized from amongst the Muslim youth (ranging between 17 and 25 years in age). The purpose of the Hizb Allah was two fold. “It was a military organization, training reserves for the home defence army and it was also a religious vanguard to propagate Muhammadan doctrine.”

The policy of Japan in Indonesia affected the educated youth. The introduction of the Japanese language coupled with their harsh and autocratic administration of the schools antagonized the students. Takdir Alishahban observed: “Because the Japanese were determined to enlist the energies of the entire Indonesian population in the war efforts, they (the students) penetrated into the villages in the remotest backwater of the islands, using the Indonesian language as they went.

Thus the language flourished and imbued the people with a feeling new to most of them. As more and more of them learnt to speak it freely, they became aware of a communal unity in opposition to the effort of the Japanese ultimately to implant their own language and culture. By the time, therefore, of the Japanese surrender, the position of the Indonesian language had improved enormously, both in strength and in prestige, over not only Dutch but also over the various regional languages of the Archipelago which had no opportunity to develop during the occupation.”¹⁹

The increased use of mass communication media by the Japanese contributed to the progress and development of Indonesian language. The disappearance of the Dutch Press led to a sharp rise in the circulation of the Indonesian newspapers.²⁰

The Japanese developed a policy of decentralized administration based on the so-called historical and cultural differences of the Indonesian society. They did away with the provincial isolation and traditional ways of life of the Indonesian people. The severance of economic relations between the islands and outside brought suffering to all sections of communities and hence led to the breakdown of provincialism and sectarianism.

The effect of the army as a unifying agent by providing a common experience to different social groups was described as follows by a Japanese training officer assigned to it: “Since the army is made up of volunteers from all walks of life, it had resulted in the unification of the Indonesian social strata towards the realization of its ideals.

In fact, the Indonesian race had never seen such a huge comprehensive system to promote its own racial well-being.” He added that the promise of independence had inspired the members of a fully-fledged modern, independent Indonesian army.

The Japanese had intended to make a nationwide purge of the Indonesian political, social, and religious leaders in order to make Indonesia a second Korea. They prepared a plan, known as “black fan” and “black list, in which

were written the names of all the Indonesian leaders who were to be massacred immediately.

Van Mook, the former Dutch Governor General in Indonesia, summarized the effects of the Japanese occupation in the following words: “The official and civil servants mostly swallowed their discontent. They were more and more impoverished by inflation; they were pushed back to lower posts by an increasing number of Japanese officials. Many of them were genuinely concerned about the slow ruination of their once excellent services; others gave up and retired till better days. Quite a number of incompetent upstarts filled their places.”

Sultan Shahriar, in his political Manifesto issued in 1364/1945, observed as follows: “When the Netherlands Indies Government surrendered to the Japanese in Bandung in March 1942, our unarmed population fell prey to the harshness and cruelty of Japanese militarism. For three years and a half our people were bent under a cruelty that they had never before experienced through-out the last several decades of Netherlands colonial rule.

Our people were treated as worthless material to be wasted in the process of war. From the lowly stations of those who were forced to accept compulsory labour and slavery and whose crops were stolen, to the intellectuals who were forced to prepare lies, the grip of Japanese militarism was universally felt.

For this Dutch imperialism is responsible in that it left our 70,000,000 people to the mercies of Japanese militarism without any means of protecting themselves since they had never been entrusted with firearms, or with the education necessary to use them.”

“A new realization was born in our people, a national feeling that was sharper than ever before. This feeling was also sharpened by the Japanese propaganda for pan-Asianism. Later attempts by the Japanese to supersede the nationalist movement were of no avail.”

The Netherlands Government in exile in London directed Indonesian inter-national relations and planned the political future of Indonesia. The plan provided for the formation of a Netherlands Commonwealth, consisting of the kingdom of the Netherlands and Indonesia as well as the Dutch West Indies, based on absolute equality, fraternity, mutual co-operation, and mutual understanding and goodwill.

As soon as the southern part of the Netherlands was liberated in September-October 1944, a call was issued for volunteers to serve in the armed forces. In order to restore Dutch imperialism and colonialism in Indonesia, on 24th August 1945, the British and the United States Governments concluded the Civil Affairs Agreement with the Dutch Government.

The Nazi aggression in Europe and the Japanese fascist invasion of China found an immediate reaction in Indonesia. The whole Indonesian national movement became anti-fascist. The leftists especially were clear in their political attitude. The anti-Japanese attitude of the Surabaya section of the Gerindo, formed in 1356/1937 in Jakarta under the leadership of Amir Sjarif-oeddin, former Prime Minister of Indonesia, and Dr. A. K. Gani, attracted much attention.

Dr. Soekarno along with other colleagues and leaders chose to cooperate with the Japanese only to turn the battle against them because he very well knew that the Japanese imperialism was no better than that of the Dutch.

The Dutch colonial power accused Soekarno of being an unprincipled pro-Japanese collaborator.²¹ Regarding Soekarno, van Mook stated in 1367/1948, from documents later discovered, “it is very clear that in all his objectionable activities he (Soekarno) was always governed by the objective of an indepen-dent Indonesia.”

Shahriar, who was anti-Japanese, regarded the Japanese as pure fascists and felt that the Indonesians must use the most subtle counter methods to get round them. Both Soekarno and Hatta, he continued, agreed to do every-thing legally possible to give the nationalist struggle a broader legal scope and at the same time secretly support the revolutionary resistance.

Through two exceptionally skillful underground workers at first Djohan Sjaruzah and later Abd al-Halim, Hatta was able, throughout the Japanese occupation, to keep in contact with principal Indonesian underground organizations.²²

Most of the underground leaders agreed with Shahriar that Indonesia’s bargaining position with the Allies for her independence would be strengthened if there were a powerful Indonesian uprising against the Japanese coincident with the Allies’ landings.

G: The Revolutionary Struggle (1364/1945 - 1368/1949)

Just after the capitulation of the Japanese to Allied forces in 1364/1945, the independence of Indonesia was proclaimed, as already observed, by Soekarno--Hatta on 17th August 1945. The proclamation was supported by all youth organizations, underground movements, former civil servants, police, army (except the Royal Amboynese), and the vast mass of the population.

The Japanese ordered the disbandment of the Peta, and all other armed Indonesian organizations. The Peta units in Java resisted the Japanese orders to disarm, kept their arms, clashed with the Japanese, made them surrender their arms, and proceeded to control government buildings, post and telegraph offices, airfields, and harbours. The Indonesian flag was flown from all public buildings. The cry merdeka (freedom), the words bung and saudara (brother) were heard as symbols of national revolution and fraternal love all over the country.

In Borneo, Celebes, and the lesser Sundas, where the Peta had not been properly organized, the Allies reinstated Dutch civil administration without much difficulty. The British in Java and Sumatra were faced with a difficult situation. Without heavy reinforcements in men and material, for which the Home authorities were not prepared, the British troops could not reinstate the Dutch in authority.

They proceeded to deal with the Republic of Indonesia as a de facto government and insisted on the Dutch doing the same. The latter under pressure of events entered into an agreement, the Lingaadjati Agree-ment, with the Indonesian Republic. The ultimate object of the Dutch imperial policy was not the grant of complete independence to Indonesia but to work for a Netherlands-Indonesian Union.

The agreement was only a makeshift arrangement to form an interim working plan with the Indonesian Republic and to utilize the time to crush the national movement by a policy of divide and rule, as military victory was beyond their means. The Indonesians offered to give complete cooperation to the Allied forces provided they were prepared to leave Indonesia when their work was done. Soekarno advised his exuberant compatriots through his radio broadcasts not to shoot now and not to waste their bullets on the British.

The Dutch broke the agreement and overran the richest districts in Java and Sumatra. The intervention of U.N. resulted in stopping hostilities, and a new agreement, the Renville Agreement, was signed in January 1947. The Dutch violated this agreement also, and the failure of the United States and the European democracies to force the Dutch to carry out the terms of the agreement considerably strengthened certain elements in Indonesia and made them break into open rebellion against the Republic.

The Dutch, taking advantage of the difficult and explosive domestic situation, launched an all-out military campaign against the Republic. The Indonesians resisted with stubbornness, and backed as they were by world opinion in favour of their righteous cause and the pressure exerted by the U.S.A. they forced the Dutch to accept the realities of the situation.

At the Round Table Con-ference, held at the Hague in 1368/1949, the Dutch accepted Indonesia's claim to independence. "In essence the Dutch exchanged their claim to sovereignty all over Indonesia except Western New Guinea... for the preservation of their economic stakes in Indonesia."²³

Out of the four years' revolutionary struggle against the Dutch, the Indo-nesians emerged victorious. The struggle, long and bitter, demonstrated the necessity of a close unity of interests and concerted action amongst various political parties and ethnic groups, and inculcated the habit of making sacrifices for the national cause.

The struggle materially effected the development of political institutions and political integration. The fact that they had won their freedom without the assistance of any foreign power strengthened the Indonesians' confidence in their own ability to manage their house and also their determination to follow an international policy without aligning themselves with any power group.

The Independence Preparatory Committee at its first meeting on 18th August 1945 elected Soekarno and Hatta as President and Vice President respectively and appointed a Commission of Seven to make a final draft of the national Constitution. The new Constitution was promulgated within a week and, though considered provisional, was not replaced till the end of 1949.

According to the new Constitution, the power in the State was vested in the President, the Consultative Assembly, and the Chamber of Representatives. As the last two bodies were not elected, all power was concentrated in the hands of the Pre-sident. On 29th August, Soekarno replaced the Independence Preparatory Com-mittee by the Central Indonesian National Committee (K.N.I.P.).

As a result of the growing resentment against the concentration of power in the hands of the President, the retention of the officers appointed by the Japanese in key posts in the Government, and the pressure of the armed youth organization and the K.N.I.P., the President was compelled to agree to sharing his legislative power with the K.N.I.P. which body delegated its power to the newly consti-tuted Working Committee with Sjahrir and Sjarifoeddin as Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively.

A further loss of authority by the President came as the result of an insistent demand by the party of Sjahrir who, dissatisfied with the “fascist and opportunistic mentality of many members of the Govern-ment,” demanded the introduction of the principle of Cabinet responsibility to Parliament.

The President accepted the demand and established on 14th November 1945 a new Cabinet headed by Shahriar responsible to the represen-tative body of the Government. The new Cabinet proceeded to encourage the creation of political parties representing diverse groups “to obviate the possible growth of a totalitarian political order” and the rise of a “monolithic” political organization, for it was felt that “if democratic principles are to be observed it is not permissible that only one party should be allowed to function.”

In spite of the restrictions gradually placed on the independent exercise of authority by the President, violent conflicts either with the Working Committee or with the K.N.I.P. were avoided by the tactful handling of difficult problems by Soekarno and the good sense of the members of the above body.

President Soekarno explained his position to Kahin thus: “Theoretically I can veto any law of the Parliament. However, I have never done so, because my system was to keep in very close contact with Assaat (chairman of both the Working Committee and the K.N.I.P.) and to influence the Working Com-mittee. Agreements were worked out ahead of time, and thus collisions between the Presidency and the Working Committee were avoided.”²⁴

The efficiency and comparative stability of the Indonesian Government during the difficult revolutionary years was mainly the result of the habit and practice that had developed because of close collaboration between different groups and the feeling of solidarity and community of interests it had developed; the Working Committee, a small compact body consisting of some of the ablest and most trusted men together with the attitude of the President and the Vice President, afforded a quick agency for taking decisions and assuring the smooth working of the political machine.

These conditions were not to be found during the post-revolutionary period (1368/1949). The growing sense of national solidarity and national identity and the universally felt hatred of colonial rule were the factors assuring the success of the Revolu-tionary Government.

The memories of the Japanese occupation and the revolutionary struggle for final freedom from colonial rule tremendously increased the political con-sciousness of the Indonesian people and their passionate desire to guard their newly won freedom jealously.

The post revolutionary period has created new problems and posed new challenges, but the natural resilience of the people and their determination and eagerness to face these problems with courage and equanimity after having buffeted many storms have been the secret of their success during this difficult period.

The Hague Agreement of 4th May 1949 provided for the establishment of an independent, sovereign, and legal democratic federal State known as the United States of Indonesia.

The official flag of the R.I.S. (Republic of Indonesia) was to be sang merah putih (red and white); the Indonesia Raya, the national anthem; and Jakarta, the capital of the State. The State was free to decide its own official emblem.

A great majority of Indonesians, both in the old republic of Indonesia and in all the fifteen Dutch created States, were profoundly dissatisfied with the federal system of government.

After several weeks of negotiations between the leaders of the R.U.I.S. (Republic of the United States of Indonesia) and the Government of Indonesia, an agreement on the formation of a Unitarian State was finally reached on 19th May 1950. The country, after years of experimentation in the field of constitution making, has reverted to the constitution of 1364/1945 still clinging to the Pantjasila enunciated by Soekarno in 1364/1945 in a speech which will go down in history as “one of the great pronouncements of democratic principles” and which the Indonesians cherish as their Bill of Rights.

The Pantjasila has become a national document in the sense that it is quoted as the authority for the principles behind action and is pictorialized in the Indonesian coat of arms. “Indonesians understand their coat of arms; it came into being out of the experience of living men; it links their past with their present; and to hear any school boy describe it is to realize that it also speaks out their hope for the future.

The bearer of the coat of arms is a mythological eagle, the garuda; its flight feathers are seventeen and its tail feathers eight, signifying the date of Indonesian independence, the seventeenth of the eighth month. The shield portrays the five principles of the Pantjasila: the central field with the star stands for faith in God; the head of the native bull for the principle of sovereignty; the banyan tree for nationalism; the sprays of rice and cotton for social justice; the linked chain for humanitarianism; while the black line across the centre represents the equator; and the device bears the old Javanese words meaning unity in diversity.”

From the above account it will be clear that Indonesia has been, right down to the recent past, struggling for political independence and that from the time she succeeded in achieving it, she has been going through the traumatic experience of her own rebirth. It is for this reason that philosophical and scientific thought has hardly had any chance for development. It is only now that the country is showing signs of settling down and attending to her social and intellectual renaissance.

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Notes

1. For the role of tariqahs in general, see H.A.R. Gibb, *An Interpretation of Islamic History*, p. 11; *Muslim World*, Vol. 14, No. 2, January 1955, p. 130.
2. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam, Shirkat-i-Qalam*, Lahore, p. 407.
3. *Indonesia Today*, Vol. 2, No. 6, Nov.-Dec. 1959, p. 19.
4. For details, see Vlekke *Nusantara, A History of the East Indian Archipelago*, pp. 1, 265-69, 281.
5. Nur Ahmad Qadri, *Tamaddun-i Indonesia*, Vol. I, pp. 464-68.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 449-52.
7. Concerning the influence of the West upon Indonesian Islam, see C. C. Berg, "Indonesia" in H. A. R. Gibb, *Whither Islam?*, London, 1939; Harvey S. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun*, Cornell University Press, 1955; W. F. Wertheim, *Effect of Western Civilization on Indonesian Society*, Institute of Pacific Relations, New York, 1950, and also his *Indonesian Society in Transition*.
8. G. M. Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, Cornell University Press, New York, pp. 87-88. See also Bousquet, *A French View of the Netherlands Indies*, pp. 2-5.
9. Quoted by M. Eostein, *Statesman's Year Book*, 1937, p. 1176.
10. G. M. Kahin, *op. cit.*
11. Ubani, "On Indonesian Language," *Merdeka*, No. 17, I. S. I., New Delhi, 12th November 1947, p. 8.
12. The hoisting of the Red and White Flag was prohibited by the Dutch, but it was flown publicly in Jakarta in October 1928 during the Indonesian Youth Congress.
13. In 1939, there were 400 Indonesians and 100 Dutch who took the examination for entrance to the Government School of Civil Service: 23 Dutch and 3 Indonesians were accepted.
14. John Gunther, *Inside Asia*, 1942, p. 349.
15. Members of the Communist Party attended the Pan-Pacific Labour Conference under the Comintern auspices at Canton in June 1924. The Indonesian nationalists were represented at the Conference of the League against imperialism in Brussels in February 1927. It coincided with large-scale arrests and deportations of the nationalist leaders of the revolution in 1926-27 in Java and Sumatra.
16. G. M. Kahin, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89.
17. Sultan Shahriar, *Out of Exile*, Jakarta, 1936, p. 88.
18. Letter to the British Foreign Secretary by the Indonesian Association for Independence, quoted by Kaushak, *The Indonesian Question*, Thacker & Company, Bombay.
19. Takdir Alishahban, "The Indonesian Language - By-Product of Nationalism," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 22, No. 4, Dec. 1949.
20. "The Press Under the Japanese," *Merdeka*, 15th May 1947.

21. In 1943, Soekarno went to Tokyo to offer thanks at the Yusukuni Shrine to the spirits of the Japanese who fell in the course of Indonesia's liberation. He was decorated by Hirohito.

22. Hatta, because of his relationship with the underground leaders, had come to be considered dangerous by the Japanese authorities in Java.

23. G. M. Kahin, *Major Governments of Asia*, p. 501.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 508.

Conclusion

It is hazardous to foretell the future of peoples, nations, and cultures. This is particularly true in a world torn asunder by ideological conflicts and constantly under the shadow of a total war. As it is, the fate of the whole human race is hanging in the balance and one spark of folly may set the whole world ablaze, thus falsifying all normal conjectures.

However, unless such an all-pervading calamity befalls mankind, one could make a guess about the future of Muslim culture and philosophical thought.

The trends we have traced in the life of different Muslim countries in Book Six should give us a fair idea as to what the future may have in store for Muslim thought and culture.

During the period of decadence the Muslims had lost their great tradition of original thinking on the one hand and moral stability and rectitude on the other. Renaissance in various Islamic countries throws into bold relief the need for educational and intellectual progress and the compelling necessity for moral reform on which depends not only the rise but also the very existence of a people's culture.

Luckily, the political and social upheaval in Muslim countries has often been accompanied by a zeal for religious, moral, and educational reform. The role of the various political and social reformers in different Islamic countries provides an ample proof of this healthy attitude.

As the reader of this work must have noticed, after the fall of Baghdad, Muslim thought took a new turn in philosophy and scientific inquiry. Philosophy took either the garb of poetry as in Rumi and Jami or that of theosophy as in the School of Ispahan, Mulla Sadra, and Mulla Hadi Sabziwari, but the scientific study of nature gradually ceased and its place was taken by the study of spiritual experience.

While Leonardo da Vinci, Copernicus, Brahe, Bruno, Galileo, Francis Bacon, Kepler, and Newton were engaged in unraveling the mysteries of nature, the thinkers of Islam were busy fathoming the depths of the spirit. In the empirical knowledge of the external world, the Muslims were left far behind the West.

Since the beginning of the fourteenth/twentieth century, however, they have directed their attention to it, but they have discovered that they cannot make any headway without becoming the veritable disciples of the West. The West on its part has been paying the debt it owes to the Muslim East with compound interest.

There is hardly a Muslim thinker in this century who has not owed a deep debt of gratitude to Western thinkers. In fact, Muslim scholars have drunk so deep at the fountainhead of Western learning that many of them have lost the taste for appreciating the learning of their own ancestors. Thus, Muslim scholarship has been inspired by the urge to acquire new knowledge advanced by the West.

With the desire to receive higher education and have research degrees in the fields of arts, sciences, and humanities, thousands of Muslim students go to the universities of Europe, America, and the Soviet Union. On their

return, most of them engage themselves in communicating their knowledge to their pupils in the universities of their respective countries.

There is a group of Muslim scholars who are trying to recapture their past heritage. This is being done by the collection, preservation, and publication of the classics of their ancestors. Cairo is the centre of this activity. Dairat al-Maarif of Hyderabad Deccan also did excellent work in this field up to the partition of the sub-continent of India in 1366/1947 when the organization ceased to exist.

Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey are also publishing translations of Arabic classics in their respective languages. In this connection the services of Munshi Newal Kishore, a Hindu by profession and a Muslim in spirit, cannot be ignored. He published Urdu versions of hundreds of Muslim classics and, thus, rendered invaluable service to the Urdu language.

The same desire to recapture the past has found expression in the celebra-tion of Firdausi's and ibn Sina's millenaries and Nasir al-Din Tusi's seventh centenary at Teheran in 1934, 1954, and 1955, respectively; the International Islamic Colloquium towards the end of 1957 at the University of the Panjab, Lahore, Pakistan; Masudi's millenary in 1958 in the Aligarh Muslim University, India; al-Ghazali's ninth centenary in March 1961 at Damascus.

There are ambitious programmes of development and reconstruction in countries like Pakistan, the United Arab Republic, Turkey, Iraq, and others. In the implementation of their programmes these countries are getting economic and technical aid from foreign powers and international agencies. Education is receiving special attention. New universities are being built in different Muslim lands. Academies, associations, and research institutes are working in the field of science, history, philosophy, fine arts, and literature in general.

There is no dearth of talent. In fact, the progress that Pakistan, Turkey, the United Arab Republic, and some other countries have made in the field of thought and education during the last one decade is remarkable.

In Pakistan, for instance, there were only two well-established universities at the time of the partition of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent in 1947. Now there are seven including one agricultural university and the number is rapidly going up. There are plans to establish an engineering university in the near future. Some of the scholars have held professorships in universities considered to be amongst the best in Europe and America.

To quote a few instances, Dr. Ishtiyahq Husain Quraishi was for some time a Professor at Columbia University, and after finishing a brilliant ambassadorial career, Mr. Burke worked as Professor and Consultant in South Asian Studies at the University of Minnesota at Minneapolis in the United States of America. Dr. Abdus Salam, Professor of Mathematics at the Imperial College of Science, London, at a comparatively young age, has brought fame to his country.

Another young scholar Dr. Fazlur Rahman lectured for several years in Durham University, and has recently joined the Institute of Islamic Studies in McGill University, Canada, as an Associate Professor. Many scholars

from other Muslim countries are also engaged in teaching in Western universities under exchange programmes.

Given zest for knowledge and peace for a couple of decades, the Muslims should be able to catch up with the advanced nations of the West. If the entire material resources of each Muslim country are pooled together, sub-stantial progress can be made within a short period.

If one thousand promis-ing scholars are sent abroad by a Muslim country for higher studies to the world's best universities and, what is no less important, are given on their return the facilities needed for carrying out research undisturbed, they should be able to raise to a very considerable extent the intellectual level of their fellow countrymen. The intellectual renaissance of Japan affords a remarkable example of such a phenomenal advance.

Muslims all over the world are now realizing the dire need for scientific studies, which were completely ignored for several centuries and the neglect of which was one of the main causes of their political downfall. Technological advance, no less than theoretical science, is invaluable for acquiring power over nature and, therefore, the present emphasis on it in every Muslim State is most welcome.

Conscious of the wide gap left between the highly advanced technological civilization of the West and their own countries, the Muslims now seem resolved to catch up with the West in the shortest possible time. The tempo of life has, therefore, considerably increased since the middle of this century.

But for the revival of a culture this is not enough. What is needed most is a sound ideology and the moulding of life in accordance with that ideology. About the soundness of Islamic ideology no Muslim has any doubt. All that is needed is to bring its moral values home to every mind through universal education.

Yet Islamic ideology is different from Islamic practice. One is an affair of the intellect, the other that of the will. An enlightened intellect is not necessarily a dedicated will. Today we see a yawning gulf between belief and practice throughout the Muslim world.

As the President of Pakistan has said in one of his speeches, "unless ways and means for the practical application of the Quranic injunctions were found out, the gulf between theoretical faith and its practical application in life would never be bridged." Complete revival of Islamic culture depends mainly upon the bridging over of this gulf. Therefore it should have the very first priority in the reconstruction programme of every Muslim State.

It is comparatively easy to develop intellectually. What is really difficult to attain and lies at the root of real progress is the moral stamina of a people. It is not the intellect but a dedicated will that puts energy into life and leads people and nations to the heights of glory. It is qualities like faith, unity, discipline, justice, courage, industry, and cooperation that act as spurs in the race of life.

During the period of their downfall the Muslims lost these qualities. There is an ever-increasing desire in the Muslim world today to root out social and moral evils and build a new society on sound moral foundations,

a new edifice that should withstand the shocks of time. But the desire is yet far from realization and the process of moral regeneration is much slower than that of an intellectual revival. It is much more difficult to mould the will of a nation than to mould its thought.

The character of the masses can be built better by example than by pre-cept. This is truer of the Muslim masses that are at present mainly illiterate. Literacy campaigns undertaken by many Muslim States, if pursued sufficiently vigorously, can remedy illiteracy, but that alone will not improve character. If the leaders in different countries set a good example to others and create in them a sense of true worthiness, they can do well in moulding their characters and inspiring them to enrich personal and communal life. It is by imbibing basic human values that cultures arise and flourish, and it is without them that they fall and wither.

In the process of revival, however, one cannot lose sight of certain extremist tendencies that may adversely affect the solid progress, which is being aimed at in the Muslim world. In some Muslim countries there is a pronounced tendency to follow the Western pattern of life indiscriminately.

In others which are free from blind imitation there is a group of people who call them-selves progressive but whose conception of westernization is again clouded by a restricted vision and who in their zeal for advancement can only imitate the superficial ways of Western life. This tendency is taken as a challenge by the conservative section of the people. Hence a rift between the two groups.

One group looks upon superficial imitation as a potent threat to their own cultural heritage and spiritual values. The other dubs this second group as reactionary and backward. Each of these groups assumes the role of reformers but while each stands for some ideals, each also unconsciously stands for some evils: the first for superficial mimicry, even irreligion and skepticism, the second for clinging to the stone-wall of conformism.

But if they want to advance the cause of Islam in any walk of life, both will have to modify their stands. The Quran describes the Muslims as people of the middle path (ummat al-wusta). Extremist tendencies must be shed off to restore Islamic values to their original purity and pristine glory.

Islam has given to its followers the right of personal inquiry (ijtihad) and the right to reinterpret the problems of life and religion in the light of changed circumstances and environments. Religious and social reformers in recent times have rightly emphasized the doctrines of free-will and personal inquiry, i.e., the rational nature of Islam, and, disgusted with rigid formalism, they have been preoccupied with the problems of re-orientating religious and cultural values in accordance with the requirements of the present age. Iqbal's English work, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, is a splendid contribution to this reorientation.

In this scientific age, attention is focused all over the world on science and technology and there is a general tendency to relegate philosophical studies to the background. But as full appreciation of true spiritual values and an overall view of life are as essential for a healthy society as science and technology, conscious effort is being made in certain quarters to counteract this unhealthy tendency.

In Turkey, this effort has been made by the Philo-sophical Society which was established in 1347/1928, and in Egypt by the Philosophical Society of Egypt of which Mustafa Abd al-Raziq was elected President in 1364/1945. In Iran, the followers of Mulla Sadra and Mulla Hadi Sabziwari are very active.

In Pakistan, this work is being done by the Pakistan Philosophical Congress, which is a very active body in the fields of philosophy, psychology, sociology, and education. It holds its sessions annually at different university centres. These sessions are attended by scholars from many coun-tries of the East and the West. The Congress is affiliated to the Federation Internationale des Societes de Philosophie. Its President is a member of the Committee of Directors of that international body; he is also a programme member of the East-West Philosophers' Conference, Hawaii, U.S.A. and a foundation member of the International Academy of Philosophy, Ahmedabad, India.

The Congress publishes a quarterly journal and at least two philosophical works every year in the English language. Its most important publication has been the English translation of al-Ghazali's Tahafut al-Falasifah. In a recent work, Philosophical Activity in Pakistan, a Belgian scholar writes: "By its annual sessions, its publications, its suggestions to the Government and Universities, and its delegations to Conferences held in foreign countries, this organisation has contributed to no small extent towards enlivening philo-sophical activity and re-establishing the importance accorded to Philosophy in the country's Universities."

The common leader of thought in the Muslim world today is Iqbal, the poet-philosopher of Pakistan. His poetical works composed in Urdu and Persian are being translated into the languages of Muslim countries, like Arabic and Turkish, and are inspiring Muslim readers with a sense of dignity, self confidence, and creative activity. This reception of Iqbal's works shows a reawakening of interest in Islamic thought and a reorientation of our spiritual and religious values.

Some of Iqbal's works have also been translated into a number of European languages. The works of the late Professor Nicholson and his successor Professor Arberry in England, Professor Baussani in Italy, and Dr. Schimmel in Germany are notable in this connection.

Owing to the developed means of communication, ideas travel easily now-adays from one place to another, but they always require time to take root in a new soil. The two recent Western philosophies, Existentialism and Logical Positivism, have come to the East, but it will be some time before they pene-trate deeply into the Muslim mind. But when they do penetrate the Muslim mind they are likely to take, to a certain extent, a different shade.

"Nothing-ness" may be taken to be a category of thought or imagination but not of reality, and "dread" may lose the significance that Existentialism has assigned to it. The range of experience might be so broadened as to include extra-sensory perception and, consequently, "it is the case that" might be differently interpreted.

Some importance may be given to the entity, the individual self, that deduces tautologies from tautologies and apprehends and empirically verifies facts. The freedom of man may be interpreted differently from the freedom assigned to the free wheel of a bicycle or any other machine.

It is very doubtful whether the ideas of social history prevailing in the West will ever be accepted in the East, especially in the Muslim East. In the concluding remarks of part “E” of the Introduction we delineated the philosophy of history to which our study lends support. There we said that it has a negative as well as a positive aspect. Negatively, it is non-organismic, non-cyclic, and non-linear; and, positively, it involves belief in social dynamics, in progress in human society through the ages by rises and falls, in the importance of the role of ethical values in social advance, in the possibility of cultural regeneration, in the environmental obstacles as stimuli to human action, in freedom and purpose as the ultimate sources of change, and in mechanical determinism as an instrument in divine and human hands.

This philosophy is as distinct from the philosophy of history advanced in Europe and the United States as from that which is accepted in the Soviet Union. We consider this philosophy in consonance with the teachings of Islam. We believe, it is this ideology in which lies the salvation of the world and not in the ideologies hotly defended and followed in the Western world.

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