

**A  
HISTORY  
OF  
MUSLIM  
PHILOSOPHY**

**VOL. II**

**EDITED AND INTRODUCED**

**BY**

**M.M. SHARIF**

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3



**HISTORY OF  
MUSLIM PHILOSOPHY**

**WITH SHORT ACCOUNTS OF OTHER  
DISCIPLINES AND THE MODERN  
RENAISSANCE IN MUSLIM LANDS**

**EDITED AND INTRODUCED BY**

**M. M. SHARIF**

**VOLUME TWO**



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## BOOK FOUR

### LATER CENTURIES

(From the Fall of Baghdād [656/1258] to 1111/1700)

#### Part 1. The Fall of Baghdād

##### Chapter XL

##### FALL OF THE 'ABBĀSID CALIPHATE

The Mongol invasion which shook the world of Islam to its very foundations in the seventh/thirteenth 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 (Mongolis) and with lightning speed overran the Asian and European continents from China to Hungary and East Prussia, and built up the largest empire known to man. These people were the Mongols<sup>1</sup> 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."<sup>2</sup>

The Mongol storm burst on the Muslim world in two separate waves. The first dates back to 616/1219 when Chingiz Khān<sup>3</sup> (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 Khawārizm Shāhs (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 Khuzistān and Fārs. The second wave broke on Khurāsān in 654/1256 when Chingiz Khān's grandson, Hulāgu Khān (614/1217–664/1265), was selected by his brother, Emperor Mangu Khān (649/1251–655/1257), and the

<sup>1</sup> The word is derived from the root *mong* which means brave.

<sup>2</sup> E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, Vol. III, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> His actual name was Temuchin. The title of Chingiz or Zingis Khān was presented to him by his people in recognition of his rising power. The word *zin* means great, *gīs* is the superlative termination.



great *quriltay*, i. e., the Mongol national assembly, held in 649/1251, to annihilate the 'Abbāsid Caliphate of Baghdād and the Ismā'ilis of Alamūt and Qūhistān in North Iran.

The first invasion, which probably could not have been averted, was provoked by a frontier incident in which the Governor of Utrār,<sup>4</sup> a frontier town in Khwārizm, murdered a number of Mongol tradesmen alleged to have been spies. Thereupon Chingiz Khān despatched an embassy consisting of two Mongols and one Turk to the Court of 'Ala al-Dīn Muḥammad Khwārizm Shāh (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 Khwārizm Shāh 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 Khwārizm.

This is not the only evidence of Khwārizm Shāh's suicidal policy. According to the contemporary historian, ibn Athīr (d. 632/1234), 'Ala al-Dīn Muḥammad 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, Jalāl al-Dīn 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 till, unaided and deserted, he met his tragic end. By his desperate and indomitable courage against the Mongol blast of death, this 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 Athīr and al-Maqrīzi (766/1364–846/1442), the 'Abbāsid Caliph al-Nāṣir (576/1180–622/1225) actually encouraged the Mongols to attack Khwārizm, 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, Khwārizm, Khurāsān, the territories lying north of the river Indus, and North Iran, till, instead of turning south or west it swept across the Caucasus into South Russia, finally to advance as far way as the Baltic and the Adriatic.

The second wave of invasion struck Khurāsān in the beginning of 654/1256; the Caliphate of Baghdād was destroyed in 656/1258 by Hulāgu Khān who had earlier wiped out the Ismā'ili stronghold at Alamūt 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 Jālūt (Goliath's

<sup>4</sup> Also known as Fārāb.

## Fall of the 'Abbāsid Caliphate

Spring) near Nazareth, however, that the Mongol tide was firmly stemmed by the gallant Mamlūks of Egypt who gave them a crushing defeat in 659/1260. After the death of Jalāl al-Dīn Mankoburni this was the first Muslim victory in thirty 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 "fell to the right and left like the leaves of 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 arts and culture which grow under the shelter of wealth and easy circumstances."<sup>5</sup> According to 'Aṭa Malik Juwaini, Hulāgu Khān's secretary, who was appointed Governor of Baghdād after the destruction of the 'Abbāsid Caliphate, Chingiz Khān described himself at Bukhāra as the "scourge of God" sent to men as a punishment for their great sins.<sup>6</sup>

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 Khān himself, quoted by Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allah, the famous Prime Minister of the Mongol period in Iran and the author of *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*,<sup>7</sup> "the greatest

<sup>5</sup> Henry Howorth, *History of the Mongols*, Part I, p. x.

<sup>6</sup> 'Aṭa Malik Juwaini, *Tārīkh-i Jahānkusha*, Vol. I, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Wahhāb Qazwīni, Leiden, 1329/1911, p. 81.

'Ala al-Dīn 'Aṭa 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 Hulāgu Khān's secretary and had served him throughout his campaign. He was appointed Governor of Baghdād by Hulāgu Khān a year after the conquest of the city and held this position for twenty-four years. His famous book which was completed in 658/1260 contains a first-hand account of Hulāgu Khān's military exploits and is one of the most authentic books on the history of this period. It deals with the Mongols, the Khwārizm Shāhs, and the Ismā'ili sect and ends with the events of the year 655/1257.

<sup>7</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allah (645/1247-718/1318), the renowned scholar-administrator of the Il-Khāni (Mongol) period of the history of Iran, served as Prime Minister under three Muslim Mongol rulers, namely, Ghāzān (694/1294-703/1303) who, along with ten thousand Mongols, embraced Islam on Sha'bān 4, 694 A.H., and by declaring it the State religion restored its supremacy in Iran; Uljaitu Khuda-bandeh (703/1303-716/1316); and abu Sa'id (716/1316-736/1335). In spite of his preoccupations as the Prime Minister of a great empire, Rashīd al-Dīn found time to pursue research and write books, both in Arabic and Persian. Of these his *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, which, in the words of Quatremère, the French editor of portions of this work, "offered for the first time to the people of Asia a complete



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.<sup>8</sup> 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, they uprooted, they burned, they slew, they carried off, they departed."<sup>9</sup>

To have an idea of the brutal lust of conquest and ruthless ferocity shown by the Mongol hordes it would suffice to trace the wanton 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 Bukhāra 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 Sabziwār. Khwārizm suffered an equally tragic fate. According to Juwaini, 1,200,000 persons were killed in the city. Amongst the scholars and saints who perished was the famous Shaikh Najm al-Dīn 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. Bāmiyān, where a Mongol prince lost his life, was wiped out of existence, and orders were issued not to leave even babes alive in their mothers' wombs. This kind of sadism was not a stray incident, for ibn Athīr characterizes the Mongols as a people who "spared none, slaying women, men, and children, ripping open pregnant women and killing unborn babes."<sup>10</sup> At Nasa they made a hecatomb of over 70,000 people. Merv, which was, at the height of its glory, suffered, according to ibn Athīr, a loss of 700,000 persons, but Juwaini puts the figure at 1,300,000, excluding those whose bodies were hidden at obscure retreats. The survivors were traced out, as in Balkh, and mercilessly killed. Nishāpūr, which was like the bright Venus in the galaxy of cities,<sup>11</sup> 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 Mirkhwānd, 1,047,000 men were butchered in the city in addition to an unknown number of women and children.<sup>12</sup> He adds, however, that forty artisans and craftsmen were given shelter and transported

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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 Khān to the death of Sultān Ghāzān.

<sup>8</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. I, Part 2, p. 856.

<sup>9</sup> Juwaini, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>10</sup> E. G. Browne, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 428.

<sup>11</sup> Juwaini, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

<sup>12</sup> Mirkhwānd, *Rūdat al-Ṣafa*, Vol. V, p. 46.

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to Mongolia. In Herāt 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."<sup>13</sup> Juwaini mourns the loss of life in Khurāsān 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 Khurāsān and 'Irāq-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 Khallikān (608/1211–681/1282) which he wrote from Moṣul after his flight from Merv to al-Qāḍi al-Akram Jamāl al-Dīn abu al-Ḥasan 'Alī, 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 Khurāsān 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 Athīr 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."<sup>14</sup>

The reckless assassination of thousands of scholars, poets, and writers, and the destruction of libraries and colleges wrought irreparable disaster upon Muslim civilization which had flourished for centuries with such remarkable vitality. Transoxiana and Khurāsān 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 twenty years after the death of Chingiz Khān in 625/1227, the Mongols continued to pillage Kurdistān, Ādharbaijān, and regions to the west of Iran, at times marauding right up to Aleppo. But the Caliphate of Baghdād had survived. The inevitable occurred in 656/1258 when Hulāgu Khān stormed Baghdād after he had extirpated the Ismā'īli power at Alamūt in 654/1256. The city which had been the metropolis of Islam for more than five centuries (132/749–656/1258) was given over to plunder and flame. The massacre,

<sup>13</sup> E. G. Browne, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 429.



according to Diyārbakri (d. 982/1574) in his *Tārīkh al-Khāmis*, continued for thirty-four days during which 1,800,000 persons were put to the sword. For days blood ran freely in the streets of Baghdād and the water of the Tigris was dyed red for miles. According to Waṣṣāf, the sack of Baghdād lasted forty days.<sup>15</sup> To quote *Kitāb 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 Baghdād was a supreme catastrophe of the world of Islam and of the Arabo-Persian civilization which had flourished so richly for many hundred 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 Baghdād had retained the semblance of Muslim unity and homogeneity. Baghdād, 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 Baghdād, 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 in Muslim lands, and, thus, indirectly in the whole world, is, in the words of Percy Sykes, "difficult to realize and impossible to exaggerate."<sup>16</sup> No wonder the great Sa'di (580/1184–691/1291) was moved to write in far-off Shīrāz an elegy on the destruction of Baghdād 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 now plunged into darkness as earlier Khurāsān 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 pri-

<sup>15</sup> 'Abd Allah ibn Faḍl Allah Waṣṣāf, *Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, p. 87.

<sup>16</sup> Percy Sykes, *A History of Persia*, Vol. II, p. 98.

vilege 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 Baghdād, 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 Auḥadi Kirmāni, Auḥadi of Marāghah, and Jāmi.

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 *Khurāsān*<sup>17</sup> 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 centuries and a half 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 Taimīyyah and the first sociologist and philosopher of history in ibn *Khaldūn*.

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<sup>17</sup> Juwaini, *op. cit.*, p. 4.



## Part 2. Theologico-Philosophical Thought

### Chapter XLI

#### 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 Baghdād, 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/thirteenth century. It was at this critical juncture that Imām 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'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet. He had little respect for theology (*Kalām*) 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 Imām ibn Taimiyyah as an original thinker and a critic has been widely accepted, and he is generally considered to be the forerunner of Wahhābism, Sanūsism, and similar other reform movements in the Muslim world.

Taqi al-Dīn abu al-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Ḥalīm, commonly known as ibn Taimiyyah, was born in Ḥarrān,<sup>1</sup> a city near Damascus, on Monday, the 10th of Rabī' I 661/22nd January 1263.

During the year 667/1269 when ibn Taimiyyah reached the age of seven, the Mongols ravaged the city of Ḥarrān, and his father 'Abd al-Ḥalīm came to Damascus with all the members of his family and settled there. Here ibn Taimiyyah received excellent education under his father who was a great scholar of the Ḥanbalite school. He also studied under 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-Qawī and mastered the Arabic grammar of Sibawaihi. He studied Ḥadīth with more

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<sup>1</sup> A place famous for its Ḥanbalite school. Here lived the Sabians and the philosophers who worshipped the heavenly bodies and images after their names. The Prophet Moses was sent to these people for their guidance. See *MRK*, Vol. I, pp. 425 *et sq.*

than two hundred Shaikhs.<sup>2</sup> It is noteworthy that among the teachers, whom ibn Taimiyyah mentions in his *Arba'ūn*, were four ladies.<sup>3</sup>

It is difficult to say whether ibn Taimiyyah was influenced by any of his predecessors in his extraordinary 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-sālihūn*) 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 (*Kalām*), 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 Mutakallimūn, 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 Nuṣairis. In 702/1302, he participated in the battle of Shaqhāb (a place near Damascus) where he met Caliph al-Malik al-Nāṣir, Muḥammad ibn Qalawūn, the Mamlūk Sultān, 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 Khusruwān in Syria and inflicted a crushing defeat on them. Hence, ibn Taimiyyah can also be called a *mujāhid* (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 the Mamlūk Sultān, al-Malik al-Nāṣir, and defeated them by his clear and cogent arguments. In this very year he proceeded to Cairo and faced a *munāẓarah* (legal debate) in which an Indian scholar named Shaikh Ṣafi al-Dīn al-Hindi played an important part. It was on the suggestion of this Shaikh 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.<sup>4</sup> He also suffered imprisonment at different places for his *fatwās* (legal decisions) and *rasā'il* (treatises) against certain social and religious practices; these excited the indignation of the scholars of his time, till at last he was interned in the citadel of Damascus in Sha'bān 726/July 1326. Here his brother Zain al-Dīn was permitted to stay with him, while ibn Taimiyyah's pupil ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah was detained in the same prison for his support. In this prison, ibn Taimiyyah wrote books and pamphlets defending his own views, and it is said that here he prepared a commentary on the Holy Qur'an in forty volumes called *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt*.

<sup>2</sup> *Fawāt*, Vol. I, p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> *Arba'ūn*, pp. 34-36.

<sup>4</sup> Subki, *Ṭabaqāt*, Vol. V, p. 240, s. v. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Raḥīm ibn Muḥammad al-Shaikh Ṣafi al-Dīn al-Hindi, born in India in 644/1246 and died at Damascus in 715/1315, ten years after the *munāẓarah* held in Cairo.

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 the prison, he passed his time in devotion to God till his death on Monday, the 20th of Dhu al-Qa'dah 728/27th September 1328.<sup>5</sup>

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.<sup>6</sup> He left innumerable books, religious decisions, letters, and notes, most of which he composed while he was in prison. Al-Dhahabi gives the number of Ibn Taimiyyah's books to be approximately five hundred.

In his *Rihlah*, Ibn Battūṭah says that he himself happened to be in Damascus at the time of the last imprisonment of Ibn Taimiyyah, and that the Sultān al-Malik al-Nāṣir released Ibn Taimiyyah after the completion of *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*, 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 *faqīh* (jurist), but Ibn Taimiyyah had his supporters who attacked the *faqīh* and beat him severely with fists and shoes, causing his turban to fall down on the ground and making his silken *shāshia* (cap) visible on his head. People objected to his wearing the silken cap and brought him to the house of the Hanbalite Qāḍi 'Izz al-Dīn Ibn Muslim, who ordered him to be imprisoned and put to torture. But the Māliki and the Shāfi'i doctors disapproved of this judgment, and brought the case to the notice of Saif al-Dīn Tankīz, one of the best and most pious nobles of Damascus, who forwarded the matter to al-Malik al-Nāṣir 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 *ṭalāq* only and that one taking the journey to the tomb of the Prophet should not shorten his prayers. The Sultān, convinced of these charges, disapproved of Ibn Taimiyyah's standpoint and ordered him to be thrown into the dungeon again.<sup>7</sup> This report of Ibn Battūṭah 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.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Fawāt*, Vol. I, p. 141; *Rihlah*, Vol. I, p. 216; *Majallah*, Vol. XXVII, Part II, p. 196.

<sup>6</sup> *Fawāt*, Vol. I, pp. 42 et sqq.

<sup>7</sup> *Rihlah*, Vol. I, p. 217.

<sup>8</sup> *Majallah*, Vol. XXVII, Part II, p. 193; *Fawāt*, Vol. I, p. 41.



## ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEOLOGY AND THE THEOLOGIANS

Ibn Taimīyyah 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-Kutubī's enumeration, many of them have not yet seen the light of the day.<sup>9</sup> A number of manuscripts left by ibn Taimīyyah on theology are also available in England and Germany among which are his *Mas'alat al-'Uluw*, *al-Kalām*, *'ala Ḥaqīqat al-Islām w-al-Īmān*, *Su'āl li Ibn Taimīyyah*,<sup>10</sup> etc., etc.

In his *Minhāj*<sup>11</sup> as well as other books, ibn Taimīyyah boldly declares that theology and philosophy have no place in Islam, and that theologians like al-Juwaini,<sup>12</sup> al-Ghazālī, and al-Shahrastānī<sup>13</sup> who devoted their lives to these sciences, ultimately understood their defects and returned to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Shahrastānī, he adds, confessed that it was folly to discuss theology; al-Rāzi, in his opinion, contradicts himself in matters of theology and admitted his perplexity.

In the *Minhāj*<sup>14</sup> as well as in his *Majmū'at al-Tafsīr*,<sup>15</sup> ibn Taimīyyah cites the opinion of Imām Aḥmad and abu Yūsuf who said that he who would seek knowledge by the help of scholastic theology (*Kalām*) would turn into an atheist. He also mentions the opinion of Imām Shāfi'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 *Tafsīr Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ*,<sup>16</sup> he tells us that the early leaders (*aslāf*) tabooed theology since it was vanity, falsehood, and saying unfitting things about God.

Among the later thinkers Imām Ash'ari (d. 330/941) defended theology in his *Risālah fi Istiḥsān al-Khawḍ fi al-Kalām*. In it, he supported the theories of *ḥarakah* (motion), *sukūn* (rest), *jism* (body), *'arḍ* (accident), *ijtimā'* (union), *iftirāq* (separation), etc., by the help of the Qur'ān. 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.<sup>17</sup> But

<sup>9</sup> Al-Kutubī, *Fawāt*, loc. cit.

<sup>10</sup> This treatise has been edited by Serajul Haque in *JASP*, Vol. II, 1957.

<sup>11</sup> *M. Sunnah*, Vol. III, pp. 68 et sqq.

<sup>12</sup> Imām al-Ḥaramain abu al-Ma'ālī 'Abd al-Mālik ibn Yūsuf (d. 478/1085), the greatest theologian of the fifth/eleventh century.

<sup>13</sup> Abu al-Faḥ Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Karīm (d. 469/1076).

<sup>14</sup> *M. Sunnah*, Vol. I, p. 181.

<sup>15</sup> *M. Tafsīr*, pp. 387 et sq.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62 et sq.

<sup>17</sup> Ash'ari, *Istiḥsān al-Khawḍ*, Hyderabad, 1323/1905.

ibn Taimiyyah considered the above theories to be Hellenistic and against the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

About the Jahmites,<sup>18</sup> ibn Taimiyyah quotes the views of Imām Ahmad who said that they told untruths about God when they denied attributes to Him, and spoke about Him through ignorance. Abu al-'Abbās ibn Suraij, he adds, disapproved of the theories of atoms and accidents. Once, in answer to a question raised in *Kalām*, he said, "The doctrine of the unity of God to the vain people is to enter into the discussion of atoms and accidents (*jawāhir wa a'rād*)." 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 Dirham<sup>19</sup> was mainly responsible for this invention. This Ja'd was executed by ibn 'Abd Allah ibn al-Qasri<sup>20</sup> at Wāsiṭ on account of his *Kalām* (theology). The story goes that before executing Ja'd, ibn 'Abd Allah stood on a pulpit (*minbar*) and addressed the people saying, "O 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.<sup>21</sup>

Ibn Taimiyyah refutes the views of al-Imām Ḥilli who expressed in his *Minhāj al-Karāmah*<sup>22</sup> that Ḥadrat '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 (*Ṣahābah*) or their followers (*Tābi'ūn*) ever discussed the phenomenal nature of the world as derived from the origination of bodies (*ḥudūth al-ajsām*). He repeats that theology came into existence at the end of the first/seventh century. It was Ja'd ibn Dirham and Jahm ibn Ṣafwān who introduced it, and eventually the pupils of 'Amr ibn 'Ubaid like abu al-Hudhail al-'Allāf and others carried it on. The object of 'Amr and Wāṣil 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 for ever.<sup>23</sup>

From the foregoing statements, it is evident that ibn Taimiyyah generally uses *Kalām* in its pre-Ash'arite sense of Mu'tazilite theology, though later he does not spare the Ash'arite 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 *istiwā'* means

<sup>18</sup> The leader of this group Jahm ibn Ṣafwān, was put to death at Merv in 128/745 for his heretical doctrines. Baghdādi, *Farq*, p. 19; Shahrastāni, Vol. I, p. 60; Bukhārī in the last book of his *Ṣaḥīḥ* refutes the Jahmite views.

<sup>19</sup> *Mizān*, Vol. I, p. 185, No. 1443; ibn Hajar, *Lisān*, Vol. II, p. 105, No. 427.

<sup>20</sup> Khālid ibn 'Abd Allah (66-126/685-743).

<sup>21</sup> *Ikhḻāṣ*, p. 63; Ba'labakkiyah, p. 392.

<sup>22</sup> Fol. 58/B. IOL. Loth. 471.

<sup>23</sup> *M. Sunnah*, Vol. IV, pp. 144 et sqq.

*istawla*," 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 Ṣafwān (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 Ghīyāth al-Marīsi (d. 218 or 219/833 or 834) and his followers.<sup>24</sup> The Mu'tazilite doctrine of divine attributes was publicly preached during the last part of the third/ninth century<sup>25</sup> and then the Shī'ite doctors, Mufīd,<sup>26</sup> Mūsawi,<sup>27</sup> and Ṭūsi,<sup>28</sup> 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-Imāmi sect was downright anthropomorphist, while subsequent generations went further and denied the existence of all divine attributes.<sup>29</sup> The Karrāmites,<sup>30</sup> in his opinion, were anthropomorphists. 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 Mālik, Shāfi'i, Aḥmad, and their followers, is based on sheer misunderstanding. These jurists in affirming the divine attributes never maintained that these attributes resembled bodily forms.<sup>31</sup>

Ibn Taimiyyah further maintains that the word *qadīm* (eternal) relating to God, on which the Jahmites and their followers base their arguments, has not received a place among His *asmā' al-ḥusna* (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 indicate only one God. The Sunnites do not maintain that God's eternity needs some additional eternal essence. The statement that the divine attributes are additional to His essence (*dhāt*) is to be taken in the sense that they are additional to the concept of the essence held by the *nufāt* (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.<sup>32</sup> For example, whenever an attribute is attached to a locus (*maḥall*), its relation is established with the object itself and not with anything else. When a thing, 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 whom are attributed speech, volition,

<sup>24</sup> MRK, Vol. I, pp. 425 et sq.

<sup>25</sup> M. Sunnah, Vol. I, p. 172.

<sup>26</sup> Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Nu'mān al-Mufīd (336-413/947-1022), teacher of al-Ṭūsi.

<sup>27</sup> Sharīf al-Riḍā' al-Mūsawi, Yāqūt, Vol. V, p. 174.

<sup>28</sup> Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn 'Alī al-Ṭūsi (d. 460/1067).

<sup>29</sup> M. Sunnah, Vol. I, pp. 172-74.

<sup>30</sup> Followers of abu 'Abd Allah Muḥammad ibn Karrām (d. 255/868).

<sup>31</sup> M. Sunnah, Vol. I, pp. 172-74.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.



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 (*fā'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'ān and the Sunnah abound with proofs that God is associated with His attributes.<sup>33</sup>

*Ibn Taimīyyah's Anthropomorphism.*—From the above discussions and the similar contents of his *al-'Aqīdat al-Ḥamawīyyat al-Kubra*,<sup>34</sup> people misunderstood ibn Taimīyyah and suspected him to be an anthropomorphist. They thought that he taught, according to the literal meaning of the Qur'ān 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 (*taḥayyuz*) and subject to division (*inqisām*). Ibn Taimīyyah refused to admit that "spatial character" and "divisibility" are the essence of bodies (*ajsām*). Ibn Baṭṭūṭah's statement that at Damascus he heard ibn Taimīyyah 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,<sup>35</sup> 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 ever happened during the visit of ibn Baṭṭūṭah to Damascus. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, as we understand from his own description, entered Damascus on 19th Ramaḍān 726/23rd August 1326, whereas ibn Taimīyyah had been imprisoned more than a month earlier (on the 6th of Sha'bān of the same year) without being allowed to come out before his death in 726/1328.<sup>36</sup> In his *al-'Aqīdat al-Tadmūrīyyah*,<sup>37</sup> ibn Taimīyyah clearly states, "Whoever considers God to be similar to the body of men or an originated thing to be similar to Him, is telling untruth 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*) as 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 kaiḥ*), and without drawing analogy (*tamthīl*), or making alterations (*taḥrīf*), or divesting Him of his

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>34</sup> See *MRK*, Vol. I.

<sup>35</sup> *Supra*, p. 798.

<sup>36</sup> See the article by Bahjat al-Baiṭār in *Majallah Majma' al-'Ilm al-'Arabi*, Damascus, Vol. XXVII, Part III, p. 411.

<sup>37</sup> MS. Berl. No. 1995, fol. 54(b).

attributes (*ta'tīl*).<sup>38</sup> 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'tīl* and *tamthīl*.<sup>39</sup>

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'ānic 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 had a deeper insight into and 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."<sup>40</sup>

*Al-Qur'ān Kalām Allah Ghair Makhlūq* (The Holy Qur'ān 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'ān is created, but goes a step further and interprets the words *ghair makhlūq* (uncreated) as eternal (*qadīm*). He considers this an innovation (*bid'ah*) which resulted from their controversies with the Mu'tazilites and Kullābites in defining the uncreatedness of the Qur'ān. Such a theory was unknown to the early Muslims. It was Ja'd ibn Dirham along with Jahm ibn Ṣafwān who first introduced the heretical theory that the Qur'ān is created, whereas it is the Word of God, and so is uncreated.<sup>41</sup>

*Wahī* (Revelation).—Ibn Taimiyyah admits the commonly accepted view as to the three forms of revelation received by the Prophet: received (i) in a waking state as well as in dreams, (ii) from behind a veil, and (iii) through an angel.<sup>42</sup> But to these he adds a fourth, namely, revelation common to all (*al-wahī al-mushtarak*), prophets and others. This he derives from a saying of 'Ubādah ibn Ṣāmit and from the verses in the Qur'ān which speak of revelation to people other than prophets;<sup>43</sup> for example, God speaks with His servants in their dreams. It is this common revelation which the philosophers like ibn Sīna and others are said to have gained. But he emphatically

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 2(a); *MRK*, Vol. I, p. 428.

<sup>39</sup> *MRK*, Vol. I, pp. 428-29.

<sup>40</sup> H. Laoust, *Quelques opinions sur la théodicée d'Ibn Taimiya*, *Memoires publiés*, Cairo, 1937, Vol. LXIII, pp. 431-43.

<sup>41</sup> *Jawāb*, pp. 74-87

<sup>42</sup> Qur'ān, xlii, 50.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, v, 3; xxviii, 6.

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 believed at least in the origination (*hudūth*) of the celestial spheres, Aristotle professed "the doctrine of the eternity of the heavens," which, according to ibn Taimīyyah, clearly shows that he had no share of *wahī al-mushtarak*, mentioned above.<sup>44</sup>

C

ATTITUDE TOWARDS PHILOSOPHY

In his refutation of Aristotelian metaphysics and logic, ibn Taimīyyah left the following independent books in addition to what he wrote against them in many other writings:--

1. *Kitāb al-Radd 'ala al-Mantiqīyyīn*, edited by 'Abd al-Ṣamad Sharaf al-Dīn al-Kutubi, Bombay, 1949.
2. *Bayān Muwāfiqat Ṣarīḥ al-Ma'qūl li Ṣaḥīḥ al-Manqūl* on the margin of *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, 4 Vols., Cairo, 1321/1903.
3. *Naqḍ al-Manṭiq*, edited by Shaikh Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Faqqi, Cairo, 1370/1951.<sup>45</sup>
4. *Al-Radd 'ala Falsafat-i Ibn Ruṣhd* published at the end of *Faṣl al-Maqūl* and *al-Kashf* of Ibn Ruṣhd, Cairo, n.d.
5. *Kitāb al-'Aql w-al-Naql* on the margin of his *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, Cairo, 1321-23/1903-05.

His *Tafsīr Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ* (Cairo, 1323/1905) also sheds sufficient light on his views on philosophy and theology.

Ibn Taimīyyah is not the first man to speak against the unsoundness of Aristotelian philosophy. In his *Kitāb al-Radd 'ala al-Mantiqīyyīn*, ibn Taimīyyah mentions that Ḥasan ibn Mūsa al-Naubakhtī, under whom Thābit ibn Qurrah and others translated Greek sciences, had written his *Kitāb al-Ārā' w-al-Diyānah* pointing out the fallacies of Aristotle. Moreover, Hibat Allah ibn 'Ali abu Barakāt, a courtier of Mustanjid bi Allah, left a book on the refutation of Aristotle's philosophy.<sup>46</sup> The famous Muslim physician and philosopher abu Zakariyah al-Rāzi (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 Ḥazm of Andalus (d. 456/1063) and the Mu'tazilite al-Nazzām (d. 231/845) were

<sup>44</sup> See Serajul Haque, "A Letter of Ibn Taimiyya to Abu al-Fidā" in *Dokumenta Islamica Inedita*, Akademie Verlag, Berlin, 1952, pp. 155 et seq.

<sup>45</sup> This is perhaps identical with No. 1.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Sayyid Sulaimān Nadawi, "Muslims and Greek Schools of Philosophy," *Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad Deccan, Vol. I, p. 87.



also against the philosophy of Aristotle. Abu 'Ali al-Jubbā'i (d. 303/915) left a book in refutation of Aristotle's book *De generatione et de corruptione*.<sup>47</sup>

In his *Kitāb 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."<sup>48</sup>

In his *Kitāb al-Radd 'ala al-Mantiqīyyīn*,<sup>49</sup> ibn Taimiyyah says that, according to Aristotelian logic, knowledge is of two kinds, namely, based on concept (*taṣawwur*) and that on judgment (*taṣdīq*), both of which are either immediate (*badīhi*) or mediate (*naṣari*). 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 the judgments which are mediate (*naṣari*) require some means to reach them, and, therefore, the way through which concepts are reached, is called *ḥadd* (definition), and the way through which judgments are arrived at is called *qiyās* (syllogism). Hence *ḥadd* and *qiyās* 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 these fundamental bases at four points which serve as the four main chapters of his *Kitāb al-Radd 'ala al-Mantiqīyyīn*:

- I. The desired concept cannot be obtained except by means of definition (*ḥadd*).
- II. Definition gives the knowledge of concepts.
- III. The desired judgment cannot be obtained except by means of syllogism.
- IV. 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.

I. 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:<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>49</sup> *Al-Radd*, p. 4.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-14, 180.

(i) 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 a logic cannot be treated as a science which, according to the logicians, only protects human understanding from committing mistakes.

(ii) 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.

(iii) People of different branches of learning and professions know their affairs well without taking recourse to definitions.

(iv) 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 (*taṣawwur*), 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.<sup>51</sup>

(v) Logicians say that the concept of quiddity (*māhiyyah*) can only be arrived at by definitions which are composed of genus (*jins*) and *differentia* (*faṣl*). 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.

(vi) To the logicians, correct definitions are the combination of genus and *differentia*, but that which is simple and unitary, like each of the "intellects" (*uqūl*), 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*.

(vii) The definition of a thing consists of several terms each of which indicates

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

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 (*taṣwīr*) and differentiation (*tamīz*) and sides with the Mutakallimūn (scholastic theologians) who hold that things are actually known by differentiation and not by definition.

(viii) 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.

(ix) 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.

(x) 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.

(xi) 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.

II. The refutation of the second proposition of the logicians, that definition gives the knowledge of concept, forms the second chapter of ibn Taimiyyah's *Kitāb al-Radd*.<sup>52</sup> 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.

(i) 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 not be correct, while in the latter case the definition serves no purpose.

(ii) Logicians say that definition neither rejects the proof nor needs it. Unlike syllogism (*qiyās*), definition can be rejected by refutation or contra-

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14-87.



diction. To this ibn Taimīyyah 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.

(iii) 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.

(iv) 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-ṣifāt al-dhātīyyah*) 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.<sup>53</sup>

Ibn Taimīyyah then advances four similar arguments and proves that definitions do not offer true significance of the objects defined.<sup>54</sup>

III. 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:<sup>55</sup>

(i) It is an uncertain claim and a negative proposition in favour of which they have not advanced any proof. According to ibn Taimīyyah, both the self-evident (*badīhi*) 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.

(ii) Knowledge of a thing does not depend on a *particular* syllogistic process of thinking. *Khābar al-mutawātir* (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 (*natījah*) is undependable.<sup>56</sup> Ibn Taimīyyah admits that when the premises are correct, the conclusions are also correct, but then he does not admit that knowledge depends on syllogism.<sup>57</sup>

(iii) According to the logicians, the syllogistic process of gaining knowledge requires two premises, but ibn Taimīyyah says that such a 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

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 32-39.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 88, 240.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 92, 298.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 298.

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.<sup>58</sup> The very first figure of syllogism, therefore, says Ibn Taimiyyah, does not require the roundabout way of inference for obtaining the conclusion.<sup>59</sup>

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-'uqūl 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 animal," 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:<sup>60</sup>

(i) According to the logicians, since ratiocination deals only 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.

(ii) Ratiocination does not help us in understanding the Necessary Existent (*wājib al-wujūd*), the ten intellects (*al-'uqūl al-'ashrah*), the heavens (*al-aflāk*), the elements (*'anāṣir arba'ah*), or the created things (*muwalladāt*) in the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms.

(iii) 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-ṭabī'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.<sup>61</sup>

Ibn Taimiyyah then traces the origin of logic to geometry. He, therefore, says that:

(iv) Logicians gave the geometrical forms of argumentation in their logic and called them "terms" (*ḥudūd*) 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 to the Muslims more knowledge and perspicuity of expression combined with good action and faith than to all classes of people.<sup>62</sup>

The logicians admit that divine knowledge is not objective. It follows that

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 168 et sq.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 122-26.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 137 et sq.

it has no existence either in the intellectual or in the physical world. It is a "universal knowledge" which does not exist except in imagination. Therefore, there is nothing in this knowledge for the perfection of the soul.

(v) Perfection of the soul depends on both knowledge of God and virtuous action (*'amal ṣāliḥ*), 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 (*īmān*) in God does not mean knowledge of God only, as the Jahmites believe. It consists of both knowledge and practice.<sup>63</sup>

IV. The fourth proposition of the logicians, that syllogism or ratiocination gives the knowledge of judgments (*taṣdīqāt*), has been refuted by ibn Taimīyah in the fourth section of his book where he discusses the topic elaborately in about three hundred pages.<sup>64</sup> 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.<sup>65</sup> 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 the 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 the very early times, various sciences which the *Sharī'ah* of Islam does not require for the guidance of mankind.<sup>66</sup>

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 Taimīyah blames the philosophers who, from differences in the movements of the stars, inferred that there are nine heavens and that the eighth and the ninth heavens are the *kursi* (Chair) and the *'arsh* (Throne) of God, respectively. He hates Aristotle and his followers for believing in the eternity of the world (*qidam al-'ālam*), 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 twelve thousand years, while others held that it would last up to thirty-six thousand years, and so on. To ibn Taimīyah these inferences were baseless and unfruitful.<sup>67</sup>

Ibn Taimīyah considers Aristotle to be ignorant of the science of divinity, and accuses ibn Sīna of having adulterated it with heretical views of the Bāṭiniyyah who interpreted Islamic *Sharī'ah* according to their whims

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 138, 144 et sq.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 246-545.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 248, 321.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 256 et sq.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 267 et sq.



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-Qūnawi, Tilimsāni, etc., followed these heretical views of the Bāṭiniyyah 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.<sup>68</sup>

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.<sup>69</sup>

Ibn Taimiyyah opines that in syllogism (*qiyās*) conclusion may be drawn out of one term only, and that it does not require *ṣuḡhra* and *kubra* (minor and major) terms for drawing conclusions, because he who knows the universal quality of a class also knows that this quality is available in every individual.<sup>70</sup> 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'ānic 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.”<sup>71</sup>

“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.”<sup>72</sup>

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.<sup>73</sup> 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. They exist intellectually, and cannot, therefore, prove the existence of a definite being distinguishable from the rest of existence.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, in syllogism a complete conception of the middle term saves us from

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 278-83.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 316.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 337-40.

<sup>71</sup> Qur'ān, xl, 56.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, xl, 83.

<sup>73</sup> *Al-Radd*, pp. 324 et sqq.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 344.

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).<sup>75</sup>

Such are the arguments of ibn Taimīyyah in proving his assertion that syllogism does not give us the benefit of a new judgment.

Now, let us see how ibn Taimīyyah refutes the views of the scholastic philosophers by tackling the theories of atom, body, similarity of bodies (*tamāthul al-ajsām*), 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'rād*), namely, their union (*ijtimā'*), their separation (*iftirāq*), their motion (*ḥarakah*), and their rest (*sukūn*). 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 *ijmā'* (consensus). Ibn Taimīyyah 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.<sup>76</sup>

*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 more up to thirty-two. 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 Imām al-Ḥaramain al-Juwaini (d. 478/1085), the teacher of Imām al-Ḡhazālī, doubted the combination of matter and form, though it is reported that he himself transmitted this as a view accepted by *ijmā'* (consensus).<sup>77</sup>

*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'rād*). Ibn Taimīyyah rejects this theory, first, on the ground that it has been refuted by Rāzi and Āmidī along with many other philosophers; secondly, because al-Ash'ari also rejects it in his *Kitāb*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 351 et sq.

<sup>76</sup> *Iḳhlās*, p. 16.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

*al-Ibānah* 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 to each individual body God gives accidents (*a'rūd*) peculiar to itself. According to them, the species (*ajnās*) cannot change from one into another. A body does not 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 (*māddah*) in all kinds of creation is the same. It is the qualities (*ṣifāt*) that change due to union (*ijtimā'*), separation (*iftirāq*), motion (*ḥarakah*), and rest (*sukūn*), while matter (*māddah*) 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 that on the basis of this theory they are divided into two groups. One group maintains that the atoms of which a body is constituted will be destroyed 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 up 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 up by the second man. Ibn Taimiyyah objects to this and points out that according to the scientists (*'uqalā'*) there is nothing in the human body that cannot be dissolved and that, according to the *aslāf* (earlier writers), the *fuqahā'* (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 interchangeable.

*Theory of Motion.*—Philosophers among the Jahmites and the Mu'tazilites have argued about the origination of bodies (*ḥudūth al-ajsām*) from the story of Abraham, who refused to call the stars, the moon, and the sun his lords (*rubūb*).<sup>78</sup> They hold that Abraham did not worship these heavenly bodies simply on the ground of their motion and shift (*al-ḥarakat w-al-intiqāl*) as suggested by the word *ufūl* in the Qur'ān.<sup>79</sup> In other words, they maintained

<sup>78</sup> For the full story see Qur'ān, vi, 76 *et seq.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, vi, 77–79.



that *motion* and *shift* are the distinctive signs of the origination of bodies.<sup>80</sup> Ibn Taimiyyah rejects the theory on the following grounds:

(i) 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, "O my people, I share not with you the guilt of joining gods with God."<sup>81</sup>

(ii) To the Arabs the word *ufūl* 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.

(iii) "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."<sup>82</sup>

The theory of indestructible atoms held by the philosophers goes against the agreement of the learned people (*'ulamā'*) that one thing may turn into another and that the atoms have no existence, just as the intellectual atoms (*al-jawāhir al-'aqliyyah*) of the Peripatetics are mere conjectures.<sup>83</sup>

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 of 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.<sup>84</sup> None of the Companions of the Prophet nor their Successors nor anyone prior to them in natural religion (*dīn al-ḥiṭrah*) 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.<sup>85</sup>

*Theory of the Necessary Cause* (Mūjib bi al-Dhāt).—Ibn Taimiyyah refutes the philosophical interpretation of the necessary cause. He says that

<sup>80</sup> *M. Sunnah*, Vol. I, pp. 197 et seq.; *Al-Radd*, pp. 304-05.

<sup>81</sup> *M. Sunnah*, Vol. I, p. 197.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. *M. Sunnah*, *al-afūl hu w-al-imbkān wa kullu mumkin āfil*.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 182.

<sup>84</sup> *Ikhlas*, pp. 52 et seq.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

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-ghāyah* and then other final causes to assist it in creation (*khalq*) which needs volition (*irādah*). 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 (*irādah*) is not identical with knowledge, nor 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 the 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.<sup>86</sup>

*Theories of Ḥarakat al-Falak, Nāmūs, and Mumkin.*—Ibn Sīna and his followers, in trying to compromise between prophecy and philosophy, invented the theory of *ḥarakat al-falak* or movement of the sky. They maintain that the heaven moves in obedience to the "First Cause" (*al-'Illat al-Ūla*). To these people the word *ilāh* (deity) means a leader in obedience to whom the sky moves, and their highest philosophy is to remain obedient to their leader. The "Maqālāt al-Lām," Book I, in Aristotle's *Metaphysica* supplies us with such a description.<sup>87</sup>

The philosophers believed in *nāmūs*. By *nāmūs* 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 religions were of the type of *nāmūs* brought to the world for the common good. Ibn Sīna was one of those who held this view. In accordance with their grades of practical philosophy, these people considered the acts of worship (*'ibādāh*), revealed Laws (*Shari'ah*), and injunctions (*aḥkām*) to be moral, domestic, and civil laws respectively. Ibn Taimiyyah strongly opposes the theories of both *ḥarakat al-falak* and *nāmūs*, 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-nās*), who knew nothing of God though he was well versed in physics.<sup>88</sup>

As for the theory of *mumkin*, the scholastics are of the opinion that every possible thing (*mumkin*) either occupies space (*mutaḥayyiz*) or exists in that which occupies space (*qā'im bi al-mutaḥayyiz*). Ibn Sīna and his followers, al-Shahrastāni, al-Rāzi, etc., in affirming an existing thing different from

<sup>86</sup> *M. Sunnah*, Vol. I, p. 111.

<sup>87</sup> *Ikhlas*, p. 57.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

these, postulate humanity, animality, or such other generic concepts. To ibn Taimīyyah 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.<sup>89</sup>

How far is ibn Taimīyyah 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 not signify time, but the predicament "when."<sup>90</sup> This does not contradict the dialectics of ibn Taimīyyah 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 (*ḥādith*). 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 by "direction" they mean some non-existing thing above the universe (*ʿālam*), then they are right, because above the universe there is nothing but God.<sup>91</sup> Then the question arises, what is the Throne of God and why do men raise their hands upwards at the time of prayer? Ibn Taimīyyah says that this is because, according to the Qurʾān, God is on His Throne and the angels bear it.<sup>92</sup> The early philosophers erroneously believed that the Throne meant the ninth heaven (*al-falak al-tāsiʿ*), 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-rūḥ*), soul (*al-naḥs*), or the Preserved Table (*al-lauh al-maḥfūz*) as also active intellect (*al-ʿaql al-ḥaʿāl*) 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.<sup>93</sup> All such theories are, in the opinion of ibn Taimīyyah, mere conjectures without any foundation.<sup>94</sup> He quotes a tradition in defence of his belief that the *ʿarsh* is above all the heavens which are above the earth, and is in the shape of a dome (*qubbah*).<sup>95</sup> Granted that the *ʿarsh* 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

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 65 et sqq.

<sup>90</sup> Aristotle, *Organon*, London, 1877, p. 18.

<sup>91</sup> *M. Sunnah*, Vol. I, p. 250.

<sup>92</sup> Qurʾān, xl, 7.

<sup>93</sup> *MRM*, Vol. IV, pp. 106-08.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>95</sup> On the authority of abu Dāwūd, narrated by Jubair ibn Mutʿim. Here ibn Taimīyyah appears to have quoted a tradition of doubtful authenticity, because this tradition has not been accepted by all authorities. See annotation by Rashīd Riḍa in *MRM*, Vol. IV, pp. 114 et sqq.



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 then 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.<sup>96</sup>

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-Fārid (d. 577/1181), al-Hallāj (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.<sup>97</sup>

Some pantheists who profess the doctrines of incarnation (*ḥulūl*), unification (*ittiḥād*), or other closely related doctrine like "Unity of Existence," maintain that "existence" is one, though there are two degrees of it. It is (i) necessary in the Creator and (ii) contingent in the creation. To this group of pantheists ibn Taimiyyah assigns ibn 'Arabi, ibn Sab'in, ibn al-Fārid, Tilimsāni, etc. Of these ibn 'Arabi distinguishes between existence (*wujūd*) and affirmation (*ṭhubūt*) saying that "substances" do exist in Non-Being (*'adam*) independent of God, and that the existence of God is the existence of the substances 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.<sup>98</sup> Al-Qūnawī (d. 673/1274) and his followers made a distinction between "the general" and "the particular" (*al-iṭlāq w-al-ta'yīn*). 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.<sup>99</sup>

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-mubāyanah li al-makhlūqāt*, 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

<sup>96</sup> *MRM*, Vol. IV, pp. 124-26.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 66.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

it the sun itself.<sup>100</sup> Ibn Taimiyyah quotes a saying of Shaikh Junaid Baghdādi, "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.<sup>101</sup>

According to ibn 'Arabi, non-existence is a positive thing even in its state of non-being.<sup>102</sup> 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 'Uthmān al-Shahhām,<sup>103</sup> the teacher of al-Jubbā'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 (i) things known, and (ii) things unknown. Distinction, in their opinion, can exist only between positive things. Such a theory is absurd according to ibn Taimiyyah. The Sunnite Mutakallimūn called these people heretics.<sup>104</sup> Ibn 'Arabi's theories generally revolve round 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.<sup>105</sup>

According to ibn Taimiyyah, ibn 'Arabi's theory reveals two things when analysed: (i) Denial of the existence of God, and (ii) denial of His creation of creatures.<sup>106</sup> Besides, according to ibn Taimiyyah, ibn 'Arabi maintains that sainthood (*wilāyah*) is better than prophethood (*nubuwwah*) and that sainthood will never come to an end, whereas prophecy has already been terminated.<sup>107</sup>

Ibn Taimiyyah then gives various explanations of the pantheistic views of ibn '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, blind: therefore, they shall not retrace their steps from error."<sup>108</sup> 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 Imām Shāfi'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

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 6.

<sup>103</sup> Known as abu Ya'qūb al-Shahhām, see *al-Farq*, p. 163.

<sup>104</sup> *MRM*, Vol. IV, p. 6.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>108</sup> Qur'an, ii, 18.

everything to the Holy Qur'ān and the Sunnah declaring the rest to be innovations. As for his views about Aristotelian logic, he exhibits his power of argumentation in an extraordinary way. He is, no doubt, an independent thinker and is free from the fetters of blind following (*taqlīd*) in every matter. He may be called the precursor of the modern trend of anti-Aristotelianism.

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## Part 3. The Sufis

### Chapter XLII

#### JALĀL AL-DĪN RŪMI

##### A

##### LIFE

Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmi 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 the West whose experiences in the realm of the spirit may have equalled the spiritual perceptions of Rūmi, but their emotional or intuitional side was not matched by an equally clear and powerful intellect. Rūmi'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 variegated intellectual and spiritual wealth. He surveyed and imbibed the rationalistic outlook of Hellenism sifting the grain from the chaff, separating the kernel from the husk. As a Muslim he was an heir to the spiritual wealth bequeathed to humanity by the glorious line of great prophets from Abraham to Muḥammad. 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 undemonstrable 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 theologians planned to discredit him by engaging him in a controversy that would expose his heresies. At the very outset Rūmī was asked to declare as to which of the seventy-two sects he offered allegiance. Rūmī 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 nonplussed, 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: Rūmī 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 Muḥammad Khwārizm Shāh 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 Rūmī 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 called Rūmī which means Roman. The Arabs might as well claim him as an 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 Khurāsān, 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 Muḥammad Khwārizm Shāh who had given his daughter in marriage to the famous mystic Ḥusain Balkhi, Rūmī's grandfather. The father of Rūmī, Bahā' al-Dīn, was famous for his learning

and piety. He lectured from morning till 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 Imām Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzi, the commentator of the Qur'ān and one of the great dialecticians, in great esteem and sometimes brought him along to hear Bahā' al-Dīn. Rāzi was reputed to be imbued with Greek dialectics, and attempted to prove religious truths by logic. Seeing Rāzi in the audience Bahā' al-Dīn 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. Rūmi as a young boy must have heard these denunciations from the lips of his learned father. In the *Mathnawi*, when Rūmi takes up the cudgel on behalf of personal experience against mere logic-chopping, he points to Rāzi 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, Rāzi would have certainly reached them, but the feet of the dialectician are wooden and the wooden feet are most shaky.”

It is said that Rāzi got so jealous of the popularity and prestige of Bahā' al-Dīn 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 Khwārizm Shāh became apprehensive of the growing influence and prestige of Bahā' al-Dīn and his fears were fanned by the latter's rivals in the religious field. It is quite possible that Bahā' al-Dīn 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 Tartar invasion overwhelmed the domains of Khwārizm Shāh. It may be that Bahā' al-Dīn had seen that it was imminent and so he decided to move away into a safer region. The family moved first to Nishāpūr and then to Baghdād where Bahā' al-Dīn's stay was prolonged because Baghdād was a cultural centre of the Muslim world and attracted scholars from distant Muslim lands. A delegation from the Sultān of Rūm, 'Ala al-Dīn Kaiqubād, happened to visit Baghdād during this period; its members were greatly impressed by Bahā' al-Dīn's lectures and sermons. On their return to Anatolia they spoke to the Sultān about the spiritual eminence of Bahā' al-Dīn, and the Sultān persuaded him to come over to his realm. Bahā' al-Dīn travelled from Baghdād to the Hijāz and passing through Syria he stayed for about a year in the town of Aque and then stopped for seven years in Laranda in Zinjān. Here, in 662/1263, his illustrious son Rūmi, now mature in mind and years, was married. It was here that Rūmi's son Sultān Walad was born a year later.



The Sultān invited the family to settle down in Qūniyah, capital of his kingdom. The Sultān 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. Bahā' al-Dīn's family was lodged in a palatial house and the Sultān would visit him very often.

We see from this family background that Rūmī grew up in an atmosphere of religious learning in which religious problems were discussed and controversies entered into with great enthusiasm. Rūmī must have learnt much from his father and the great scholars who were devoted to him. The most eminent among them was Burhān al-Dīn Muḥaqqiq whose title denotes that he carried on independent research (*taḥqīq*). Rūmī's father entrusted the education of his promising son to this teacher who inculcated in his pupil the habit of independent thinking. Rūmī's education continued after the death of his father and we find him at the age of twenty-five travelling in search of knowledge to great centres of learning like Damascus and Ḥalab (Aleppo). Rūmī lived for some time in the hostel of Helariyyah College. There were very eminent teachers on the staff of this College, one of whom was Kamāl al-Dīn ibn 'Adīm Ḥalabi, who wrote a history of Ḥalab, a fragment of which has been published in Europe. Rūmī's education covered the whole curriculum: the Qur'ānic commentary, Ḥadīth, jurisprudence, and Arabic language and literature. His *Mathnawī* 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 forty. The Holy Prophet Muḥammad 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 *Manāqib al-'Ārifīn* that at the time of the death of Rūmī's father his teacher and tutor Burhān al-Dīn certified his pupil'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 Rūmī before his encounter with the mystical and mysterious Shams of Tabriz. Rūmī now engaged himself in teaching theology and giving sermons as the learned religious teachers of his time 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 Rūmī met for the first time, there exist a number of legends that are inconsistent. According to one version, Rūmī, surrounded by books and pupils, was engaged in teaching when Shams suddenly dropped in and asked him, "What are these books about?" Taking him to be a man without learning Rūmī replied that the questioner could not know what they

contained. At this the heap of books burst into flames. Rūmi 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 Rūmi was enraged at this Shams brought them out without the water having touched them; they were as dry as before. Shibli, the eminent modern writer of a book on Rūmi, is evidently right in his judgment that these legends are not based on facts because Sipāh Sālār, who spent forty years in intimate contact with Rūmi, 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 'Alā' al-Dīn and was a descendant of Kaya Buzurg, an Imām of the Ismā'īlī sect before dissociating himself from it. Shams received his education in Tabriz and then became a disciple of Bāba Kamāl al-Dīn Jumdi, who introduced him to 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 Qūniyah when Rūmi went to see him. The impression of this mystic on Rūmi's mind was deep and lasting. Sipāh Sālār says that the two were closeted together for six months in Ṣalāh al-Dīn Zarkūb's room, which none but Zarkūb was allowed to enter. Now Rūmi 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. Rūmi's sons and disciples turned against Shams whom they considered to be a charlatan and a sorcerer. Under these circumstances Shams left Qūniyah suddenly, leaving no clue about his whereabouts. After a long time Shams wrote to Rūmi from Damascus. This letter kindled the flame in Rūmi's mind again. In the meantime his disciples whose resentment had driven away Shams had repented of their conduct. Rūmi's son Sultān 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 Qūniyah. The epistle of Rūmi written in verse is recorded in the *Mathnawi* of Sultān Walad. This letter shows how deeply Rūmi 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 Qūniyah where he was received with great honour by Rūmi and his disciples. It appears that Shams now meant to stay on, having allayed the suspicions of Rūmi's disciples by marrying a maid of Rūmi's house whose name was Kīmiya. A residential tent was pitched for the wedded couple in front of the family residence of Rūmi. Something happened again which turned Rūmi's son 'Alā' al-Dīn Chalpi against Shams and others joined him with the result that Shams disappeared now for good. Rūmi's reliable biographer Sipāh Sālār says only this much that Shams left Qūniyah again in indignation and although Rūmi sent people to search for him in various places no one could find him. But other biographers of Rūmi are in full accord about the conviction that Shams was assassinated by some

of Rūmī's disciples, and the author of *Nafahāt al-Uns* mentions the name of Rūmī's son, 'Alā' al-Dīn, 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 Rūmī's mental calibre be the subject of an abiding delusion created by a master hypnotist? The world has valued Rūmī 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 Rūmī 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 Rūmī was overnight turned into an ecstatic lyricist, who now found poetry and music better than philosophy and theology as vehicles for the expression of truth. Rūmī identified himself so completely with Shams that the voluminous collection of his mystical lyrics is called *Dīwān-i Shams-i Tabrīz*. 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 the uninitiated, but he has to accept the testimony of Rūmī about it, however personal and subjective it may be, when he says with unshakable conviction that in Zarkūb'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 that Shams must have been a man of extraordinary psychical 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.

Rūmī 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 Rūmī's thought or the spirit of his religious experience. Rūmī who was bitterly averse to imitation and blind conformity in religious life became a victim, by irony of fate, of what he had persistently fought against. With Rūmī ecstatic dance 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 spreading 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. There is a trying process of undergoing 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 forty 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 of forty 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 of 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

Rūmi as a philosopher of religion stands shoulders above all those Muslim thinkers who are called *hukamā'* 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-Fārābi, ibn Sīna (Avicenna), ibn Rushd (Averroës), and even al-Ghazāli. He did not hitch his wagon to these stars with the exception of al-Ghazāli, 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 antithesis 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 Rūmi 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 analyses and theories and one has regretfully to 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 Rūmī. 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 constitute the totality of existence. In this view even matter is spiritual. The thinker nearest to Rūmī in this respect is the German philosopher Leibniz, who centuries after Rūmī conceived of existence as an infinity of egos at different levels of consciousness. As in the metaphysics of Leibniz, Rūmī 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 undemonstrable postulate. So is the case with the thought of Rūmī. 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 Rūmī'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. Rūmī 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 Rūmī 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 reinterpreted in Rūmī'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 Rūmī 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 farther 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 thought 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 Rūmī 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 Plotinus. 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*, the Absolute of *Advaita Vedānta*. The human souls, according to Plotinus, 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 Rūmī 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 is more of eternally graded devolutionary states of existences than an eternal urge to develop into higher and higher states which is so clearly depicted in the metaphysics of Rūmī. Rūmī 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 *Ikhwān al-Ṣafa* 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 Rūmī. 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 Rūmī 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. Rūmī 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 *élan 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.

Rūmī 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 stage is adaptive and goal-seeking. The Odyssey and voyage of the ego's self-discovery and its gradual unfoldment are given in Books III and IV of the *Mathnawī* 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 for ever 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 III of the *Mathnawī* hinting at higher stages till 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 Rūmi, 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 Rūmi 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 interlinked with space, an idea which has been mathematically and scientifically developed in modern times by Einstein. Rūmi 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 Rūmi 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'ānic verse about divine light which definitely states that it is non-spatial, *la sharqīyyah wa la gharbīyyah*, supports this view, and Rūmi'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'ān 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; close this shop situated in space and open a shop on the other side to which your real non-spatial spirit belongs. The ground of this spatial universe is non-spatial; space is a phenomenal creation of that which in itself is not space." Rūmi 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 Rūmi gets support from the Qur'ānic teaching that there is a fundamental unity in the multiplicity of human egos. "It is He who created you of one spirit."<sup>1</sup> Rūmi uses similes to make his meaning clear. He says that sunlight entering houses through many windows is split up by 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 Rūmi 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

<sup>1</sup> Qur'ān, vi, 99.



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 interlinked 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 problems 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 is 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'ān 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 sūrah are: (1) *Rabb al-'ālamīn* (the Nourisher of all realms and beings), (2) *Rahmān* and *Rahīm* (Creative Love and Forgiving Love), and (3) *Mālik Yaum al-Dīn* (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 *Rahmān*, He creates out of love, as *Rabb* He sustains out of love, and as *Rahīm* 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 metaphysicians. The fact is that what mystics and thinkers like Rūmi 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 at all strata of existence. It is stated in the Qur'ān that God has enjoined love (*rahmah*) on Himself<sup>2</sup> and that it encompasses everything.<sup>3</sup> 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 entire existence.

The cosmic significance of love could be derived from the Qur'ānic 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 Rūmi. 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 supersensuous Reality, as well as Eros [love] as a cosmical power. Rūmi'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 philosophise 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 Sinā's *Fragment on Love*<sup>4</sup> is mostly a reproduction of the dialogue in [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 realisation [or assimilation] of that beauty."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vi, 12, 54.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vii, 156.

<sup>4</sup> 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).

<sup>5</sup> Khalifah Abdul Hakim, *The Metaphysics of Rumi*, Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore, 1959, pp. 44-45.

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. Rūmī's evolutionary concept comprehends all these partial and fragmentary theories, taking them up in a grand synthesis. Like Hegel he is a believer in the Eternal Absolute, but to explain the dynamism of all life and history he resorts to cosmic love instead of the dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Similarly, Rūmī 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 attractions 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 love 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 cords." According to Rūmī, 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 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 Rūmī 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 Rūmī is a monadologist and when he talks of atoms and their mutual attractions he is really talking of egos that are in the process of realizing their divinely-rooted 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. Rūmī 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 and 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 Rūmi is a universal religion which could not 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 this 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 through the magic of love transforms the lower into the higher. We see in 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 Rūmi, 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 preconceived 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. Rūmi 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 Rūmi calls *khirad* or particular reason (*'aql-i juzwi*) to distinguish it from universal reason, which is an ally of the intuition of life. The particular 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 Rūmi which has continued to develop through the centuries in modern times produced a disciple of the intellectual calibre and poetic genius of Iqbāl. 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. Rūmi deplures 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 phenomenalism or subjectivity of time, space, and causality; anticipations of Bergson in his criticism of the intellect and in his conception of *élan vital* and 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 surge 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 thirteenth/nineteenth-century physicists call atoms but Rūmi calls egos. Rūmi 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. Rūmi 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 itself 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 philosophies had declared life to be an illusion, but Rūmi declares life at all grades to be an 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. Rūmi'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 thousand times in the sea of life. Fight for spiritual conquest, and not flight from life's challenges, 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 your self? 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 Rūmi 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 Rūmi'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 from God and not 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, O Candle of Faith! such a 'Man of God' do you seek and find."

Rūmi 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 Rūmī'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. Things in space emerge and disappear; forms and shapes come and go. The streams of phenomenal life continue to flow and pass away; lament not their vanishing because the 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." Rūmī 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 till 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'ān says about the creation of man that man's body was made of clay, but the material frame having been perfected, God breathed from His own spirit into him. Rūmī in his discourses collected in *Fīhi mā fīhi* has quoted a tradition of the Prophet wherein it is said that Adam's clay was kneaded in forty days. The Qur'ān 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 forty days might mean hundreds of millions of years. Rūmī 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. Rūmi 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, Rūmi 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 Rūmi:

“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 the Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Prophet) and then went as far as Qandhār but God found I not, neither in low nor in high places. With set purpose I fared to the summit of Mount Caucasus and found there only ‘anqā’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 own 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. Rūmi 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 Rūmi’s vision and creed:

Maḥmūd Shabistari, al-Jīli, and Jāmi

“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 thought 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. Rūmi 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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## Chapter XLIII

### MAḤMŪD SHABISTARI, AL-JĪLI, AND JĀMI

#### A

#### MAḤMŪD SHABISTARI

Maḥmūd Shabistari, so called after the name of Shabistar, a village near Tabrīz in Ādharbaijān, was born about the middle of the seventh/thirteenth century and died about 720/1320. Little is known of his life. His *Gulshan-i Rāz* (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 Ḥusaini from Khurāsān.

The exposition of the doctrine of the Unity of Being in the book adds nothing to what had earlier been said by ibn ‘Arabi. Maḥmūd, 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 the necessary were never separate; they existed from eternity as one. If you look at one side of the 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.<sup>1</sup>

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-thābitah*) 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.<sup>2</sup>

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 (*aḥadiyyah*); the second is the universal soul (*nafs al-kulli*). Then come Throne (*'arsh*), the heavenly Chair (*kursi*), seven heavenly spheres, 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 the last in the series, man is logically the first, as tree is potentially prior to the seed. All the 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 all 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. Its is 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

<sup>1</sup> *Gulshan-i Rāz*, Question 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 2.



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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

In the sixth question of *Gulshan-i Rāz* the Shaikh 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, all the 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 right action, action that springs from the heart. Shabistari also suggests a study of both the sources of knowledge mentioned in the Qur'ān—the external world (*āfāq*) 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 (*ḥikmah*), moral purity (*'iffah*), bravery (*shajā'ah*), and justice (*'adālah*) 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.<sup>5</sup>

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

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 10.

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, Lāhiji, however, adds that it is to serve as a polished mirror for the manifestation of God's essence, attributes, and names. Can we ascribe any freedom to the mirror in reflecting objects? For everyone of us, actions were predetermined. God's actions are inscrutable. "Can you explain," he asks, "why one man is born Muḥammad 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 Shaikh 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 for ever, as he is elementally incapable of fulfilling the obligation of following the right path and obeying God's Law, i. e., *Shari'ah*.<sup>6</sup>

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 his descent into the phenomenal world, he comes down to the lowest level. His state at this stage is directly opposite to the state of unity. 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."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 9.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 4.

The religious Law (*Shari'ah*), the mystic Path (*Tariqah*), and Truth (*Haqiqah*)—all go to form the perfect man. *Shari'ah*, according to the *Shaikh*, 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 saintship (*wilayah*) and prophethood (*nubuwwah*). Saintship is a more general category than prophethood. Saints so called and prophets are all saints in the first instance. In a mystic saintship 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 saintship, a cycle in which prophethood and saintship were both manifest in the world, came to an end. After the Final Prophet, saintship continued and the new cycle began to take its shape. One day the seal of saints will appear, who shall be the acme of saintship 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.<sup>8</sup> The word "seal," according to *ibn 'Arabi*, does not signify a mystic with whom saintship will come to an end, but with *Shabistari*, the seal of saints, like the "Seal of Prophets," would terminate saintship for ever. The last of the saints is the "seal" with whom 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 re-creation.

In 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).<sup>9</sup>

After death, the individuality of man shall vanish at last and many shall be dissolved into One.<sup>10</sup> Man shall be vouchsafed the beatific vision, but it will not be something external; it will be a manifestation within himself.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 11.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*



Abd al-Karīm b. Ibrāhīm al-Jīlī was born in 767/1365 and died in about 832/1428. Except for the few references in his book, almost nothing is known about his life. He was the disciple of Shaikh Sharaf al-Dīn al-Jabartī and lived in Zabīd (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-Insān al-Kāmil fī Ma'rifat al-Awākhir w-al-Awā'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 (*Ḥaqq*). The Absolute Being manifests itself in two different realities, *khalq* and *Ḥaqq*."<sup>12</sup>

*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."<sup>13</sup> It has two attributes: eternity and everlastingness; two qualities: God (*Ḥaqq*) and the world (*khalq*); two descriptions: eternity (*qīdam*) and createdness (*ḥudūth*); 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 second, It is existent for Itself and non-existent for others; two modes (*ma'rifah*): according to the one, It is positive (*wujūb*) 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."<sup>14</sup>

It is clear that according to al-Jīlī reality is one<sup>15</sup> and belongs to divine Substance (*jauhar*) which has two different aspects: God and the world.

<sup>12</sup> Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, Urdu translation by Faḍal Mirān, Sufi Printing and Publishing Company, Pindi Bahauddin, p. 4. All references to *al-Insān al-Kāmil* are to this Urdu translation.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30–32.

<sup>15</sup> *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 Not-Being and that is the phenomenal world.

Multiplicity is only subjective and relative. "You can say what you like. You are at liberty to say that 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."<sup>16</sup> "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 (*ittiḥād*) nor incarnation (*ḥulūl*), for the slave is slave and the Lord is Lord: the slave does not become Lord, nor the Lord slave."<sup>17</sup> A true mystic or the perfect man is able to realize in his super-sensuous experience that multiplicity is only a subjective way of looking at things, otherwise reality that underlies it is one.<sup>18</sup> 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 (*'Amā*) which is also called Reality of realities, Hidden Treasure and White [Pure] Chrysolite, so is He present now in all the things of the phenomenal world without incarnation (*ḥulūl*) and mixture (*imtizāj*). He is manifested in the parts and atoms of the phenomenal world without becoming many."<sup>19</sup>

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 (*tashbīh*) is the form of divine beauty which is manifested in all the things of the phenomenal world without any distinction.<sup>20</sup> The Christians are right when they say that Christ, 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.<sup>21</sup> 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 (*tanzīh*), 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 or eternal transcendence, as He is in Himself, which He alone can know and which none can claim to understand. He is, therefore, above even the transcendence which is asserted of Him in correlation with His immanence.<sup>22</sup>

Name (*ism*) is that which specifies the named in the understanding, pictures

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>18</sup> The Qur'ānic verse (xxviii, 88) is usually translated as "Everything is liable to destruction except His Face." But al-Jili 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.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 62, para 1.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 11, pp. 69-70.

<sup>21</sup> He quotes several Qur'ānic verses (xv, 85; xli, 53, etc.) to prove this point; *ibid.*, p. 156. See also p. 145.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

it in the mind, brings it in imagination, arranges it in thought, preserves it in memory, and presents it 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 (*zāhir* to *bāṭin*) but in fact both are identical. There are some names the named of which do not exist in actual reality, as, for instance, '*anqā*' which exists only in name. '*Anqā*' and Allah stand at opposite poles; while the object of '*anqā*' 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 Allah which comprises in itself all names and attributes. Names are of two kinds: (1) of the essence, e.g., one (*aḥad*), single (*wāḥid*), unique (*fard*), etc., (2) of the attributes, e.g., knowledge, power, mercy, etc.<sup>23</sup>

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 animal. 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 (*tarkīb*) they are identical with it. But in God, this otherness disappears, for division and multiplicity do not apply to Him. His attributes are His essence and the two are identical."<sup>24</sup>

Thus, according to al-Jili, the material world is not an unreality, a *māya*, 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 fifty-seventh chapter of *Insān-i Kāmil*, 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 (*wujūd*) and is the essence in which God is completely manifested. Don't you 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."<sup>25</sup> Later on, he asserts that Being (*wujūd*), as a matter of fact, is nothing but "a thought within a thought within a thought."<sup>26</sup> Thus, by

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33ff.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 120-21.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 214-15.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 216-17.



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 (*ilāhīyyah*), mercifulness (*raḥmānīyyah*), and lordship (*rubūbīyyah*). Divinity is the sum of all the realities (i.e., all individualities) of Being and their maintenance in their respective positions (*marātib*) 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 (*ḥādith*), 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."<sup>27</sup> 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 brave man. Similarly, we see giving of alms to the poor on the part of a generous man. "Marching forward" and "giving of alms" are not bravery and generosity respectively, but only the effects of these attributes.<sup>28</sup>

Mercifulness (*raḥmānīyyah*) 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 *ilāhīyyah* refers to both. In this respect mercifulness appears to be higher in scale than divinity, as sweetness of sugar does with regard to the sugarcane. If you prefer sweetness to sugarcane, mercifulness is better than divinity, but if looking at the generality and comprehensive character of the sugarcane, you prefer it to sweetness, then divinity will be prior in rank. The name that manifests itself in this rank is that of *Raḥmān* (the Merciful) which includes both the attributes of the essence as oneness (*aḥadīyyah*), uniqueness (*waḥdīyyah*), eternity (*ṣamadīyyah*), etc., and attributes of His Self which are seven, viz., life, knowledge, power, will, speech, hearing, and sight.<sup>29</sup>

The first mercy of God was the creation of the universe from His own Self.<sup>30</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 48–49.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 47–52.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58

<sup>30</sup> He refers to the Qur'ānic verse (xlv, 13) in which the words *jamī' an minhu* are interpreted by him to mean as "all (created) from His own self."

God is the substance (*hayūla*) of the universe.<sup>31</sup> 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. Our belief is that ice and water are identical."<sup>32</sup>

God permeates the whole of existence through His name *Rahmān* and this permeation is neither incarnation (*ḥulūl*) nor contact, for both these conceptions imply duality; as a matter of fact, He is consubstantial with existents (*'ain al-maujūdāt*).

Lordship (*rubūbiyyah*) is the name of the rank which demands those names that require the being of the existents and comprehends such names as the knower (*'alīm*), the hearer (*samī'*), the seer (*baṣīr*), the self-subsisting (*qayyūm*), and the willing (*murīd*). 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.<sup>33</sup>

There are four kinds of attributes: beauty (*jamāl*), perfection (*kamāl*), majesty (*jalāl*), and essence (*aḥāt*).

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 majesty as well as those of perfection. Paradise is the manifestation 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.<sup>34</sup>

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 (*ḥayy*) 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

<sup>31</sup> He refers to the Qur'ānic verse (xlvi, 3) for the phrase *bi al-Ḥaqq* which is interpreted by him to mean that everything was created out of *Ḥaqq*, i. e., *Ḥaqq* served as matter for the world.

<sup>32</sup> *Al-Insān al-Kāmil*, p. 60.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

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 source 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 not for themselves as, for instance, plants, minerals, etc.

Everything existent is alive, for existence by itself implies life, though 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 (*ḥādith*) but in relation to God it is eternal (*qadīm*), 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 learnt by me from direct revelation in mystic experience."<sup>35</sup> 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 ilhāmī*), 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’ānic verse (iii, 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'

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.



me of themselves of what they themselves really are."<sup>36</sup> 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.<sup>37</sup> 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, that God's decree (*ḥukm*) 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.<sup>38</sup>

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 attributed to us is created (*makhlūq*) 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."<sup>39</sup> 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 (*mukhtār*), 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.<sup>40</sup>

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.

<sup>36</sup> *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam* (Urdu translation, Lucknow, 1927), p. 172. See Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muḥyid Dīn-Ibnul 'Arabi*, Cambridge, 1939, p. 152.

<sup>37</sup> *Fuṣūṣ*, pp. 155, 272; Affifi, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>38</sup> *Al-Insān al-Kāmil*, pp. 96–100.

<sup>39</sup> Affifi, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

<sup>40</sup> *Al-Insān al-Kāmil*, pp. 101–04.

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.<sup>41</sup> 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 were previously the objects of God's consciousness. 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'yān al-thābitah*), 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 in 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.<sup>42</sup> 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 objectively, as the object of God's knowledge, for if we accept this position, we would be bound to regard the created world as co-eternal and co-existent with God. He quotes a Qur'ānic verse (lxxvi, 1) in support of his thesis: "Has there not been over man a long period of time when he was nothing—to be spoken of?" Al-Jili holds that time (*dahr*) in this context means Allah and a portion of time (*hīn*) 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

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 105–06.

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.<sup>43</sup>

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."<sup>44</sup>

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 question. Temporality (*hudūth*) implies that things, although they have been in the knowledge of God since eternity, in respect of their existence are created things.<sup>45</sup>

5. *Speech* (Kalām).—Speech is a reflection of the Being of God; it is an overflowing or emanation (*fa'id*) from the essence of God. It is an intelligible epiphany. It manifests itself in two directions. The first is of two kinds. (a) The first kind of speech (*kalām*) issues forth from God's position of power (*'izzah*) which must be obeyed by all. The Qur'ānic verse, xli, 11, refers to this fact.<sup>46a</sup> (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'ānic 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" (xviii, 109). Thus, Nature is the materialization of the Word of God and exists in its physical form. It is the objective and material form of the contents of God's consciousness, the physical shape that the objects of His knowledge, called *a'yān al-thābitah*, assume.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 127-33.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 129-30.

<sup>45</sup> In a certain sense, he argues, *a'yān al-thābitah* can be called eternal. God is eternal and His knowledge must also be eternal. As objects of God's knowledge, *a'yān al-thābitah* must of necessity be eternal. And yet, he adds, in their essence, they are *hādith*. Because *hudūth* is an actual existential fact (*amr al-'aini*) and *qidam* only a logical determination (*amr al-hukmi*), al-Jili prefers to call *a'yān hādith* rather than *qadim*. *Al-Insān al-Kāmil*, p. 132.

<sup>46a</sup> 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.'"

<sup>46</sup> *Al-insān al-Kāmil*, pp. 107-09.



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'ūn*). 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.<sup>47</sup>

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 attribute 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.<sup>48</sup>

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.<sup>49</sup>

*Self-revelations of the One.*<sup>50</sup>—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-'Amā'*). 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 *'Amā'*. On the basis of this simple answer, ibn 'Arabi and al-Jili have built a superstructure 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.<sup>51</sup> Al-Jili calls this essence *'Amā'* and describes it as essence in its inwardness. It is like a flint which hides fire in its innermost

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109–11.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 111–12.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 116–20.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

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 (*Ḥaqq*) and the world (*khalq*), beyond the determinations of names and attributes.<sup>52</sup>

It is the one epiphany which has no relation whatsoever with the "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.<sup>53</sup>

This state of blindness is related to Absolute Oneness (*aḥadiyyah*), 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. 'Amā', with regard to inwardness and occultation or hiddenness, is the essence, while Absolute Oneness with regard to God's manifestation to Himself is His mind (*nafs*) in which all relations are negated.<sup>54</sup>

Absolute Oneness denotes that the Pure Being is about to start on the process of descent, coming down towards manifestation.<sup>55</sup> This is the first stage of the descent or self-revelation of the essence from the darkness of 'Amā' 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.<sup>56</sup>

The unity (*aḥadiyyah*) 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 (*waḥdiyyah*). The intervening stage between *aḥadiyyah* and *waḥdiyyah* is represented by He-ness (*huwīyyah*) and I-ness (*anīyyah*).<sup>57</sup>

Ibn 'Arabi employs the term *huwīyyah* (He-ness) as equivalent to divine essence.<sup>58</sup> 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" (*ghā'ib*)

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 64-66.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>58</sup> See Affifi, *op. cit.*, p. 24, footnote 1. Also p. 114 where He-ness is identified with 'Amā'

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 it: inwardness (*bāṭin*) and absence (*ghaibūhiyyah*). It is the inmost consciousness of Allah.<sup>59</sup>

*Aniyyah* (I-ness) is the outward aspect of unity in which One blossoms forth into multiplicity. *Zāhir* (outward) and *bāṭin* (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 *ilāhīyyah* is a sum of contradictories.<sup>60</sup>

The stage of self-revelation called simple Oneness (*waḥdīyyah*) 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 (or 'ain of) Allah. In *aḥadīyyah*, there is no manifestation of names and attributes and the Real is the pure essence. In *waḥdīyyah*, 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 *ilāhīyyah* names and attributes are manifested but are distinguished one from the other and are even contradictory to one another.<sup>61</sup>

*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.<sup>62</sup> 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

<sup>59</sup> *Al-Insān al-Kāmil*, p. 122.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 56–57.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.



i.e., will, they are obedient, while, with regard to the second, they are classed among the disobedients. 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?"<sup>63</sup>

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 so much 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 we 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, but 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 (*Qadīm*). 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-thābitah*). 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-thābitah*). He who receives the epiphany of the name *al-Haqq* (the Truth) realizes the hidden truth contained in the Qur'ānic verse (xv, 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-Aḥad* (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 (*burūz*) 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 (*wujūd*). 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 (*baqā'*) with Him and in Him, and all the veils of difference and dualities were removed. I raised my self (*naʿs*), 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 my self (*dhāt*) His

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 71-74.

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-Rahmān* (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 *‘Alīm* (Knower), *Qādir* (Powerful), etc., descend on him. This process goes on till he is illumined by all the names. Last of all comes the epiphany of the name *Qayyūm* (Self-subsisting). This is the final stage after which the mystic passes on to the next higher stage of the illumination of divine attributes.<sup>64</sup>

3. *Illumination of attributes*.—At this stage, the self (*nafs*) and existence (*wujūd*) of the mystic are annihilated. When the light of slavehood (*‘abdīyyah*) 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 (*Rūh 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, there is no distinction between Lord and slave. When slave disappears, his logical correlate, Lord, must also disappear. The true reality is God, the One. As al-Jili puts it, “In this sea of unity, 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 or 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 (*kalām*). In this condition, the recipient looks upon all existents as God’s Word. Sometimes he hears the Words of God without any 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

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 75–78.

best reflection of My life. You are My name, My person (*dhāt*), My attribute. You are the epitome and the (final) object of existence and creation (*hudūth*). If there had been no Lord (*Rabb*), 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-muntaha*) 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 (*anīyyah*) is My He-ness (*huwīyyah*). ‘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 himself, he heard the ringing of bells; his whole physical body seemed to have been torn asunder and his existence changed into non-being. He experienced here darkness upon darkness till by the grace of God he was relieved of all this and came upon light. At this stage the illumined one gets extraordinary spiritual powers; a thing comes into existence at his bidding. The last stage is the illumination of the attribute of divinity (*ilāhīyyah*), where two contradictory positions seem to be reconciled and incorporated into a higher synthesis. A person illumined by this light accepts all the religions of the world as true and yet he looks upon all of them (including Islam) as untrue; 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 (*muḥaqqiq*) as true.<sup>65</sup>

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 (*latīfah ilāhīyyah*) which is either attributive (*ṣifātī*) or essential (*dhātī*). When this substance is essential, i. e., when man is illumined by divine essence, he truly becomes a perfect man.<sup>66</sup>

*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.<sup>67</sup> (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

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 79–90.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.



is One, but it appears in two different aspects of God and man (*Ḥaqq* and *khalq*).<sup>68</sup> 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 aspects: 'You' and 'I' . . . 'You' refers to your He-ness (*huwīyyah*); 'I' refers to my reality . . . 'I,' as 'I'-ness, is God and 'You' in its creaturely aspect is man. You may look at your self as 'I' or as 'You'; in reality, there is nothing here except the Universal Reality."<sup>69</sup>

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, 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 (*aḥadīyyah*) which is His essence and here He is one (*wāḥid*) 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 Aḥmad with reference to the celestial sphere and Muḥammad with reference to the terrestrial sphere."<sup>70</sup> This is the doctrine of Logos or the perfect man which he discusses in detail in the sixtieth 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 Muḥammad. 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. Muḥammad as a perfect man) in the form of his Shaikh, Sharf al-Din al-Jabrati, at Zabīd in 796/1393, though he did not know at that time that he was Muḥammad. 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 Muḥammad. But when he (the mystic) sees him in some other form, though he knows that it is in reality Muḥammad, he calls him by the name of the form in which he appears. The name Muḥammad applies to nothing except the reality of Muḥammad (*ḥaqīqat al-Muḥammadīyyah*). Al-Jili is, however, very careful to point out that this is not the doctrine of metempsychosis. Muḥammad 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 perfect men are outwardly his (i. e., Muḥammad's) vicegerents, while inwardly he constitutes their essence.<sup>70a</sup> At another place

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>70a</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 260-61

al-Jili calls Muhammad as "the heaven and the earth and the length and the breadth."<sup>71</sup>

This basic reality of Muhammad is present in all people in proportion to their inherent capacities. Saints and prophets all partake of it in different degrees, while Muhammad alone possesses it in its fullness and, therefore, according to al-Jili, nobody except he can be called a truly perfect man.<sup>72</sup> 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 the image of the Merciful," and, as another tradition asserts: "God 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 (*huwīyyah*) as against God's He-ness (*huwīyyah*), I-ness (*anīyyah*) against I-ness, essence against essence, whole against whole, universal against universal, particular against particular.<sup>73</sup> 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*),<sup>74</sup> his *anīyyah* to the Heavenly Chair (*kursi*),<sup>75</sup> his mind to the Exalted Pen (*al-qalam al-a'la*),<sup>76</sup> his soul to the Guarded Tablet (*al-lauh al-mahfūz*),<sup>77</sup> his nature to

<sup>71</sup> The terms "length" and "breadth" were first used by Ḥallāj for *lāhūt* (divinity) and *nāsūt* (humanity) and later employed by ibn 'Arabi and al-Jili to denote the two aspects of the essence.

<sup>72</sup> *Al-Insān al-Kāmil*, pp. 253-54.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262.

<sup>74</sup> *'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

<sup>75</sup> *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 existence." *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>76</sup> "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."

<sup>77</sup> *Al-lauh al-mahfūz*, according to al-Jili, stands for the universal soul. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

physical elements, his potentialities to *hayūla*, etc., etc. In short, every faculty of the perfect man corresponds to different manifestations in the physical world."<sup>78</sup>

According to al-Jili, there are three stages (*barzak̄h*) of development for the perfect man. In the first stage called beginning (*badī'ah*) the perfect man becomes endowed with divine names and attributes. In the intermediary stage (*tawassuṭ*) 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 universe. In the third and final stage (*khitām*) 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." He is called "the guide" (*al-mahdi*) 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 iron is attracted by the magnet. All the 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,<sup>80</sup> and as such he is able to bestow on things what their nature demands without any act of hindrance.<sup>81</sup>

*Sainthood and Prophethood.*—Al-Jili quotes Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir on the authority of ibn 'Arabi, "Oh prophets! you have been called prophets but we have got something which you did not get." Another mystic says, "We have dived in the river (of sainthood) while the prophets are staying on its banks." Al-Jili remarks that there is truth in these statements but a prophet as prophet is superior to a saint *qua* saint.<sup>82</sup>

Al-Jili regards prophethood as a developed stage of sainthood. The seventh stage of the spiritual development is nearness (*qurb*) which he calls great sainthood (*wilāyat al-kubra*). It has four aspects. The first is friendship (*ḥabūlah*), the position attained by Abraham. The second is love (*ḥubb*), where Muhammad was given the rank of a lover of God (*ḥabīb Allah*). The third is

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 261–62.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 263–64. Cf. ibn 'Arabi: "Only two beings rightly call themselves God: God Himself who in His books calls Himself Allah and the perfect man like Bāyazid." See Affifi, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

<sup>80</sup> There is a stage of reality where the distinctions of *Haqq* and *khaliq* appear, but the perfect man is able to rise in his knowledge and experience above this stage and attain to the Absolute Essence.

<sup>81</sup> *Al-Insān al-Kāmil*, p. 93.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153. Al-Jili distinguishes between sainthood and prophethood as follows: "When Adam was sent down to the earth, he was made a prophet, for prophethood means legislation (*tashrī'*) and imposing obligation (*taklīf*) which pertain to this earth. While in paradise Adam was a saint, for it is the place of miracles and observation and this is sainthood." *Ibid.*, p. 308.



finality (*khatam*), the rank of Muḥammad (*maqām-i Muḥammadi*) where the banner of Aḥmad was hoisted for him. The last and fourth is the rank of slavehood (*'abdiyyah*) where God called him by the name of slave (*'abd*).<sup>83</sup> 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 Muḥammad on all planes (*ḥadarah*) 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 Muḥammad. They are his brothers about whom there is a 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-Jīli, is not institutional (*tashrī'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.<sup>84</sup>

Al-Jīli draws a distinction between saintship (*wilāyah*), prophecy of saintship (*nubuwwat al-wilāyah*), and prophecy of institution (*nubuwwat al-tashrī'*). Saintship 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 saintship, the perfect servant (*al-'abd al-kāmil*) 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 Muḥammad was an apostle (*rasūl*) 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 Muḥammad, like such saints as Bāyazīd, Junaid, 'Abd al-Qādir Jilāni, 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 Muḥammad.

Thus saintship represents a peculiar relation between the Lord and the servant, prophecy of saintship is an aspect of the saint which is common between the Creator and the creature; prophecy of institution is an independent and permanent assignment; 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 saintship is superior to the aspect of his prophecy, though every prophet-saint is superior to a saint.<sup>85</sup> According to al-Jīli, Muḥammad 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 has been com-

<sup>83</sup> Reference is to the Qur'ānic verse (xvii, 1), "Glory be to Him who carried His servant (*'abdihi*) by night from the Holy Mosque to the Remote Mosque."

<sup>84</sup> *Al-Insān al-Kāmil*, pp. 319-20.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 320-21.

municated by him. No Sufi saint can know or experience anything which was not experienced by him, therefore, he cannot but follow him. "After Muḥammad institutional prophethood came to an end."<sup>86</sup>

*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-Jīlī identifies it with the spirit of God which, according to the Qur'ān, was breathed into Adam (xv, 29).

The heart (*qalb*) is the eternal light which was revealed in the essence ('*ain*) of existents (i. e., in Muḥammad 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'ān as the light (xxiv, 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.<sup>87</sup> 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 the influence of the animal passions. Al-Jīlī 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 Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlāni who says, "I continued grazing in the fields of *riḍā'* (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-Jīlī, 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 (*mushāhadah*). 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

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144. The qualifying word "institutional" implies that prophethood of the other type is still possible and, thus, on p. 320 he explicitly says that *nubuwat al-wilāyah* will continue.

<sup>87</sup> "Names and attributes form the nature of the heart." *Ibid.*, p. 193. He argues from the Qur'ānic verse (xcv, 4): "We indeed created man in the fairest mould."

attributes so much so that he feels his essence to be identical with divine essence. He then become 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'āsh*). 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.<sup>88</sup>

Universal reason is the luminous percipient in which those forms of knowledge are made manifest which are 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 is 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 universal reason has two scales, i.e., of wisdom and power, with the result that knowledge gained through the latter is infallible and covers almost everything, 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.<sup>89</sup>

*Judgment (Wahm).*—The *wahm* of Muhammad 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 overpowers reason, reflection, and imagination. It has, thus, the greatest capacity for (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 overpowered by it becomes subject to darkness and bewilderment.<sup>90</sup>

*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,

<sup>88</sup> "From the first intelligence which is referred to as the Principle of Muhammad, God created Gabriel. Thus, Muhammad in this sense becomes the father of Gabriel and the source and ground of the whole universe. The First Intelligence is called *al-Rūh al-Amīn* (the Truthful Spirit) because it is the storehouse of divine knowledge and its protector." *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 197–200.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 200–06.



according to al-Jīlī, 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-Jīlī 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.<sup>91</sup>

*Reflection (Fikr).*—It is a key to the Unseen. According to al-Jīlī, 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 (*'urūj*) is of two kinds: (a) 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.<sup>92</sup>

But it does not imply that the exercise of reflection should be condemned outright. Al-Jīlī 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'ān 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.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 206–10.

<sup>92</sup> Al-Jīlī relates that he himself was submerged in this path of speculative philosophy and this was due only to the spiritual influence of his teacher, al-Jābartī, who was staying with a group of mystics in Zabīd in 779/1377 at the house of one Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad. *Ibid.*, pp. 212–13.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 210–14.

*The Self (Nafs).*—According to al-Jili, as the title of chapter fifty-nine illustrates, self is the origin of the Lucifer (*Iblīs*) 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 Muḥammad. "The self of Muḥammad was created by God out of His own Self and the self of Adam was made a copy of the self of Muḥammad." Later on, he says, "Allah created the self of Muḥammad 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 (*naḥs al-ammārah*) 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.<sup>94</sup>

*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'ān and traditions. He holds that all existent things are created for the purpose of divine worship.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 292-93.

Everything by its state and activity, nay by its 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 wishes 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" (xi, 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.<sup>95</sup>

The stage intermediate between death and resurrection (*barzakh*) is an incomplete and non-permanent stage of life after death. It is a world of phantasy. 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 (*maqām al-maḥmūd*), is meant for none but Muḥammad. 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.<sup>96</sup> Hell is nothing but the natural darkness which is fire.<sup>97</sup> In the fifty-ninth 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.<sup>98</sup>

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

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 272-73.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.



and, thus, this punishment will change into pleasure.<sup>99</sup> But even then this so-called punishment in hell will not last for ever.

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.<sup>100</sup>

According to al-Jili, God's will is absolutely free from external restraints; His actions are not determined by causes and conditions.<sup>101</sup> Man, on the other hand, according to him, is completely determined in his action.<sup>102</sup> 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 (*ikhtiyār*) is attributed to them only formally so that God's way to man may be justified.<sup>103</sup>

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 burnt but is good for the insect who lives in it and gets nourishment from it. In short, there is nothing in this world which is absolutely evil.<sup>104</sup>

Al-Jili holds that what is called sin or disobedience is in one respect obedience, for it is in conformity with God's will. He upholds the distinction 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

<sup>99</sup> He relates his personal experience of seeing people at a particular level of hell who were subject to a most severe form of punishment. But even in this condition they refused to accept the offer of paradise with disdain, implying that the nature of punishment was such that it could be preferred to the so-called blessings in paradise. *Ibid.*, pp. 230-31. In another place he says that there are many people in hell who are better in the eyes of God than many people of the paradise. See p. 232. Also pp. 45, 108, 224, 225.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, Chaps. 17, 18.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34. He argues, like other Muslim pantheists, from the Qur'anic verse (xxxvii, 96): "Allah had created you and what you make," interpreting *ta'malūn* as "what you do."

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

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 Muḥammad's prophethood, prayer, fasting, poor-tax, and pilgrimage.

The second stage is faith (*īmān*). 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. *Kalām* (scholastic theology) was invented to defend religion against unbelievers and innovators (*aḥl al-bid'ah*). It never helps in producing faith in a person.

The third stage is called piety (*ṣalāh*) 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 *Sharī'ah* for the sake of his self.

The fourth stage is called *iḥsān* 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 (*shadādah*) 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 *ṣiddīqīyyah* 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-yaqīn*). The second is faith through personal experience and mystic *kashf* (*'ain al-yaqīn*). The third is true and perfect faith (*ḥaqq al-yaqīn*). The mystic who has attained this stage of *ṣiddīqīyyah* 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 *fanā'* and then reaches the stage of *baqā'* where he receives the *tajallī* of all divine names one after the other. He perceives the essence through names. This is the final plane of *'ilm al-yaqīn*. In the next plane, i.e., of *'ain al-yaqīn*, 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 till 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., of *ḥaqq al-yaqīn*, 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 *khitām* where the individual is characterized by the essence (*ḥaqīqah*) of the Real. This station is beyond the reach of ordinary mortals.

C

JĀMI

'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmi (817-898/1414-1492), a famous poet and great scholar, was the follower of ibn 'Arabi. His book, *Lawā'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.<sup>105</sup>

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'qūl-i thānīyyah*) and has no objective reality corresponding to it but which attaches itself to the quiddity (*māhīyyah*) of a thing mentally. Taking Being in this sense, several critics have raised an objection against ibn 'Arabi's statement 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. Jāmi, therefore, tries to defend ibn 'Arabi by saying that Being or existence has another sense. When pantheists use the word "Being" (*wujūd*), 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.<sup>106</sup> But the truth of this statement, according to Jāmi, 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.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>105</sup> *Lawā'ih*, Newal Kishore Press, Lucknow (India), 1936, p. 4.

<sup>106</sup> 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 *Lawā'ih* 18 and 26.

<sup>107</sup> *Lawā'ih* 13, 14.



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 make their appearance. The essence is above all determinations but it is only when God is viewed by our human and 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 nor different from Him. In "Flash" (*Lā'ihah*) fifteen, Jāmi 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 was 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.<sup>108</sup>

The nature of things in the universe in relation to the Absolute is like modes which Jāmi, following ibn 'Arabi, calls *shu'ūn*; they have no existence or reality in themselves and are mere adjectives of the One Being.<sup>109</sup> These modes are included in the Absolute as qualities inhere in a substance or as a consequent follows from its ground—as half, third, and fourth, and other fractions are related to the integer one; these fractions are potentially included in the integer one and become explicit only when repeated.<sup>110</sup> It is clear that the conception of creation as commonly understood is irrelevant. Creation in the theological sense is not the actualization of the hidden potentialities of the Creator, but the production of individuals and things which, though deriving their existence from this source, yet enjoy self-determination and independence to some extent. According to Jāmi, Creator and creatures are two aspects of the same reality.

This subjective determination, according to Jāmi, has two stages. In the first stage called *martabah-i 'ilmi*, these existents appear in divine knowledge

<sup>108</sup> *Lā'ihah* 25.

<sup>109</sup> See *Lā'ihah* 26 where Jāmi tries to explain certain statements of ibn 'Arabi as discussed in *Faṣṣ al-Shu'aibīyyah*.

<sup>110</sup> *Lā'ihah* 19.

in the form of archetypal ideas (*a'yān-i thābitah*). 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."<sup>111</sup>

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."<sup>112</sup> The first stage of the descent is *aḥadīyyah* which is a bare unity devoid of all modes and relations. When it is conditioned by these modes, it is called *al-wahdīyyah* where the Real is 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. The perfect men like prophets alone reflect all these names and attributes.<sup>113</sup> 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."<sup>114</sup>

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 world. "Every grade of Being is determined according to its rank. If you ignore this distinction, you become an infidel."<sup>115</sup>

In ethics Jāmi 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 evil? Jāmi 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 good. According to him, therefore, evil has no positive content; it is privative, lacking something which should have been there. Take, for instance, the case of cold. There is nothing evil

<sup>111</sup> *Lā'ihah* 18.

<sup>112</sup> *Lā'ihah* 24.

<sup>113</sup> *Lā'ihah* 17. See also *Lā'ihah* 24, where the idea of One's descent is further elaborated.

<sup>114</sup> *Lā'ihah* 20.

<sup>115</sup> *Lā'ihah* 23.

in it as such, but with reference to the fruits which it does not allow to ripen, it becomes evil.<sup>116</sup>

The ultimate goal of man should be not only *fanā'*, passing away of consciousness, but *fanā'-i fanā'*, passing away of the consciousness of having attained the state of *fanā'*. At this stage, an individual loses not only awareness of self but also awareness of this "non-awareness of self." Then, according to Jāmi, faith, religion, belief, or *kashf* (mystic knowledge and experience) all become meaningless.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> *Lā'ihah* 30.

<sup>117</sup> *Lawā'ih* 8 and 9.

## Chapter XLIV

### SHAIKH AHMAD SIRHINDI

#### A

#### LIFE AND STUDIES

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, better known as Mujaddid Alf Thāni, was the son of Shaikh 'Abd al-Aḥad Makhdūm, who was a devout Muslim always anxious to derive spiritual enlightenment from saints. Shaikh 'Abd al-Aḥad Makhdūm met Shaikh Allah Dād at Ruhtās and Sayyid 'Ali Qawām at Jaunpur. He learnt a great deal from both and then returned to Sirhind and lived there till his death in 1007/1598. A great master of all the branches of contemporary knowledge, he taught the prevalent text-books on philosophy and religion to his pupils intensively. He was also an acknowledged authority on jurisprudence. Besides, he taught mysticism to those who were eager to learn it, using *'Awāriḥ al-Ma'āriḥ* and *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* as his texts. He was an ardent reader of ibn 'Arabī and was an authority on his teachings. He acknowledged ibn 'Arabī'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) unpractised. He loved the devotees of **Khawājah Bahā' al-Din Naqshband** of **Bukhāra** called the **Naqshbandis**,<sup>1</sup> and his son inherited this love and devotion to them from him.

**Shaikh 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 learnt 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 Kamāl Kāshmiri. He also studied some works on **Hadith** from Ya'qūb Kashmiri, a great scholar of the time. By the young age of seventeen 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-Fadal and Faiḍi. After some time he accompanied his father to Sirhind. On his way home, he was married to the daughter of a noble named **Shaikh Sultān** of Thanesar. On his return to Sirhind he stayed with his father and through his help established spiritual relationship with the Qādiriyyah and **Chishtiyyah** schools of mysticism. Through the training received from his father, he learnt the fundamentals of Sufism. In his studies too he had been much 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 **Khawājah Bāqi Billah** as a saint from a friend, Maulāna Ḥasan. He went to him promptly and was well received. The **Khawājah** inquired of him about his intended pilgrimage and then desired him to stay with him for a week or so. He was so much impressed by the spiritual attainments of the **Khawājah** that he made up his mind to become his disciple. The **Khawājah** was very fastidious in taking anyone as his disciple but he immediately accepted the Mujaddid as his follower and focussed 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 **Khawājah'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 **Khawājah's** death he used to go to Delhi at the 'urs<sup>2</sup> of his late chief.

<sup>1</sup> Devotees of **Khawājah Bahā' al-Din Naqshband** of **Bukhāra** are called the **Naqshbandis**.

<sup>2</sup> 'Urs, a gathering to celebrate the death anniversary of a holy man.

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 Jahāngir 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 Āṣaf Jāh 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 28th Ṣafar 1034/10th December 1624.

Some hold that the Shaikh'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 is 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 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-Islamic 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 true 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 as sanctioned by the Holy Prophet and was very hard upon those who coined excuses to violate them. He was an authority on *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, predestinarianism, sectarianism, and Sufism are very important. Shaikh 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 '*ulamā*' (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 practise 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 to it. Even if it appears right, it is in fact a blot on the fair face of Islam. Any approval of a heresy is a 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 to the '*ulamā*' 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 pretext that their Shaikhs did so."<sup>3</sup> If a heresy appears in the guise of an inspiration, it is immediately accepted by the people as a long lost truth. For long the conversations and commentaries of the Sufis had been tending away from the religious Law (*Sharī'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 Iqbāl 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 Shaikhs who in their state of insensibility (*sukr*) praise infidelity and induce men to wear the Brahmanical thread<sup>4</sup> are to be excused because then they are not themselves. Those who follow them consciously

<sup>3</sup> *Maktūbāt-i Mujaddid*, Book II, Letter No. 23.

<sup>4</sup> A thread worn by the Brahmans round the neck.



in these matters are not to be excused because they do so while they are in their senses.”<sup>5</sup> 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 Khawājah 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.<sup>6</sup>

The Caliph ‘Umar was highly incensed when he was told that Shaikh ‘Abd al-Kabir Yamani was of the view that Allah has no omniscience. He did not attribute this remark to the Shaikh’s insensibility or unconsciousness. He rather thought it to be an act of infidelity, even if it was committed by the Shaikh with a view to being denounced by the world,<sup>7</sup> 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 tranquillity without which salvation is impossible. When this tranquillity is reached, the heart becomes unconscious of everything but God.”<sup>8</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup> The Naqshbandi Shaikhs have subordinated 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 faṣṣ<sup>11</sup> against the explicit verses of the Qur’ān (*naṣṣ*).<sup>12</sup> The light of God which is revealed in 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.<sup>13</sup> 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’ān and the Sunnah together as the fountain-

<sup>5</sup> *Maktūbāt-i Mujaddid*, Book I, Letter No. 23.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter No. 30.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter No. 100.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter No. 161.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter No. 172.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter No. 220.

<sup>11</sup> *Faṣṣ*, reference to *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam* by ibn ‘Arabi.

<sup>12</sup> *Naṣṣ*, an explicit verse of the Qur’ān.

<sup>13</sup> *Maktūbāt-i Mujaddid*, Book I, Letter No. 243.

head of their beliefs. They misinterpret them only because of their perverted mentalities.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup>

You can tell an impostor 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," Mansūr Hallāj used to offer five hundred *rak'āt*<sup>17</sup> every morning in submission to God even while he was chained in the prison cell. It is as difficult for an impostor to observe the tenets of the Law as to remove the Mount Caucasus from its place.<sup>18</sup>

According to the Mujaddid, the only duty performed by the theologians (*'ulamā'*) 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. The restoration of the Sunnah and the obligatory prayers is the best of worships and will be rewarded in heaven.<sup>19</sup> The Naqshbandi devotees dislike the mystical revelation that contradicts the Law and denounce the senseless wranglings of the Sufis. They do not like dances and hearing of music. They do not like a 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 acknowledgment of the prophetic institution; it has nothing to do with external trappings such as the cap or the genealogy of the Shaikh as is the case with the other sects.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter No. 286.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter No. 289.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Book II, Letter No. 42.

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> *Mo'tübāt-i Mujaddid*, Book II, Letter No. 95.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter No. 87.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Book I, Letter No. 221.

EXISTENTIAL OR EXPERIENTIAL UNITY

(*Wahdat al-Wujūd* or *Wahdat al-Shuhūd*)

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 Shaikh, Khwājah Bāqi 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. Khwājah Naqshband says that all that is heard or seen or known is a veil. It must be negated with the word "none" (*lā*). "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 . . ." <sup>21</sup> 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 denial of the existence of the others. The prophets never preached pantheism, nor did they ever call the pluralists

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter No. 31.



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.<sup>22</sup>

D

REVELATION AND INTUITION

Only the Qur'ān 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 the Prophet Moses prayed for the sight of Him. Who can bear the sight of Him?"<sup>23</sup>

"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. Shaikh Shihāb al-Dīn 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 impostors 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."<sup>24</sup>

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 touchstone 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. Saintly men

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter No. 272.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter No. 217.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter No. 293.

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 this 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.<sup>25</sup> 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 are the creations of our own fancy.<sup>26</sup>

## 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 fidelity. 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 phantasies 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 principal articles and are, therefore, deprived of the truth. A Sufi has to experience these states before his acquisition of the truth.<sup>27</sup>

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.<sup>28</sup> The straight Path is the Path of the Holy Prophet whose guidance is 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.<sup>29</sup>

Submission to the Prophet's tradition (Sunnah) is the real bliss, while

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, Book II, Letter No. 92.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, Book I, Letter No. 107.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter No. 36.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter No. 40.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter No. 41.

opposition to it is the cause of all disasters. Hindu *sādhūs* 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 religious Law are like dealers in diamonds who work less but gain more.<sup>30</sup>

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.<sup>31</sup>

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.<sup>32</sup>

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.<sup>33</sup>

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, which for them is merely formal. They think only of the form of the 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.<sup>34</sup>

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 saintship (*wilāyah*) in all respects.<sup>35</sup>

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 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'ān 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 his 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 the encyclopaedic knowledge he had, and make a pleasant and enlightening reading.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter No. 114.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter No. 137.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter No. 207.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter No. 210.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, Book II, Letter No. 18.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, Book I, Letter No. 251.

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Part 4. The "Philosophers"

Chapter XLV

JALĀL AL-DĪN DAWWĀNĪ

A

LIFE AND WORKS

Muḥammad bin As'ad Jalāl al-Dīn was born in 830/1427 at Dawwān in the district of Kāzarūn, of which his father was the Qāḍī. Having received early education from his father and then from Mahjwi al-Ari and Ḥasan bin Baqqāl, he studied theology under Muḥyi al-Dīn Anṣārī and Hammām al-Dīn at Shīrāz, where he ultimately became professor at the *Madrasat al-Aitām*. 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 got admission into the Court of Ḥasan Beg Khān Bahādur (Uzūn Ḥasan), the then Turkish ruler of Mesopotamia and Persia. He ultimately rose to the eminent position of the Qāḍī of the Court, which position he retained under Sultān Ya'qūb as well. He died in 907/1501 or 908/1502, and was buried in his native village Dawwān.<sup>1</sup>

Ṭūsi revived the tradition of philosophical disciplines during the Mongol period; Dawwānī 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 reorientated the study of Shihāb al-Dīn Maqtūl by writing a commentary on his *Hayākil-i Nūr* and elaborating his illuminative philosophy (*ḥikmat-i ishraq*) 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. Brockelmann has enumerated seventy of his extant works,<sup>2</sup> of which the important ones are listed below: —

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. I, p. 933.

<sup>2</sup> *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur, Suppl.*, Vol. II, 1937, pp. 306–09.

1. *Sharḥ 'Aqā'id-i 'Aḍudiyyah*, Istanbul, 1817.
2. *Sharḥ Tahdhīb al-Mantiq wa al-Kalām*, Lucknow, 1264/1847.
3. *Al-Zaura*, Cairo, 1326/1908.
4. *Risālah fi Ithbāt al-Wājib al-Qadīmah w-al-Jadīdah*.
5. *Risālah fi Tahqīq Naḥs al-Amr*.
6. *Risālah fi Ithbāt al-Jauhar al-Mufāriq*.
7. *Risālah fi 'Adālah*.
8. *Risālah fi al-Hikmah*.
9. *Sharḥ al-Hayākil*.
10. *Anmudhaj al-'Ulūm*.
11. *Al-Masā'il al-'Aṣr fi al-Kalām*.
12. *Akhlāq-i Jalāli*, translated into English under the title of *The Practical Philosophy of the Mohammadan People* by W. F. Thompson, London, 1839.

## B

### ETHICS

Dawwāni was commissioned by Sulṭān Ḥasan Beg to revise the ethical treatise of Ṭūsi with the express aim of "correcting and completing" it from the illuminative (*ishrāqi*) point of view. The structure of *Akhlāq-i Jalāli* is basically the same as that of *Akhlāq-i Nāṣiri*, but in the execution of the work Dawwāni has artistically ornamented it with the Qur'ānic verses, precepts of the Prophet and his Companions, and the moving utterances of the mystics. He not only abbreviated and simplified Ṭūsi'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, Ṭūsi regards ultimate happiness (*sa'ādat-i quṣwa*) as the *summum bonum* of life. His concept of ultimate happiness, because of its reference to the heavenly (*quḍsi*) element, is intrinsically different from the Aristotelian concept of happiness. Dawwāni goes a step further and identifies the moral with the religious ideal. It is with reference to God-intended vicegerency that the Qur'ān distinguishes right from wrong, evaluates knowledge and appreciates power; therefore, vicegerency of God (*khilāfat-i ilāhi*) and not ultimate happiness should be the inspiring ideal of the "noblest of the creation." His moral theory, in other words, is based on the place or 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? Dawwāni 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 subordinating 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.<sup>3</sup>

How is this vicegerency to be accomplished by man? Quoting the Qur'ānic verse, "Whosoever gains wisdom, verily he gains great good," Dawwānī holds that mature wisdom (*ḥikmat-i bālighah*) is the royal road to this exalted position. But 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'ānic doctrine of moderation<sup>4</sup> no less than the Aristotelian doctrine of the mean, Dawwānī 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, Dawwānī has identified it with the bridge over hell (*pul ṣirāt*)—a bridge which is narrower than a hair and sharper than a sword.

Moral struggle presupposes 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. But 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

<sup>3</sup> *Akhlāq-i Jalāli*, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> Qur'ān, ii, 190; v, 2.



mind of the Muslims,<sup>5</sup> 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, eleven, twelve and nineteen species<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup>

Ibn Miskawaih had worked out the details of Plato's theory of virtue, but with Ṭūsi 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 (*radā'at*) as the third generic cause of vice<sup>8</sup> to the Aristotelian excess and deficiency of a State. Ṭūsi 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 (*Kitāb al-Ṭahārat*) and of that of Fārābi. Lastly, Ṭūsi 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, *insān* (associating), and body is not an obstacle but an instrument of the soul for attaining the perfection it is capable of.<sup>9</sup> 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 Shihāb al-Din Maqtūl, Dawwāni finds complete harmony between philosophy and mysticism. What the mystic "sees," the philosopher "knows," and what the latter "knows," the former "sees." He, therefore, gave a Qur'ānic bias to the ethics of Ṭūsi.

## C

### POLITICS

Following Ṭūsi, Dawwāni too has used *Siyāsat-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 Dawwāni as for Ṭūsi. Monarchy 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 *Akhlāq-i Nāṣiri*, Dawwāni adds ten moral principles of his own, which ought to be observed by a king in order to ensure efficient administration of justice.

<sup>5</sup> Briffault, *The Making of Humanity*, p. 192.

<sup>6</sup> *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, pp. 15-20.

<sup>7</sup> *Mizān al-'Amal*, pp. 83-91.

<sup>8</sup> *Akhlāq-i Nāṣiri*, p. 114.

<sup>9</sup> Ivanow, *Taṣawwūrāt*, p. 92.

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 himself. 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 decisions should be based on clemency and condescension rather than on rashness and wrath. Fifthly, in pleasing people 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 so conduct the affairs of the State that none under his authority is guilty of this offence.

D

METAPHYSICS

Like Ṭūsī and others, Dawwānī'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, Dawwānī identifies the first intellect (*'aql-i auwal*) with the original essence of Muḥammad. 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 mustafād*) 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, having sprouted into twigs, branches, and fruit, reverts to its original form of unity possessing collective potentiality. This circular process takes the form of motion (*ḥarkat-i waḍa'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.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Akhlāq-i Jalāli*, pp. 258-59.

Dawwānī's metaphysical treatise, *al-Zaura* is a critical evaluation of *Kalām* and of the teachings of the spiritual leaders, the philosophers, and the mystics, from the illuminative (*ishrāqī*) point of view. He fully appreciates the utility and importance of the first three disciplines but takes a 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.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Al-Zaura*, p. 116.

## Chapter XLVI

### IBN KHALDŪN

#### A

Ibn Khaldūn wrote no major work in fields accepted in the Muslim philosophic tradition, or which he himself considered to be the proper fields of philosophic investigation—logic, mathematics, physics, and metaphysics—politics, ethics, and economics.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, he was not regarded by his contemporaries, or by subsequent Muslim students of philosophy, as a philosopher (*ḥakīm*) in the sense in which al-Fārābī, ibn Sīna, and ibn Ruṣhd were identified as such. Nevertheless, both his contemporaries and later Muslim students of history and society were aware that ibn Khaldūn had made the most significant contribution to these specialized fields through his

<sup>1</sup> The summaries of "many" of the works of ibn Ruṣhd, which he wrote as a young man (reported by ibn al-Khaṭīb, cf. al-Maqqari, *Nafh al-Tib*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyi al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd [10 vols., Cairo, al-Maktabat al-Tijāriyyah, 1367/1947, Vol. VIII, p. 286]), may prove of value in corroborating the philosophic notions found in the "History." Ibn Khaldūn 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.



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 to ibn Khaldūn'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 science 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 Khaldūn 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 Khaldūn 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 Khaldūn'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 Khaldūn'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 Khaldūn through the preceding Greek and Muslim philosophic tradition, which ibn Khaldūn 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 Khaldūn'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), or in fundamental disagreement with it, and hence was the teacher of, not only 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 Khaldūn'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 Khaldūn'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"

(*Kitāb al-'Ibar*).<sup>2</sup> That a work exploring the art of history, and largely devoted to an account of universal history,<sup>3</sup> should concern itself with philosophy is justified by ibn Khaldūn on the ground that history has a dual character: (a) an external (*zāhir*) aspect which is essentially an account of, or information about, past events; and (b) an internal (*bāṭin*) aspect. With respect to this latter aspect, history "is contemplation (theory: *nazar*) and verification (*taḥqīq*), a precise causal explanation of things generated (*kā'ināt*) and their origins (or principles: *mabādi*), and a profound science (*'ilm*) of the qualities and causes of events; therefore, it is a firm and principal part (*aṣl*) of wisdom (*ḥikmah*), and deserves, and is well fitted, to be counted among its sciences."<sup>4</sup>

Whatever ibn Khaldūn'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 Khaldūn studied, considered that the two had become identical in his own time),<sup>5</sup> he frequently uses the expressions "wise men" (*ḥukamā'*) and "philosophers" (*ḥalāsifah*) interchangeably, and it is certain that he identifies the sciences of wisdom with the philosophic sciences.<sup>6</sup> 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 Khaldūn'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"

<sup>2</sup> 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 Khaldūn's Political Philosophy (cf. below, Book IV, Part 6, Chap. XLIX) are to the volumes, pages (and lines) of the Quatremère edition (*Q*) together with the corrections and/or additions supplied by de Slane and F. Rosenthal in their respective French and English translations, both of which reproduce the pagination of the Quatremère edition on the margin. Cf. the Bibliography at the end of this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the account of the parts of the *'Ibar*, below, p. 898.

<sup>4</sup> *Q*. I, 2:17-19.

<sup>5</sup> 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 has become complete, and there being in our time no groups (merely) believed to be wise . . . the contemplation of these sciences must be 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, *Talkhīṣ al-Sama' al-Ṭabī'i* ("Paraphrase of the *Physics*"), MS, Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, *Ḥikmah*, No. 5, fol. 1 of Aḥmad Fu'ād al-Ahwāni, *Talkhīṣ Kitāb al-Nafs* (*Paraphrase du "de Anima"*), (Cairo, Imprimerie Misr, 1950), Introduction, p. 16; *Kitāb al-Sama' al-Ṭabī'i*, (Hyderabad, Dairatul-Maarif, 1365/1945), pp. 2-3.

<sup>6</sup> Cf., e. g., *Q*. II, 385:5, III, 87:3-4 (where both wisdom and philosophy are used together in naming these sciences), 210.



[*ṭabī'īyyah*] and "rational" or "intellectual" [*'aqlīyyah*] sciences)<sup>7</sup> 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."<sup>8</sup>

The philosophic sciences are classified into four fundamental sciences or groups of sciences: logic, mathematics, physics, and metaphysics or the divine science.<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup>

The philosophic sciences reaching the Muslims were those of the Greeks.<sup>11</sup> Of the Greek philosophic schools ibn Khaldūn 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."<sup>12</sup> 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

<sup>7</sup> Q. II, 385, III, 86-87.

<sup>8</sup> Q. II, 385:5-9.

<sup>9</sup> 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. III, 88:12-19). This scheme seems to emphasize the order in which, according to ibn Khaldūn 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. III, 87-88). The third scheme (mathematics, logic) gives a summary exposition of these sciences "one by one" (Q. III, 88:19-20, 93ff.).

<sup>10</sup> Q. III, 88-92.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Q. I, 62-63.

<sup>12</sup> Q. III, 90:14.



they differed with Aristotle on many issues, they generally recognized him as the foremost teacher (*Mu'allim-i Auwal*). Of Muslim philosophers, ibn Khaldūn mentions by name al-Fārābi, ibn Sīna, ibn Bājjah, 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.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, there seems to be little doubt that when ibn Khaldūn 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 which he enumerates. These are the Greek philosophic science (of the Socratic school)<sup>14</sup> 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. Khaldūn 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 (*'umrān*) 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."<sup>15</sup> The primary cause of errors in transmitting historical information (and, consequently, in writing an untruthful account of history), thus, becomes ignorance of the nature of the states

<sup>13</sup> Q. III, 90-93.

<sup>14</sup> 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-Shahrastāni, *al-Milal w-al-Nihal*, ed. Aḥmad Fahmi Muḥammad, 3 Vols., Cairo, Maktabat al-Ḥusain al-Tijāriyyah, 1367-1947-48, Vol. II, pp. 104-07, 231 ff.

<sup>15</sup> Q. I, 56:6-13.

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 natures of engendered [existents] and the states in existence"<sup>16</sup> 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)."<sup>17</sup>

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 Khaldūn 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."<sup>18</sup> Logic is an organon of thought and a propaedeutical science making rules used in the contemplation of all generated things, and in

<sup>16</sup> Q. I, 57-58.

<sup>17</sup> Q. I, 61:7-19.

<sup>18</sup> Q. III, 87:5-9.

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 Khaldūn 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-Fārābi, ibn Sina, and ibn Ruṣhd. Thus, logic for him deals with 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."<sup>19</sup> Ibn Khaldūn doubts the validity of the attempts of Muslim dialectical theologians (*Mutakallimūn*) who concentrate on purely formal syllogism and forego the fruits of the works of the ancients in the field of material logic.<sup>20</sup> Secondly, ibn Khaldūn 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.<sup>21</sup> 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,<sup>22</sup> 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

<sup>19</sup> Q. III, 108-12.

<sup>20</sup> Q. III, 112-16.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Q. III, 87-88, 93-108.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. above p. 893



science and counted among the natural sciences, and (b) how does ibn Khaldūn establish it as a firm and principal part of natural philosophy?<sup>23</sup>

D

Natural science is defined by ibn Khaldūn as follows:

"Then [after logic], the contemplation among them [i.e., the philosophers] turns either to: [a] the sensibles, 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."<sup>24</sup>

This is explained further in the second and more elaborate definition supplied by ibn Khaldūn 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 (springs, 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."<sup>25</sup>

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 wellknown and reliable of these being ibn Sīna in the corresponding parts of his three major works (*Shifā'*, *Najāt*, and *Ishārāt*), and ibn Rushd in his summaries of, and commentaries on, Aristotle's works on physical sciences; with the difference that ibn Sīna seems to disagree with Aristotle on many problems of natural science, while ibn Rushd remains in close agreement with him.<sup>26</sup>

These statements point to a conception of the character and scope of natural science, and the order of its parts, which is not ibn Khaldūn's own, but one which was elaborated by ibn Sīna and ibn Rushd on the basis of a tradition initiated in Muslim philosophy by al-Fārābī, 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*,<sup>27</sup> 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

<sup>23</sup> See above, p. 890.

<sup>24</sup> Q. III, 87:9-15.

<sup>25</sup> Q. III, 116:12-17.

<sup>26</sup> Q. III, 116-17. This judgment is based on ibn Sīnā's own statements and the accusations levelled against him by ibn Rushd.

<sup>27</sup> *Meteorologica* I, i. 338a 20-39a 9.

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*).<sup>28</sup>

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 within the scope of the science of the soul. This raises important problems as 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, arrive at explanations similar in character to those given by natural science—taking this to be more fitting to the purpose of Aristotle.<sup>29</sup>

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

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, al-Fārābī, *Falsafah Aristūṭālīs* (The Philosophy of Aristotle), MS., Istanbul, Aya Sofia, No. 4833, fols. 34b ff.; ibn Sīna, "al-Nafs," *Shifā'*, II, vi. "Psychologie d'Ibn Sina (Avicenne) d'après son œuvre *Al-ḥifā'*," ed. Ján Bakšs, Prague, L'Académie Tchèque 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-Najāt*, 2nd printing, Cairo, 1357/1938, Part II; 'Uyūn al-Hikmah (Fontes Sapientiae), ed. Abdurrahman Badawi (Mémorial Avicenne V), Cairo, Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1954, pp. 16-46; ibn Rushd, *Kitāb al-Āthār al-'Ulwiyyah*, Hyderabad, Dairatul-Maarif, 1365/1945, pp. 2-5; "al-Nafs," *op. cit.*, pp. 1-5.

<sup>29</sup> "al-Nafs," *op. cit.*, p. 3.

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.<sup>30</sup>

Human association or culture, as ibn Khaldūn 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 Khaldūn 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.<sup>31</sup> 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 found<sup>32</sup> 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.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. the references given in note 42.

<sup>31</sup> Below, Chap. XLIX.

<sup>32</sup> To his surprise, for he expected to find such a science elaborated by them; and only they could have elaborated it.



E

The "History" was originally divided by ibn Khaldūn into an "Introduction" (*Muqaddimah*) 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 Khaldūn's own time, and Book Three contains the history of the Berbers in western Islam.<sup>33</sup>

*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.<sup>34</sup> 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 to be known as the *Muqaddimah*, i.e., 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 Khaldūn explains, the writing of a correct historical account depends upon a prior understanding of 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."<sup>35</sup> 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.).<sup>36</sup> 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.<sup>37</sup> Apart from the general usages mentioned above, ibn Khaldūn uses *muqaddimah* in this specific "logical" sense,<sup>38</sup> 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.

<sup>33</sup> Q. II, 16.

<sup>34</sup> Al-Tahānawī, *Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn* (A Dictionary of Technical Terms), Eds. M. Wajīh et al., Calcutta, Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1853-62, pp. 1215:21, 1217:2-6.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1216:4ff. (Cf. Q. I, 308:7-8, 345:20).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1216:20-1217:2.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1217:5ff.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Q. I, 71-78.

1. *Association is necessary for man.*—Ibn Khaldūn 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.”<sup>39</sup> It is significant, however, that ibn Khaldūn substitutes, here at the outset, “necessary” for “by nature”; and his explanation of this 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 natures” 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 organizations 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.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, ibn Khaldūn, 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 philosophers,<sup>41</sup> referring to the appropriate passages of *De Anima* and the commentaries on them.<sup>42</sup> On the surface, ibn Khaldūn’s only objection 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

<sup>39</sup> Q. I, 68:14–16.

<sup>40</sup> Q. I, 69–72.

<sup>41</sup> Q. I, 68:14–16, 70:11–12, 72:3 and 7.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Q. II, 368–70, where the same argument is present in connection with the practical intellect, with a similar reference to the philosophers. Aristotle, *De Anima*, III, 4–7; ibn Sina, *Nafs*, pp. 198ff.; *Najāt*, pp. 163–65; *Kitāb al-Ishārāt w-al-Tanbihāt* (Le livre de théorèmes et des avertissements), ed. J. Forget, Leyde, E. J. Brill, 1892, pp. 134–37; *Uyūn*, pp. 40–46; ibn Rushd, *Nafs*, pp. 69–72.

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 the 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.<sup>43</sup> Here, ibn Khaldūn 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;<sup>44</sup> 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-Mas'ūdi, and al-Idrīsī.<sup>45</sup> By calling these astronomers and geographers "wise men" or philosophers, he indicates that their investigations fall within the scope of natural philosophy. It is also in these works that the word *'umrān*, which ibn Khaldūn 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.<sup>46</sup> The only specific authority he invokes here is ibn Sīnā's *rajaz* poem on medicine.<sup>47</sup> 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.<sup>48</sup> 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 Khaldūn 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.<sup>49</sup>

4. *Influence of the atmosphere upon the habits of character [akhlāq] of*

<sup>43</sup> Q. I, 73-148.

<sup>44</sup> Q. I, 73, 75, 82-85, 88-89, 94-95.

<sup>45</sup> Q. I, 75, 82, 84-88, 92, 93, 97

<sup>46</sup> Q. I, 48ff., 151, 153-54.

<sup>47</sup> Q. I, 153.

<sup>48</sup> Q. I, 151, 154.

<sup>49</sup> Q. I, 149-50, 153-54.



*human beings.*—Ibn Khaldūn 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.<sup>50</sup> 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'ūdi (copying Galen and al-Kindi), which attributes these habits of characters to the weakness or the power of the brain, is considered inconclusive and undemonstrated.<sup>51</sup>

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.<sup>52</sup> This natural causal explanation is based on experience and confirmed by the students of agriculture.<sup>53</sup>

6. *Classes of those who perceive the "unseen" (ghaib) among human beings by natural disposition or by exercise.*<sup>54</sup>—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 pedigree, and (e) marvels and miracles. The difference between the dialectical theologians and the philosophers concerning how marvels and miracles take place and concerning their significance, is presented primarily in terms of whether they 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] (*khawāriq*) emanate through his [i.e., the prophet's] power and the obedience of the elements to him in the generation [of these invasions of nature]."<sup>55</sup>

As distinct from this introduction, ibn Khaldūn presents his own statement (*qawl*) in which he sets down "the interpretation of the true meaning (*ḥaqīqah*) of prophecy as explained by men of verification (*muḥaqqiqūn*)," and mentions the real meaning of soothsaying, dream-vision, etc. The verified interpretation

<sup>50</sup> Q. I, 155–56.

<sup>51</sup> Q. I, 157.

<sup>52</sup> Q. I, 157–61, 165.

<sup>53</sup> Q. I, 164.

<sup>54</sup> Q. I, 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.

<sup>55</sup> Q. I, 170:8–9.

which ibn **Khaldūn** 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 (*'ālam*) and the observable effects of unseen powers; sensible bodies, the elements, the spheres, the generables (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 or calculative (*nātiqah*) 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.”<sup>56</sup> 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 **Khaldūn** proceeds to classify and explain the various types of the activity of the soul in relation to the unseen world.

Thus, ibn **Khaldūn**'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.<sup>57</sup> 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.”<sup>58</sup>

## F

These, then, are the premises, and the only premises, of ibn **Khaldūn**'s new science of culture. Even a superficial examination of them reveals that

<sup>56</sup> Q. I, 176:9-18. Cf. Macdonald, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

<sup>57</sup> Q. I, 181, 186-87, 190, 192-93.

<sup>58</sup> Q. I, 196, 203-04.

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 presuppositionless science. It presupposes not only all the natural sciences that have provided it with its 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 Khaldūn's new science of culture within the Muslim philosophic tradition thus indicates beyond reasonable doubt that (a) ibn Khaldūn 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 specially, all of its premises are drawn exclusively from the various natural sciences, and, thus, it is indeed firmly grounded in these sciences because it presupposes their conclusions, and builds itself on that firm foundation.

Ibn Khaldūn'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 Khaldūn 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 Khaldūn'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 XLIX of this work.

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## Part 5. The Middle-Roaders

### Chapter XLVII

#### THE SCHOOL OF IŞPAHĀN

##### 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 Twelve-Imām Shī'ism in any of the European languages.<sup>1</sup> As a result, not only Westerners but even the Muslims whose contact with the Shī'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 Shī'ism, especially in Persia. Inasmuch as it was mostly in the Shī'ah world that much of the intellectual life of Islam, especially in the sciences and traditional wisdom (*Hikmat*),<sup>2</sup> took refuge after the seventh/thirteenth 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 Shī'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 is the intellectual life of Shī'ism in this period one of the apogees of Muslim history, producing

<sup>1</sup> A few authors like Gobineau, Donaldson, and E. G. Browne have touched upon certain aspects of Shī'ism in their writings; the only European author, however, who has delved with serious intention into the Shī'ah intellectual world, is Henri Corbin, who during the past twenty years has done much to introduce the rich heritage of Shī'ism, especially as it has developed in Persia, to the Western world.

<sup>2</sup> For the meaning of this word which denotes wisdom, refer to the chapter on Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī Maqtūl.

sages like Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzi, 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 Khaldūn 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 intellectual "vacuum." Our aim in this chapter is hardly one of filling this lacuna; rather it is to give some of the background and intellectual perspectives of Ṣafawid Persia, where Twelve-Imām Shī'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 Ṣafawids 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 Shaikh Ṣafi al-Dīn Ardibīlī,<sup>3</sup> the Ṣafawids soon developed into a well-organized political force which was to conquer the whole of Persia and to weld it into a political unity for the first time since the fall of the Sāssānid Empire. The Sufi order continued under the spiritual direction of a series of descendants of Shaikh Ṣafi, and its members in the ninth/fifteenth century adopted a twelve-sided red hat for which they became known as the qizil-bāsh (red heads). The order grew in power in the politically disorganized Persia of the ninth/fifteenth century and under Ismā'il (892/1487-930/1523-24) succeeded in defeating the local rulers and unifying the whole of Persia.

Shāh Ismā'il was crowned in Tabriz in 905/1499 marking the beginning of the reign of the Ṣafawids which was to last over two centuries until in 1133/1720 the Afghāns conquered Persia, sacked the Ṣafawid capital at Iṣpahān, and killed Shāh Ḥusain, the last of the Ṣafawid rulers. During this period Persia, which until now had been partly Shī'ah and partly Sunni, wavering between these two orthodox perspectives of the Islamic revelation, became completely Twelve-Imām Shī'ah, and Shī'ism, which had until now remained a minority creed, found itself as the official religion of an empire and had to face political and social issues it had never been forced to face before.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Shaikh Ṣafi (647/1249-735/1334), one of the most important of Shī'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 Shaikh Zāhid Gilāni, he was already a significant figure in his own day as testified by the biographical works like the Ṣafwat al-Ṣafā' by ibn Bazzāz and Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh's letters to the saint and to the governor of Ardibil in his Munsha'āt-i Rashīdi. See also, E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, Vol. IV, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1924, Chap. II.

<sup>4</sup> For a history of the Ṣafawid period, see E. G. Browne, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV; L. Lockhart, *The Fall of the Ṣafawid Dynasty and the Afghān Occupation of Persia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1958, and the traditional Persian sources of which some of the more important include the Ṣafwat al-Ṣafā' by ibn Bazzāz,

No longer molested by an external force and faced with a large number of practical social problems, Shī'ah theology, *Kalām*, which had always served as the walls of the citadel of the faith,<sup>5</sup> 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 Shī'ah culture of Persia prepared the background for the flourishing of the doctrines of *ishrāqi* gnosis (illuministic wisdom),<sup>6</sup> philosophy, and the sciences. The efforts of the chain of sages after Khawājah Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī, who had kept the study of these subjects alive, suddenly found the necessary environment for the development of this form of wisdom.<sup>7</sup> We have connected this wisdom symbolically with the school of Iṣpahān, which spread throughout Ṣafawid 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 Iṣpahān, the Ṣafawid capital, but also other cities like Shirāz, Kāshān, Qazwīn, and Tabriz. Furthermore, some of the most important figures like Shaikh Bahā' al-Dīn Āmili, and Sayyid Ni'matullah Jazā'iri, who played a vital role in the establishment of Shī'ism in Persia, were Arabs from Āmil near Damascus and Bahrain, two centres which had been preserving the Shī'ah tradition for centuries.<sup>8</sup>

The Shī'ahs have developed the Ja'fari school of Law named after the sixth Imām, Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, as well as theology (*Kalām*) and other traditional studies, namely, language, history, Hadīth and commentary upon the Qur'ān, jurisprudence (*Fiqh*), principles of jurisprudence (*Uṣūl*),<sup>9</sup> theology,<sup>10</sup> and

*Aḥsan al-Tawārīkh* by Ḥasan Baik Ruḡlū, *Zubdat al-Tawārīkh* by Muḥammad Muḥsin ibn 'Abd al-Karīm, and the universal history *Nāsikh al-Tawārīkh* by Mirza Taqi Sipīhr.

<sup>5</sup> The purpose of theology is to protect the truths 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.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the meaning of *ishrāqi* wisdom, refer to the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtūl.

<sup>7</sup> The reason why the pre-Ṣafawid sages of Persia like 'Alī Turkah Iṣpahāni and ibn abi Jumhūr as well as the Ṣafawid authors themselves have been neglected in the Western world, is that the quality of their wisdom is primarily gnostic (*'irfāni*) like that of Shaikh al-Akbar Muḥyi al-Dīn 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.

<sup>8</sup> For the name of some of these Arab Shī'ah scholars, see E. B. Browne, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, Chap. VIII.

<sup>9</sup> The science of *Uṣūl* as an independent science has grown into monumental proportions only in the past few centuries reaching its height in the hands of Shaikh Murtaḍa Anṣārī, the famous doctor of the Qājār period, who only a century ago made *Uṣūl* into a science matching *Kalām* in its logical subtleties.

<sup>10</sup> Shī'ah theology reached its height in the seventh/thirteenth century in the hands of men like Khawājah Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī and 'Allāmah-i Ḥilli.



*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, nor with theosophy which has unfortunately become identified in the English-speaking world with pseudo-spiritualist movements, nor with theology.<sup>11</sup> As developed in the Ṣafawid 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 Imāms, especially as contained in the *Nahj al-Balāghah* by the first Imām 'Ali, the *ishrāqi* 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 (*tajrīd*) and illumination of the intellect. They contain as a necessary basis some preparation in logic which they share with the Peripatetics (*Mashā'iyūn*), 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 Ṣafawids prepared the ground for the intellectual revival of the school of Iṣpahān are usually not much better known outside Persia than the Ṣafawid sages themselves. They include a series of philosophers and scientists like Khawājah Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsi, better known in the Western world as a scientist than a philosopher and theologian, Quṭb al-Dīn Rāzi, Mir Sayyid Sharīf Jurjāni, Jalāl al-Dīn Dawwāni, and ibn Turkah Iṣpahāni,<sup>12</sup> all of whom sought to reconstruct Muslim intellectual life through a gnostic interpretation of the writings of ibn Sīna, Suhrawardi, and the Sufis, and who carried further the attempt already begun by al-Fārābi, extended by ibn Sīna in his Qur'ānic commentaries, and carried a step further by Suhrawardi, to correlate faith (*īmān*) with philosophy.<sup>13</sup> The precursors of the Ṣafawid sages include also a series of pure gnostics,

<sup>11</sup> See the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtūl. Generally, *Hikmah* in Arabic or *Hikmat* in Persian means wisdom in addition to the particular sense given to it as a divine science.

<sup>12</sup> For the series of commentators and expositors of *ishrāqi* wisdom, see the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtūl.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

both *Shī'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.<sup>14</sup> These Sufis include Ṣadr al-Dīn Qunawī, Fakhr al-Dīn 'Irāqī, 'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī, 'Ala al-Daulah Simnānī,<sup>15</sup> 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmi,<sup>16</sup> and two others who are especially important in introducing the gnostic doctrines of ibn 'Arabi into the *Shī'ah* world, ibn abi Jumhūr and Mulla Ḥaidar 'Ali Amūli.<sup>17</sup> One must also mention another great spiritual leader, Maulāna Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī whose influence has extended throughout Persia during the past seven centuries.

C

MAJOR FIGURES OF THE SCHOOL OF IṢPAHĀN

To write down even the mere names and works of all the important authors of the Ṣafawid 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 Zayn al-Dīn ibn 'Ali ibn Aḥmad Jaba'i (911/1505–966/1558), commonly known as the second martyr (*shahīd-i thāni*) because of his having been put to death by the Ottomans, the author of numerous treatises which still form a part of *Shī'ah* religious education; 'Ali ibn 'Abd al-'Ali 'Āmili known as Muḥaqqiq-i Karakī (d. 945/1538), the author of *al-Najmīyyah* in theology and many other treatises and commentaries, the two Majlīsīs, Muḥammad Taqī (1003/1594–1070/1659), the author of *Raudat al-Muttaqīn*, and his son Muḥammad Bāqir (1037/1628–1110/1699), the greatest of the Ṣafawid theologians and scholars to whom we shall turn later.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> For an account of the doctrines of ibn 'Arabi, see T. Burckardt (Tr.), *La sagesse des prophètes*, Paris, 1955; also *idem*, *Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*, tr. M. Matheson, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1959, which is an excellent general introduction to ibn 'Arabi's school of 'Sufism. See also Corbin, *L'imagination créatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn 'Arabi*, Flammarion, Paris, 1958, which contains some useful chapters on his ideas and their spread in the East.

<sup>15</sup> See S. M. Ṣadr, *Shaykh 'Ala al-Daulah Simnāni*, Dānish Press, Teheran, 1334/1915.

<sup>16</sup> This great Persian Sufi poet and sage has written several well-known summaries of ibn 'Arabi's doctrine including the *Lawā'ih* translated by Whinfeld and Qazwini, Luzac & Co., London, 1928, the *Ashā'at al-Lama'at*, and the *Naqat al-Nuṣūṣ*.

<sup>17</sup> The *Kitāb al-Mujli* of ibn abi Jumhūr and *Jāmi' al-Asrār* and *Jāmi' al-Ḥaqā'iq* of Mulla Ḥaidar 'Ali Āmuli are among the most important sources of *Shī'ah* gnostic doctrines.

<sup>18</sup> The best traditional sources for these earlier *Shī'ah* authors are the *Rawdat al-Jannāt* of Muḥammad Bāqir Khunsāri, lithographed edition, Teheran, 1306, 1888; *al-Dhārī'ah* of Āgha Buzurg Tihirāni, al-Gharra Press, Najaf, 1355/1936 on

As for the *ḥukamā'*, those who cultivated this particular form of wisdom which they called *Hikmat*, they include Ṣadr al-Dīn Shirāzi, better known as Mulla Ṣadra, to whom a separate chapter has been devoted in the present work, Sayyid Aḥmad 'Alawi, Mīr Dāmād's son-in-law and the commentator of ibn Sinā's *Shifā'*, Mulla Muḥammad Bāqir Sabziwāri (d. 1090/1669), the commentator of the *Ishārāt* and the metaphysics of the *Shifā'*, and of the *Dhakhīrat al-Ma'āfi*, Rajab 'Ali Tabrizi (d. 1080 ?/1670), a thinker with nominalist tendencies and the author of *Risāleh-i Ithbāt-i Wujūd*, 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhījī (d. 1071/1661), a student of Mulla Ṣadra and author of some of the most important books on *Hikmat* in Persian like the *Guhar Murād*, *Sarmāyeh-i Imān*, and the *Mashāriq al-Ilhām*, glosses upon the commentary of Khawājah Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsi upon the *Ishārāt*, and a commentary upon Suhrawardī's *Hayākil al-Nūr*, and Qādi Sa'id Qumi (1049/1640-1103 ?/1692), a gnostic and theologian, the author of the *Arba'ināt*, *Kilid-i Bihisht*, and a commentary upon the *Athulujīyya* attributed to Aristotle but now known to be a paraphrase 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 Ṣafawid period. These figures include Shaikh Bahā' al-Dīn 'Āmili, Mīr Dāmād,<sup>19</sup> perhaps the central figure in the school of Iṣpahān, Mīr abu al-Qāsim Findiriski, Mulla Muḥsin Fa'id Kāshī, 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 *Gulshan-i Rāz* by Muḥammad Lāhījī, which is one of the best books on Sufism in Persian, and the works by the masters of other Sufi orders like the *Tuḥfih-i 'Abbāsi* by the *dhahabi* shaikh, Shaikh Mu'adhdhin Khurāsāni.

Shaikh Bahā' al-Dīn 'Āmili.—The most colourful figure of the Ṣafawid period was without doubt Bahā' al-Dīn 'Āmili, better known as Shaikh-i Bahā'i.<sup>20</sup> His father was the leader of the Shi'ah community of 'Āmil and a student of Shahīd-i Thāni. After his teacher's death in 966/1559, he set out with his son towards Persia. Bahā' al-Dīn, who was born in Baalbek in 953/1546, was then only thirteen years old and well qualified to master the Persian language. In Persia he continued his studies in the religious sciences, poetry,

the *Tārīkh-i 'Ālam Ārā-yi 'Abbāsi* of Iskandar Baig Munshi, Teheran, 1334/1915; and of more recent composition the *Raiḥānat al-Adab* of Muḥammad 'Ali Tabrizi, Sa'di Press, Teheran, 1331-33 Solar; the *Qiṣaṣ al-'Ulamā'* of Mirza Muḥammad Tunikābuni, Islāmiyyah Press, Teheran, 1313 Solar; *Fihrist-i Kutub-i Ihdā'i-i Āqā-yi Mishkāt* by M. B. Dāniṣh Pazhūh, University Press, Teheran, 1335/1916; see also H. Corbin, "Confession extatiques de Mīr Dāmād" in the *Melanges Louis Massignon*, Institut Français de Damas, Damas, 1956, pp. 331-78.

<sup>19</sup> See Corbin, *op. cit.*, pp. 333 ff.

<sup>20</sup> His name should not in any way be connected with the heterodox Bahā'i movement of the thirteenth/nineteenth century.



and *Hikmat* and soon became the leading scholar of his day and the *Shaikh al-Islām* of Ispahān. Despite his nearness to the Court and necessary participation in 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 the *hajj*.<sup>21</sup>

*Shaikh Bahā'* al-Din was the leading theologian and jurist of his time and the leader of the '*ulamā*' of Ispahān. He was at the same time an outstanding Sufi, one of the best of the Ṣafawid poets who revived the 'Irāqī style and wrote poetry in the tradition of Rūmi and Ḥāfiẓ, the leading architect of the Ṣafawid period, whose masterpieces like the *Shāh* mosque of Ispahān still stand among the summits of Muslim architecture,<sup>22</sup> and the greatest mathematician and astronomer of his period.

In an age when the theologians, jurists, *Hakīms*, natural historians, sophists, logicians, and Sufis were well-marked groups, sometimes in external conflict with one another, *Shaikh-i Bahā'* was respected by all these groups, from the wandering dervishes, the *qalandars*, to the Court '*ulamā*' each of which considered the *Shaikh* 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 *Shaikh-i Bahā'*'s writings has become a standard source of reference in its own field. Some of his important works include *Jāmi'-i 'Abbāsi* on theology in Persian; *Fawā'id al-Ṣamadīyyah* on Arabic grammar which is still in wide use; a treatise on algebra, the *Khulāṣah fi al-Ḥisāb*;<sup>23</sup> several treatises on astronomy including the *Tashrīḥ al-Aflāk*; a treatise on the astrolabe, '*Urwat al-Wuthqa*'; general Qur'ānic commentaries; many works on various aspects of the '*Sharī'ah*'; the *Kashkūl*, a collection of Arabic and Persian writings which ranks among the most famous Sufi works; and a series of *mathnawīs* like *Bread and Sweet*, *Cat and Mouse*, *Milk and Sugar*, and the *Tūti-Nāmeḥ*.<sup>24</sup>

It is especially in the didactic poems, the *mathnawīs*, that the particular genius of *Shaikh-i Bahā'* for expressing sublime truth in simple language and in witty anecdotes becomes manifest. In these poems his spirit is very similar

<sup>21</sup> For an account of the life and works of *Shaikh-i Bahā'*, see *Tārīkh-i 'Ālam Ārā-yi 'Abbāsi*, pp. 155-57; also Naficy, *Aḥwāl wa Ash'ār-i Fārsi-i Shaikh-i Bahā'*, Eqbāl Press, Teheran, 1316/1898.

<sup>22</sup> *Shaikh-i Bahā'* is said to have built a bath-house named *Gul Khan* which had always hot water without any fuel being used in it. When it was pulled down, people discovered a single candle burning under the water tank.

<sup>23</sup> 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 Muḥammad Amin Najafi Hijāzi Qumi and into German by G. H. F. Nesselmann who published the text and the translation in Berlin in 1843. *Shaikh-i Bahā'* revived the study of mathematics and astronomy in Persia after one hundred years of neglect, having himself learnt these sciences in Herāt.

<sup>24</sup> For a list of the nearly ninety works attributed to him, see his *Kulliyāt-i Ash'ār-i Fārsi*, ed. M. Tauhidipūr, Maḥmūdi Press, Teheran, 1336/1917, pp. 42-45.

to that of Maulāna Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī whom he follows in spirit as well as in form. In the long poem 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 esoteric knowledge. Shaikh-i Bahā'i also emphasizes throughout the work the supremacy of intellectual intuition over discursive knowledge. As an example we mention below the story of a Mu'tazilite and a Sufi who appears in the guise of a madman named Buhlūl.

During the reign of one of the Caliphs, a Mu'tazilite was chosen as the Imām of a mosque. One day Buhlūl entered the mosque with a brick hidden under his dress and joined the congregation after the prayers to listen to the Imām's sermon. The Imām 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, Buhlūl became infuriated but held back his anger. The Imām continued his sermon by saying that both good and evil are by divine consent. Again Buhlūl became angry but once again succeeded in remaining quiet. The Imām added that on the Day of Judgment man would be actually able to see God. Upon hearing this, Buhlūl took out the brick from under his dress, threw it at the Imām breaking his head and ran away. The Caliph raging with fury was about to call for Buhlūl when Buhlūl himself 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 Imām. Buhlūl answered by pleading to the Caliph to give him permission to explain how by his act he had done nothing discourteous, and when given the permission addressed the bleeding Imām and said that since according to his own words a thing cannot harm its own kind, a brick cannot harm the Imām's head since both are made of clay. Furthermore, he asked the Imām if he had felt any pain upon being hit on the head and if he could see the pain. Upon getting the reply that the Imām did not see the pain, Buhlūl asked how could a man unable to see pain, a creation of God, see the Creator. Finally, Buhlūl added that since all acts are done through divine consent, God must have given consent to his throwing the brick and so the Imām should not complain of an act to which God had consented. Upon hearing this, the Imām, the symbol of rationalism, had to remain silent before Buhlūl, the symbol of intellectual intuition.<sup>25</sup>

The writings of Shaikh-i Bahā'i are also replete with passages about the nothingness of all human knowledge as against divine gnosis. For example, in the poem *Nān wa Ḥalwah* (Bread and Sweet) he says:

Formal science is nothing but altercation;  
It results in neither intoxication<sup>26</sup> nor contemplation.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 164-66.

<sup>26</sup> Intoxication symbolizes ecstasy and spiritual union.

It continually brings congelation to man's nature;  
 What's more, the Maulāna<sup>27</sup> 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 thyself  
 With which science, O accomplished man!  
 There is no science but the science of love,<sup>28</sup>  
 The rest is the deception of the wretched Satan.  
 There is no science but the Qur'ānic commentary and Hadīth,  
 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 Rāzi.<sup>29</sup>  
 All who do not love the face of the beautiful  
 The saddle and the rein are appropriate for them.<sup>30</sup>  
 That is, he who does not have love for the Friend,  
 Bring for him the saddle and the headstall.<sup>31</sup>  
 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, O! villain,  
 That thou carriest the Devil's cleaning stone in thy pocket.  
 Wash the tablet of the heart from the Devil's excrement;  
 O! 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.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Maulāna Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmi is commonly referred to as Maulawi in Persian. This verse refers to Maulawī's well-known rejection of rationalism in favour of gnosis (The leg of the rationalist is a wooden leg . . .).

<sup>28</sup> Love symbolizes gnosis or the science which comes through contemplation and illumination rather than analysis and discursive thought.

<sup>29</sup> Reference is to the famous theologian Imām Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzi.

<sup>30</sup> This verse is in Arabic and is repeated immediately with only a little change in Persian.

<sup>31</sup> That is, he is like a beast of burden.

<sup>32</sup> Reference is to the wisdom of the Sufis as contrasted with that of the Greeks, the *Hikmat-i Imāni* and the *Hikmat-i Yūnāni*.



How long with this jurisprudence and baseless theology,  
 Wilt thou empty thy brain? O! 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 next<sup>33</sup>  
 Called the left-over of the believer a remedy, O! grieved  
 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.<sup>34</sup>

Not only does Shaikh-i Bahā'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 this 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.<sup>35</sup> In the same *Nān wa Halwah*, while commenting upon the Prophet's saying: "The love of the country comes from faith," he writes:<sup>36</sup>

"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.  
 O! 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.

<sup>33</sup> The Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be peace).

<sup>34</sup> Shaikh-i Bahā'i, *Kulliyāt . . .*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>35</sup> 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 Suhrawardī's gnostic tracts like *Qissah Ghurbat al-Gharbiyyah*; see H. Corbin, *Avicenne et le récit visionnaire*, Institut Franco-Iranien, Teheran, and A. Maisonneuve, Paris, 1952-54, Vol. I, Chap. 3, and Suhrawardī, *Oeuvres philosophiques et mystiques*, Vol. II, Institut Franco-Iranien, Teheran, and A. Maisonneuve, Paris, 1954, Prologue by H. Corbin.

<sup>36</sup> Shaikh-i Bahā'i, *Kulliyāt . . .*, p. 23.

How long wilt thou, O! victorious falcon,  
 Remain away from the sphere of the spirit?  
 It is a shame for thee, O! artful one,  
 To shed thy feathers in this ruin.  
 How long, O! hoopoe of the city of Saba,<sup>37</sup>  
 Wilt thou remain in estrangement with feet tied?  
 Seek to untie the cords from thy feet,  
 And fly where 'there is no space.'<sup>38</sup>

Shaikh-i Bahā'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 *Hikmat* as Mir Dāmād or Mulla Muḥsin Faiḍ 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 serves 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 Dāmād*.—One of the most influential figures of the Ṣafawid school was Muḥammad Bāqir Dāmād, better known as Mir Dāmād. He and his pupil, Mulla Ṣadra, must be considered to be the greatest *Hakīms* of the period. Being the grandson of Muḥaqqiq-i Karaki and descendant of a distinguished Shī'ah family, Mir Dāmād received the best education possible in all branches of religious learning. His most famous teacher was Shaikh Ḥusain ibn 'Abd al-Ṣamad 'Āmili, the father of Shaikh-i Bahā'i, who later on became his most intimate friend and companion at the Ṣafawid Court.<sup>39</sup> Mir Dāmād soon became a leading authority on *Kalām*, *Hikmat*, *Fiqh* and even in the occult and natural sciences.<sup>40</sup> In Ispahān he attracted numerous students to himself. His most famous disciples were Mulla Ṣadra, Sayyid Aḥmad 'Alawi, the commentator of the *Shifā'*, Mulla Khalīl Qazwīni whose commentary upon the *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* is very well known in Persia, and Quṭb al-Dīn Ashkiwāri, the author of a universal sacred history and several philosophical and gnostic

<sup>37</sup> A city in the south of Arabia with which the name of the Queen of Sheba is associated.

<sup>38</sup> *Lā makān*, meaning beyond the world of cosmic manifestation. Suhrawardi refers to this point which is the top of the cosmic mountain *Qāf*, as *nā kuja ābād*; see Suhrawardi, "Le bruissement de l'aile de Gabriel," tr. H. Corbin and P. Kraus, *Journal Asiatique*, Juillet-Sept., 1935, pp. 41-42.

<sup>39</sup> For an account of the life and writings of Mir Dāmād, see M. Tunikābuni, *Qiṣaṣ al-'Ulamā*, pp. 333-35; *Raiḥanat al-Adab*, Vol. IV, pp. 117-21; *Raudat al-Jannāt*, pp. 114-16; *Tārīkh-i 'Ālam Ārā-yi 'Abbāsi*, pp. 146-47; Dānīsh Pazhūh, *Fihrist . . .*, Vol. III, 1, p. 152 and the good Introduction to his life and thought by H. Corbin, "Confessions extatiques de Mir Dāmād," pp. 340ff.

<sup>40</sup> It is said that he had much interest in the life of the bees and had accumulated a good deal of observational data about them.

treatises.<sup>41</sup> Mīr Dāmād more than anyone else was responsible for the revivification of ibn Sīnā's philosophy and *ishrāqī* wisdom within the context of Shī'ism and for laying the ground for the monumental work of Mulla Ṣadra. Mīr Dāmād 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.<sup>42</sup> He has been entitled the Third Teacher (*Mu'allim-i Thālith*) after Aristotle and Fārābi.

The writings of Mīr Dāmād, 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 *Kalām*; works on *Fiqh* like *Shāri' al-Najāt*; *al-Ufuq al-Mubīn* on Being, time, and eternity; *al-Ṣirāt al-Mustaqīm* on the relation between the created and the eternal; *Taqwīm al-Īmān* on Being, creation, and God's knowledge; several other major treatises on *Hikmat* including the *Qabasāt*,<sup>43</sup> *Taqdīsāt*, *Jadhawāt*, and *Sidrat al-Muntaha*,<sup>44</sup> several Qur'ānic commentaries like *Amānat-i Ilāhi*; commentaries upon the *Istihṣār* of Khwājah Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsi and the metaphysics of the *Shifā'*; the *Khalsat al-Malakūt* on gnosis;<sup>45</sup> and a collection of poems in Persian and Arabic including the *Mashāriq al-Anwār*, written under the pen name, *Ishrāq*. After a life-time spent in writing, teaching, and reading the Qur'ān to which he was much devoted, and having prepared the ground for the whole group of sages, especially Mulla Ṣadra, who were to carry his ideas to their ultimate perfection, Mīr Dāmād died on the way between Najaf and Karbala in Iraq in 1041/1631.

The thought of Mīr Dāmād is marked by two features which distinguish him from the other *Hakīms* of the period, the first the organization of his treatises and the second the notion of eternal creation, *hudūth-i dahri*, which is the central and ever-recurring theme in his writings. As for the organization of his works, like the *Qabasāt* and *Taqdīsāt*, it differs for the most part from

<sup>41</sup> For an account of these and other students of Mīr Dāmād, see H. Corbin, *op. cit.*, pp. 345-46.

<sup>42</sup> 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 récit d'initiation et l'hermétisme en Iran," *Eranos Jahrbuch*, Vol. XVII, 1949, pp. 136-37. For the symbols of the Orient and Occident in *ishrāqī* wisdom see the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtūl.

<sup>43</sup> This major work has been commented upon several times. One of its most curious commentaries is that of Muḥammad ibn 'Alī Riḍa ibn Āqājāni, one of the students of Mulla Ṣadra; it runs over a thousand pages.

<sup>44</sup> 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 Mīr Dāmād's student, Sayyid Aḥmad 'Alawi, although in the *Jadhawāt* Mīr Dāmād refers to this work as being his own. In any case it is a product of his school.

<sup>45</sup> For a translation and discussion of this work, see H. Corbin, *op. cit.*, pp. 350 ff.



that of the traditional Muslim books on philosophy and *Hikmat* which usually begin with logic and then proceed to natural philosophy (*ṭabī'īyyāt*), mathematics (*riyāḍīyyāt*), and theology (*ilāhīyyāt*).<sup>46</sup> For example, in the *Qabasāt* 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'ān and the Ḥadīth, nature, time, and motion, criticism of logic, divine omnipotence, intellectual substances, chain of Being, and finally predestination.<sup>47</sup>

The second marked feature of Mir Dāmād's exposition of *Hikmat* concerns the notion of time. It is well known that the question whether the world is created (*ḥādīth*) or eternal (*qadīm*) 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.<sup>48</sup> Mir Dāmād seeks a solution to this question by dividing reality into three categories: *zamān* or time, *dahr*, and *sarmad*; the latter two are kinds of eternity. This division is ontological and not just logical or theoretical.<sup>49</sup>

The divine essence or ipseity (*dhāt*) 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 Dāmād 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 *Ishrāqīs* call them, in turn generate the world of change. They are the immutable intelligences of this world, and each species in this world is a theurgy (*ṭilism*) for its archetype. The relation between the immutable archetypes and the world of 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 Dāmād calls *dahr*. Finally, the relation between one change and another is called time (*zamān*), in the sense of quantity and measure of change as Aristotle had already described it.<sup>50</sup>

Since this world was brought into being through the intermediate world of

<sup>46</sup> See for example the *Shifā'* or *Najāt* of ibn Sina and the *Kitāb al-Mu'tabar* of abu al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī. In some cases as in the *Dānīsh Nāmeḥ-i 'Ala'i* of ibn Sina and many later *ishrāqī* writings, the book begins with metaphysics and then proceeds to natural philosophy in the manner of Plato rather than Aristotle.

<sup>47</sup> See Mir Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, Shaikh Maḥmūd Burūjirdi, Shirāz, 1315/1897.

<sup>48</sup> For a general discussion of this question, see L. Gardet, *La pensée religieuse d'Avicenne*, J. Vrin, Paris, 1951, pp. 38ff., and A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Time and Eternity*, Artibus Asiae, Ascona, 1947, Chap. IV.

<sup>49</sup> Mir Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, pp. 1-10

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

the archetypes, its creation is *dahri* not *zamāni*, 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.<sup>51</sup> The creation of this world is, therefore, *ḥudūth-i dahri, ibdā'*, and *ikhtirā'* and not *ḥudūth-i zamāni, waḍ'*, and *takwīn*. Time has a reality in its own plane of being, but in the world of *dahr*, the world of the archetypes, time does not even exist. Moreover, the changing physical world (*'ālam-i jismāni*) depends for its existence upon non-existence (*'adam*) in the world of the archetypes. While it exists in time (*zamān*), 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 a 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 (*dhāt*) there is neither *dahr* nor *zamān*, neither archetype nor body; God is alone in His majesty.<sup>52</sup> Yet, *dahr* exists on its own level and *zamān* on its own. *Sarmad* is the cause of *dahr* and *dahr* the cause of *zamān*,<sup>53</sup> so that ultimately the divine essence is the cause of all things, while in its essence nothing may even be said to exist.

The *Jadhawāt*, the contents of which we will now briefly survey, is one of the works in which Mīr Dāmād presents the complete cycle of his metaphysical ideas combined as usual with the Qur'ānic text, the Ḥadīth, and his own verse.<sup>54</sup> In the first *jadhwah* or particle of fire, of which the word *jadhawāt* is the plural, Mīr Dāmād 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:

<sup>51</sup> Mīr Dāmād 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; *Qabasāt*, p. 20.

<sup>52</sup> For a comparison and affinity of these ideas with those of ibn 'Arabi, see *La sagesse des prophètes*, Chapters I and II.

<sup>53</sup> In presenting this view of creation, Mīr Dāmād draws heavily on earlier writings from Plato's *Timaeus* and the so-called *Theology of Aristotle* to the *Shifā'* of ibn Sina and the *Kitāb al-Mu'tabar* of abu al-Barakāt. 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. Mīr Dāmād's *Risālah fi Madhhab Aristatālis* is devoted to a discussion of the difference between the views of Plato and Aristotle on the question of time and eternity drawing on Fārābī's *Kitāb Jam' bain al-Rā'yain*. Mīr Dāmād's treatise is published on the margin of the *Qabasāt*, pp. 140-57.

<sup>54</sup> The *Jadhawāt* (Bombay, lithographed edition, 1302/1884, pp. 203) begins with a poem in praise of 'Alī ibn abi Ṭālib the first lines of which are as follows:

O herald of the nation and the soul of the Prophet,  
The ring of thy knowledge surrounds the ears of the intelligences.  
O 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.

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 (*tūli*) order and a latitudinal (*'ardi*) order.<sup>55</sup> The longitudinal order of the chain of effusion includes five essential degrees: —

1. The degree of pure intelligences, the victorial lights (*anwār-i qāhirah*) 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 (*nūr al-anwār*).
2. The degree of heavenly souls (*nufūs-i falakīyyah*), the governing lights (*anwār-i mudabbirah*), the first member of which governing the first heaven is called the universal soul (*naḥs-i kull*).
3. The degree of the natural souls (*nufūs-i muntabi'ah*) and the archetypes of the heavens, the planets, the four natures, the elements, and compounds.<sup>56</sup>
4. The degree of bodily form (*sūrat-i jismīyyah*), 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.<sup>57</sup>

As for the longitudinal order of the chain of return to the divine essence, it too includes five stages: —

1. The degree of the absolute body (*jism-i muṭlaq*) 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.<sup>58</sup>
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 (*Ḥaqq*) Itself.<sup>59</sup>

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 (*mujarradāt*) is called the world of the invisible (*ghaib*), or command (*amr*), or *malakūt*, or intellect (*'aql*), or life

<sup>55</sup> Suhrawardi also divides the angelic world into the longitudinal and the latitudinal orders, a division the influence of which upon Mir Dāmād is easy to discern. On the question of angelology the Ṣafawid sages remained faithful to the *ishrāqi* scheme combined with that of ibn Sīna. See the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtūl.

<sup>56</sup> The natures refer to the warm and cold, wet and dry, and the elements to the four traditional ones, fire, air, water, and earth.

<sup>57</sup> Mir Dāmād and Mulla Ṣadra, unlike Aristotle and his followers, posit some form of matter in every degree of formal manifestation.

<sup>58</sup> Mir Dāmād mentions that there are 1,400 species of animals, 800 belonging to sea and 600 to land.

<sup>59</sup> *Jadhawāt*, pp. 2–13.



(*ḥayāt*), or light (*nūr*), while the world of bodies is called the world of creation (*khalq*), vision (*shahādat*), or dominion (*mulk*), or death (*maut*), or darkness (*ẓulmat*). 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.<sup>60</sup> 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 *ispahbad* light (*nūr-i ispahbadi*). 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 *Ishrāqīs* 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" (*wāhib al-ṣuwar*) or the active intellect (*'aql-i fa'āl*) which gives being as well as form to the sublunary region.<sup>61</sup>

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 an 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 Dāmād* turns to a discussion of unity (*tauḥīd*) starting from "there is no divinity but God" (*la ilāha illa-Allah*) to "there is no being but He and no truth but He" (*la maujūdun illa Huwa wa la ḥaqqun illa Huwa*).<sup>62</sup> For the real gnostic every being is

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13-18.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18-28.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28ff.

nothing but Being. Mir Dāmād 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.<sup>63</sup> The Divine Being by His essential unity encompasses all things; His unity is before, with, and after both *dahr* and *zamān*. 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 (*zamān*), and unity of the elements and compounds.

As for the generation of multiplicity from unity, Mir Dāmād rejects the Peripatetic view of authors like ibn Sīna who consider that the first intellect brings multiplicity into being by the three relationships possible for it: necessity by something other than itself, the intellection of the divine essence, and the intellection of its own essence. For Mir Dāmād just as the number of intelligences is unlimited so are their possible relationships beyond the number determined by the Peripatetics.<sup>64</sup> Likewise, the intelligences have a great many illuminations and effusions beyond the categories set forth by the Aristotelians, one intelligence being victorial (*qāhir*) and the other passive and receptive (*maqhūr*). Each heaven as well as each body, simple or composed, has its archetype (*rabb al-nau'*) in the world of divine command (*'ālam-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 Dāmād, following the ancient Ishrāqi sages calls *hūrqalya*,<sup>65</sup> the world of separated imagination (*khayāl-i munjaṣil*), or the purgatory (*barzakḥ*). Human imagination is itself 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 Jābulqa and Jābulsa<sup>66</sup> 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

<sup>63</sup> In discussing *tauḥīd*, Mir Dāmād draws not only on ibn Sīna and Suhrawardi but even on the *Nahj al-Balāghah* of the first Shī'ah Imām, the *Ṣaḥīfih-i Sajjādiyyah* of the fourth Imām, and other Shī'ah sources. He regards Pythagoras as the Imām of the Semitic sages (*Hukamā'-i Sāmi*) 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.

<sup>64</sup> *Jadhawāt*, pp. 38 ff.

<sup>65</sup> This intermediary region plays an important role in the thought of Mulla Ṣadra and even more in the writings of Shaikh Aḥmad Aḥsā'i, the founder of the Shaikhis who still survive in Kermān.

<sup>66</sup> These are two famous mythical cities through which initiates pass in their journeys and they appear often in initiatic narratives in Persian.



and saints derive their being from these names, and the creatures are their effects. The spiritual world is called the world of invocation (*'ālam-i tasbīḥ*) because the realities of that world are the divine names. Man, therefore, can regain that world only by invoking the names and becoming unified with them.<sup>67</sup> 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* (*tajrīd*), he is still in time and space. It is only when he dies and leaves the world of darkness for that of light that he becomes completely free from the conditions of terrestrial existence, of *zamān*, 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 (*iḥsās*), imagination (*takhayyul*), apprehension (*tawah-hum*), and intellection (*ta'aqqul*), the degrees which stretch between the visible world and the invisible world. The soul (*nafs*) is the link 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 the sensible, i.e., words and names which are the external dress of truths.<sup>68</sup>

Mir Dāmād 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."<sup>69</sup> He calls the science 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 twenty-eight letters of the Arabic alphabet and the equal number of the stations of the moon and works out this correspondence in great detail.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>67</sup> *Jadhawāt*, pp. 54-63.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>69</sup> *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 V. 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 Hatjo, Stuttgart, 1947.

<sup>70</sup> For a profound study of this subject as developed before Mir Dāmād, see S. T. Burckhardt, *La clé spirituelles de l'astrologie musulmane d'après Ibn 'Arabi*, Éditions Traditionelles, Paris, 1950.



In establishing a relation between numbers, letters of the alphabet, and the heavens, Mīr Dāmād, 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 (*bāṭini*) meanings of the Qur'ān 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'ān which corresponds to the world of creation, the *Qur'ān-i tadwīni*, but also the Qur'ān which is the archetype of all manifestation, the *Qur'ān-i takwīni*, i.e., the *logos* or the reality of Muḥammad (*ḥaqīqat al-Muḥammadiyyah*).

*Mīr Abu al-Qāsim Findiriski*.—The third of the famous triumvirate of sages from Iṣpahān,<sup>71</sup> Mīr 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 Vasiṣṭha* by Nizām al-Dīn Pānīpatī, 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 *Shifā'* and the *Qānūn* of ibn Sīna in Iṣpahān where he died in 1050/1640.

The most interesting aspect of Mīr 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 Ṣafawid Court.<sup>72</sup> His manner resembled that of the Hindu Yogīs 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-ḥarakah*), another on the arts and sciences in society (*ṣanā'īyyah*), the book on Yoga already mentioned, *Uṣūl al-Fuṣūl* on Hindu wisdom, and a history of the Ṣafawids. Moreover, he, like Mīr Dāmād and *Shāikh-i Bahā'i*, was an accomplished poet showing the development in him of the gnostic element which is the only possible common ground between traditional philo-

<sup>71</sup> The other two are *Shāikh-i Bahā'i* and Mīr Dāmād who were close friends of Mīr Findiriski and shared with him the respect and honour of the Ṣafawid Court. For an account of the life of Mīr Findiriski whose complete name is Mīr abu al-Qāsim ibn Mirza Baik Ḥusain Findiriski, see *Raiḥānat al-Adab*, Vol. III, pp. 231-32.

<sup>72</sup> The story is told of him in most biographies that one day *Shāh 'Abbās*, 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." Mīr Findiriski, knowing that the remark was meant for him, replied, "Your majesty, rest assured, I was present but I saw none of the '*ulamā*' there." See *Riyād al-Ārifīn*, p. 276.

sophy and poetry. The most famous of his poems is a *qaṣīdah*, based upon that of Nāṣir ibn Khusrau 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 Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Khalkhāli and Ḥakīm ‘Abbās Dārābi. Because of the importance of this poem in summarizing some of the basic elements of *Hikmat* as it was revived during the Ṣafawid 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.<sup>73</sup>  
 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 Naṣr or of an abu ‘Ali Sīna.<sup>74</sup>  
 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 qualities<sup>75</sup> from the sun,  
 The sun is itself light and shines upon all things while keeping its unity.  
 The intellectual form which is endless and immortal  
 With or without all things is a totality and unity.  
 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.

<sup>73</sup> The text of this *qaṣīdah* and the commentary by Khalkhāli have been published in Teheran, lithographed edition, 1325/1907. This verse means the celestial archetypes of Platonic ideas and their earthly reflections or shadows.

<sup>74</sup> Reference is to Fārābi and ibn Sīna, the two early masters of *mashā’i* philosophy in Islam.

<sup>75</sup> “Qualities” means multiplicity of forms which become evident only when light shines upon them.

Whatever is outside thy 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. . . .<sup>76</sup>  
 How good it would be if the sages before us had said everything completely,  
 So that the opposition of those who are not complete<sup>77</sup> 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<sup>3</sup> bearing on metaphysical principles. In his treatise on arts and sciences (*ṣanā'īyyah*),<sup>78</sup> he distinguishes twelve 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: (i) The subject is universal and the discussion concerns knowledge as well as action from both of which there comes only good; (ii) the subject is universal and the discussion concerns both knowledge and action from both of which there comes evil; (iii) the subject is universal and the discussion concerns knowledge from which there comes only good; (iv) the subject is universal and the discussion concerns knowledge from which there comes only evil; (v) the subject is universal and the discussion concerns action from which there comes only good; and (vi) 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 (vii) those arts and sciences the subject of which is particular and the discussion

<sup>76</sup> The later Muslim authors following ibn Sina divide reality into the Necessary Being (*wājib al-wujūd*), the possible being (*mumkin al-wujūd*) and the being that is impossible (*mumtani' al-wujūd*).

<sup>77</sup> All 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.

<sup>78</sup> Mir Findiriski, *Risāleh-i Ṣanā'īyyah*, Sa'adat Press, Teheran, 1317 Solar.



concerns knowledge and action from which there comes only good; (viii) the subject is particular and the discussion concerns knowledge and action from which there comes evil; (ix) the subject is particular and the discussion concerns only knowledge from which there comes only good; (x) the subject is particular and the discussion concerns only knowledge from which there comes evil; (xi) the subject is particular and the discussion concerns only action from which there comes only good; and, finally (xii), the subject is particular and the discussion concerns only action from which there comes evil.<sup>79</sup>

The first of the twelve 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., that of 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 this diversity.<sup>80</sup> The fifth category is that of the jurists (*fuqahā'*) who cultivate the practical sciences, and the sixth is that of their opposites like Mazdak,<sup>81</sup> 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 these sciences theoretically. The eleventh category concerns arts and sciences which are limited to a particular subject, and the twelfth 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 *ḥukamā'* 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.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13-54.

<sup>80</sup> 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 (*rumūz*) 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.

<sup>81</sup> 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 the Carmathians (*Qarāmīṭah*) as belonging to this group.

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 are considered to stand above the natural sciences, *Hikmat* above theology, and the wisdom of the prophets and saints above all the other categories.

*Mulla Muhsin Fa'id-i Kāshi*.—Muhammad ibn Shāh Murtada ibn Shāh Mahmūd, better known as Mulla Muhsin or Fa'id-i Kāshi, is the most famous of the sages of the generation following that of Mir Dāmād, Shaikh-i Bahā'i, and Mir Findiriski. Born in Kāshān in 1007/1600, he spent some years at Qum and then came to Shirāz to complete his studies with Mulla Ṣadra whose daughter he later married. He also studied with Mir Dāmād and Shaikh-i Bahā'i but was more closely associated with Mulla Ṣadra. Just as Mir Dāmād produced a series of outstanding students, the best known of whom was Mulla Ṣadra—the greatest of the Ṣafawid Ḥakims to whom we shall turn in a separate chapter—Mulla Ṣadra in turn produced a galaxy of famous students among whom Fa'id-i Kāshi and Mulla 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhiji, both his sons-in-law, are the most important.<sup>82</sup>

The genius of Mulla Ṣadra consisted largely in unifying the three perspectives of formal revelation or *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 Qādi Sa'id Qumi, Mulla 'Ali Nūri, and Āqa 'Ali Zunūzi sought to correlate revelation and reason, and Āqa Muḥammad Bidābādi and Āqa Muḥammad Ridā' Qumshihī, reason and gnosis. Others continued the path trodden by Mulla Ṣadra himself and emphasized the harmony of all the three paths mentioned above. Mulla Muhsin Fa'id and Hāji Mulla Hādi Sabziwāri, the most famous Persian thinker of the last century, belong to this 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 Shī'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 Shī'ah Ghazālī, not only because of his preoccupation with harmonizing the exoteric and the esoteric views, but also for his treatment of a spiritualized ethics which forms

<sup>82</sup> Mulla-i Lāhiji, known as Fayyāq, 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. IV, pp. 408–09; 435. See also the introduction by Sayyid Muḥammad Mishkāt to the new edition of *al-Mahajjat al-Bahā'iyyah*, Vol. I, Islāmiyyah Press, Teheran, 1380 Solar, in which the significance of Fa'id's doctrines and in particular the present work on ethics is discussed.



the requirement for following the Path. He even re-wrote the well-known *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* of Ghazālī under the name of *al-Maḥajjat al-Baiḍā' fi Iḥyā' al-Iḥyā'*, substituting traditions (Ḥadīth) from the Shī'ah sources for those from the Sunni ones given by Ghazālī.<sup>83</sup>

The writings of Mulla Muḥsin both in Arabic and Persian are too numerous to mention here.<sup>84</sup> Among the more famous, one may name *Ḥaqq al-Yaqīn*; *'Ain al-Yaqīn*, and *'Ilm al-Yaqīn* on *Ḥikmat*; *al-Ṣāfi*, *al-Wāfi*, and *al-Shāfi* on Qur'ānic commentary and Ḥadīth; *Mafātīḥ al-Sharāyi'* on jurisprudence; *al-Tathīr* on ethics; *Jalā' al-'Uyūn*, *Zād al-Sālik*, and *Kalimāt-i Maknūnah* on Sufism; numerous treatises on the esoteric meaning of acts of worship, on various invocations, on particular sciences including astronomy; selections from and commentaries on the *Rasā'il* of the *Iḫwān al-Ṣafa*, the *Futūḥāt al-Makkīyyah* of ibn 'Arabi, and the *Mathnawi* of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmi; 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 his ethical and social teachings have attracted particular attention in the past decades.

Mulla Muḥsin's thought marks the final integration of *Ḥikmat* into Shī'ism. *Ḥikmat* in Persia had been moving in this direction for many centuries from the time of al-Fārābi and ibn Sīna. Suhrawardi Maqtūl took the decisive step in regarding knowledge as personal illumination by the heavenly guide or "guardian angel." Mulla Ṣadra following him made the universal intellect the criterion of knowledge. Mulla Muḥsin took a further step in this direction in identifying this intellect with the Shī'ah Imāms, in whom the light of Muḥammad (*al-nūr al-Muḥammadiyyah*) is manifested and who are called the innocent (*ma'sūm*) intellects.<sup>85</sup> Only by union with them, with the pure intellects, can one gain ultimate knowledge.

One of the important treatises of Mulla Muḥsin, in which gnosis, *Ḥikmat*, and *Shar'* are blended in characteristic fashion, is the *Kalimāt-i Maknūnah* written in a mixture of Arabic and Persian.<sup>86</sup> It treats of a complete cycle of theoretical gnosis so that its discussion gives a fair example of the totality of Mulla Muḥsin'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 *élite* (*khawāṣṣ*) 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

<sup>83</sup> See Mulla Muḥsin Faiḍ-i Kāshī, *al-Maḥajjat al-Baiḍā' fi Iḥyā' al-Iḥyā'*, 4 Vols., Islāmīyyah Press, Teheran, 1380-81 Solar, in which in ten sections he deals with Sufi ethics based on Shī'ah sources but following closely the model of the *Iḥyā'*.

<sup>84</sup> The *Raiḥānat al-Adab*, Vol. III, pp. 242-44, mentions 120 works by him. For the account of Mulla Muḥsin's life and writings, consult also *Qīṣaṣ al-'Ulamā'*, pp. 322-33, and *Riyād al-'Ārifīn*, pp. 388-89.

<sup>85</sup> Mulla Muḥsin Faiḍ, *Ā'īnih-i Shāhi*, Mūsawi Press, Shīrāz, 1320/1902, p. 5.

<sup>86</sup> *Kalimāt-i Maknūnah*, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1316/1898. Henceforth our reference to this work will be to this edition.



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.<sup>87</sup> Being is the Truth which subsists by Itself, while everything else subsists by It. Being is not just a mental concept, the meaning of Being in the mind 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 *māhiyāt* or *a'yān al-thābitah*,<sup>88</sup> 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 archetypes, *a'yān al-thābitah*, have two aspects; on the one hand, they are the mirrors in which Truth is reflected, in which case they are hidden and Truth is manifest; and, on the other hand, 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 (*Ḥaqq*) 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 Muḥsin advises the sage to take a further step in eliminating himself also so that there remains nothing but Truth.<sup>89</sup>

Mulla Muḥsin follows certain earlier Sufis in considering the world to be re-created at every instant,<sup>90</sup> 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, each particle of it perishing 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-arbāb*) of all the names, the theophany of which is the universal man (*al-insān al-kāmil*). Although the stages in which creation

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>88</sup> For an explanation of these terms see Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Being and Its Polarisation," *Pakistan Philosophical Journal*, Vol. III, No. 2, October 1959, pp. 8-13. In the general discussion among the Ḥakīms as to whether these essences (or Being) are principial, Mulla Muḥsin sides with the school of *iṣālat-i wujūd*, the principiality of Being, and considers the *māhiyāt* to be the accidents of Being. This question has been dealt with in the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtūl.

<sup>89</sup> *Kalimāt-i Maknūnah*, pp. 31ff. Mulla Muḥsin describes these stages also as the *'ilm al-yaqīn*, in which one "sees" nothing but the divine essence, names, and acts; the *'ain al-yaqīn*, in which one "sees" nothing but the essence and names; and the *ḥaqq al-yaqīn* in which there remains only the divine ipseity.

<sup>90</sup> See T. Burckhardt, *Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*, pp. 64ff.

comes into being are numerous, Mullah Muḥsin 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, *ulūhīyyah*; in the third are the divine acts and world of spirits which are the manifestations of Truth in the world of Lordship, *rubūbīyyah*; in the fourth is the world of the "ideas" and imagination (*khayāl*)<sup>91</sup> 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.<sup>92</sup> Everything in the physical world has its archetype in the world of imagination, while everything in the world of imagination has its archetype in the world of lordship, and 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 *élite*. Moreover, man has a vegetative soul consisting of the faculties of attraction, repulsion, digestion, growth, and retention originating in the liver; an animal soul consisting of the faculties of the five senses originating in the heart; a sacred rational soul (*naḥs-i nāṭiqah-i qudsīyyah*) with the faculties of meditation (*fikr*) and invocation (*dhikr*); and the universal divine soul (*naḥs-i kullīyyah-i ilāhīyyah*), not possessed by all men, with the faculty of reaching the station of annihilation (*fanā'*) in the Divine.<sup>93</sup>

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 muṭlaq*) is the supreme station, the perfect "form" of unity, the first pen, and the Pole of Poles, *qutb al-aqtāb*, upon which all the prophets and saints depend. The inner (*bāṭin*) dimension of this prophecy is absolute sainthood (*wilāyat-i muṭlaq*). Mulla Muḥsin identifies absolute prophethood with the light of Muḥammad, and absolute sainthood with the light of 'Alī. 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 the Prophet Muḥammad. Sainthood will reach its completion gradually until it culminates in the twelfth Imām, the Mahdi.

<sup>91</sup> 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 créatrice* . . . Chap. II.

<sup>92</sup> *Kalimāt-i Maknūnah*, p. 61.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75.

Absolute prophethood is the treasure of all possible perfections and the whole cosmos is the expansion and manifestation of its inner qualities.<sup>94</sup>

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.<sup>95</sup>

*Mulla Muhammad Bāqir Majlisi.*—One cannot terminate a study of the intellectual life of the *Ṣafawid* period without mentioning the two *Majlisis*, father and son, especially the son *Muhammad Bāqir* who stands as one of the outstanding figures of the period. The first *Majlisi*, *Muhammad Taqi* (1003/1594–1070/1659), was one of the students of *Shaiḫ-i Bahā'i* and an outstanding theologian and Sufi of his time.<sup>96</sup> His son, the second *Majlisi* (1037/1628–1110/1699), however, surpassed his father in fame and power and became the most dominant figure of *Shī'ism*. Having studied with his own father, Mulla *Khalil Qazwini*, and Mulla *Muhsin Fa'id*, he in turn became the master of over a thousand disciples including *Sayyid Ni'matullah Jazā'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 *Shī'ah* sciences and for assembling the writings of the earlier doctors of *Shī'ism* and prophetic *hadīth* into encyclopedias which have henceforth become the main reference for all who undertake religious education in the *Shī'ah madrasahs*. The most important and famous of these is the *Bihār al-Anwār* summarized in the *Safīnat al-Bihār* of *Shaiḫ 'Abbās Qumi*, the lithographed edition of which occupies twenty-four volumes; *Haqq al-Yaqīn* in *Uṣūl*; *Hayāt al-Qulūb*, a commentary upon the *Tadhīb al-Aḥkām* of *Khawājah Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsi*; and the *Mir'āt al-'Uqūl*, a twelve-volume commentary upon the *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* of *Kulaini* in which *Majlisi* for the only time in his writing career enters into purely intellectual (*'aqli*) questions and treats of many essential religious subjects, especially eschatology and the conditions before the appearance of the *Mahdi*, from an intellectual rather than a purely "confessional" point of view.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 167 ff.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 214–19.

<sup>96</sup> *Raiḥānat al-Adab*, Vol. III, pp. 460–62. The *Mir'āt al-Aḥwāl-i Jahān Numā'* by *Aḥmad ibn Muhammad Bāqir Iṣpahāni Bihbahāni* is devoted to his life and works.

<sup>97</sup> For the writings and life of the second *Majlisi*, see *Raiḥānat al-Adab*, Vol. III, pp. 455–60; *Dānish Pazhūh, Fihrist . . .*, Vol. V., p. 1137. The *Fa'id-i Qudsi* by



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.<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, supported by the Court and many of the theologians and doctors, he opposed the intellectual method of the Ḥakīms and philosophers with the result that both the Sufis and the Ḥakīms fell into disgrace and had much difficulty in official religious circles. The dynasty which had begun as the extension of a 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 Ṣafawid dynasty itself fell before the onslaught of the Afghāns, and Iṣpahān, 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 thirteenth/eighteenth century Sufism was revived in Persia by Ma'ṣūm 'Ali Shāh and Shāh Ṭāhir Dakāni, two Ni'matullāhi masters sent by Ridā' 'Ali Shāh from Deccan to Persia. It was persecuted for a period but began to expand with the establishment of the Qājārs. Likewise, the school of *Hikmat* continued through the students of Mulla Ṣadra and others from one generation to another until it produced Shaikh Aḥmad Aḥsā'i, the founder of the Shaikhi movement,<sup>99</sup> Hāji Mulla Hādi Sabizwāri, and several other outstanding figures in the Qājār 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 Ṣafawid 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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Mirza Ḥusain Nūri is devoted completely to his life and writings. Majlisi wrote thirteen Arabic and fifty-five Persian books which altogether occupy nearly a million and a half lines.

<sup>98</sup> He devoted a treatise, the *I'tiqādāt*, to rejecting Sufism.

<sup>99</sup> Shaikh Aḥmad 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 Shaikhīs claim to have knowledge of all things, and so each of them from the time of Shaikh Aḥmad to the present has composed a large number of treatises on all the sciences. For a list of the works of Shaikh Aḥmad and the other leaders of the Shaikhīs, see abu al-Qāsim ibn Zain al-'Ābidin ibn Karim, *Fihrist-i Kutub-i Marḥūm-i Aḥsā'i wa Sā'ir-i Mashāyikh-i 'Izām*, 2 Vols., Sa'adat Press, Kermān, 1337 Solar.

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Chapter XLVIII

ṢADR AL-DĪN SHĪRĀZI (MULLA ṢADRA)<sup>1</sup>

A

LIFE AND WORKS

The intellectual activity revived in Persia during the Ṣafawid period, some features of which we have discussed in the previous chapter, "The School of Iṣpahān," found its culmination in Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzi known to his compatriots as Ākhūnd Mulla Ṣadra and to his disciples as simply Ākhūnd or as *Ṣadr al-Muti'allihīn*, i.e., the foremost among the theosophers. This figure, about whom the whole intellectual life of Persia has revolved in the past three centuries and a half and who is one of the major expositors of Islamic intellectual doctrines in the Shī'ah world, has remained until today

<sup>1</sup> This chapter has been written with the invaluable help of Hājji Muḥammad Husain Ṭabāṭabā'i, one of the leading authorities on the school of Mulla Ṣadra in Iran today, the author of the twenty-volume Qur'ānic commentary *al-Mizān* and the editor and commentator of the new edition of the *Asfār*.

almost completely unknown outside Persia, even in other Muslim countries. Many have heard of his name, and nearly all travellers to Persia since the Şafawid period, who have been interested in the intellectual life of the country, have recognized his importance and have been impressed by his fame,<sup>2</sup> 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 Şadra, whose complete name is Şadr al-Din Muḥammad, was born in Şirāz in about 979/1571,<sup>3</sup> the only son of Ibrahim Şirāzi. A member of the famous Qawām family of Şirāz, Ibrāhim held the post of a vizier and was a powerful political and social figure in his native city. The young Şadr al-Din exhibited his exceptional intelligence from childhood and was given the best possible education in Şirāz.

Having completed his early studies, he became intensely interested in the intellectual sciences (*al-'ulūm al-'aqlīyyah*), especially metaphysics, and,

<sup>2</sup> Comte de Gobineau, one of the most observant of travellers who have visited Persia during the past few centuries, was quite aware of Mulla Şadrā's significance although not quite well acquainted with his ideas, for in a well-known passage he writes: "Le vrai, l'incontestable mérite de Moulla Şadra reste celui que j'ai indiqué plus haut: c'est d'avoir raminé, rejeuni, pour le temps où il vivait, la philosophie antique, en lui conservant les moins possible de ses formes avicenniques . . . ." Gobineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, les Editions G. Grès et Cie, Paris, 1923, p. 102.

<sup>3</sup> The date of Mulla Şadrā's birth was unknown until quite recently when in preparing the new edition of the *Asfār*, Ṭabāṭabā'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 Şadra himself, the authenticity of which cannot be doubted, there appears this statement: "This truth was revealed to me on Friday, the 7th of Jamādi al-Ūla 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 Şadra and his works, see M. B. Khunsāri, *Raudāt al-Jannāt*, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1306/1888, Vol. II, pp. 331-32; M. A. Tabrizi, *Raiḥānat al-Adab*, Sa'di Press, Teheran, 1331/1912, Vol. II, pp. 458-61; Mir Khwand, *Raudāt al-Şafa*, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1270/1853, Vol. VIII, p. 120; T. Tunikābuni, *Qiṣaṣ al-'Ulamā'*, 'Ilmi Press, Teheran, 1313/1895, pp. 329-33, and Āgha Buzurg Ṭihri, *al-Dhari'ah*, al-Gharra Press, Najaf, 1355/1936, on dealing with various writings of Ākhūnd.

As for secondary sources, see M. Mudarrisi Chahārdihi, *Tārīkh-i Falāsifih-i Islām*, 'Ilmi Press, Teheran, 1336 Solar, Vol. I, pp. 179ff.; A. A. Zinjāni, *al-Filsūf al-Fārsi al-Kabir Şadr al-Din al-Şirāzi*, al-Mufid Press, Damascus, pp. 212-18, No. 3, 1951, pp. 318-27; J. 'Ali Yāsīn, *Şadr al-Din al-Şirāzi Muḥaddid al-Falsifat al-Islāmiyyah*, al-Ma'arif Press, 1375/1956, and the introduction by M. R. Muzaffar in the new edition of the *Asfār*, Dā'ir al-Ma'arif al-Islāmiyyah, Qum, 1378/1958.

For an account of the life and doctrines of Mulla Şadra in European languages, see Gobineau, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-103; E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, University Press, Cambridge, 1924, Vol. IV, pp. 429-30; and M. Horten, *Die Philosophie des Islam*, Verlag Ernst Reinhardt, München, 1924, pp. 57ff. Also Browne, *A Year Amongst the Persians*, Adam & Charles Black, London, 1950, pp. 141-43.



therefore, left Shirāz for Iṣpahān which was at that time the capital and major seat of learning in Persia. In Iṣpahān he studied first with Bahā' al-Dīn 'Āmīlī, learning the transmitted sciences (*al-'ulūm al-naqlīyyah*) from him and later with Mir Dāmād who was his most famous master in the intellectual sciences.<sup>4</sup> Within a few years he became himself a recognized master in all the branches of formal learning especially in *Hikmat*<sup>5</sup> in which he soon surpassed his own teachers.

Not satisfied simply with formal learning, Mulla Ṣadra left worldly life in general and retired to a small village named Kahak near Qum where he spent fifteen years in asceticism and purification of his soul until, as he claims in his introduction to the *Asfār*, he became endowed with the direct vision of the intelligible world. He now came to "see" through illumination (*ishrāq*) what he had previously learnt theoretically from books.

Having reached both formal and spiritual perfection, Mulla Ṣadra returned once again to the world. Meanwhile Allāhwirdī Khān, the Governor of Shirāz, had built a large *madrasah* and invited Mulla Ṣadra to return to Shirāz as the head of the new school. Ākhūnd accepted the offer and returned to his native city, making the school of Khān the major centre of intellectual sciences in Persia.<sup>6</sup> 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 Baṣrah in 1050/1640 during the seventh journey—Mulla Ṣadra was often molested by some of the exoteric 'ulamā' 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.

<sup>4</sup> Concerning Bahā' al-Dīn 'Āmīlī and Mir Dāmād, see the preceding chapter.

To know the names of the masters of a Ḥakīm is important because learning *Hikmat* from "within" is impossible without a master for the majority of even those who are gifted to pursue it. One can learn certain ideas from books alone but really to understand what *Hikmat* means and what the various authorities meant by various expressions there is need of a master who himself learnt the doctrines from another master and so on going back to the early masters. The Ḥakīm is, therefore, as insistent upon the authenticity of his chain of masters as a verifier of *hadīth* is about the *isnād* of a tradition or a Sufi master about the *silsilah* or chain of his *tariqah*.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> The Khān school which is one of the most beautiful edifices of the Ṣafawid 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.

Mulla Ṣadrā's life, then, can be divided into three distinct periods: the period of childhood and schooling in Ṣhīrāz and Iṣpahān, the period of asceticism near Qum at the end of which the composition of the *Asfār* 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 Ṣadra, 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 either religious sciences or metaphysics, theodicy or *Hikmat*,<sup>7</sup> and are in a very clear and fluent style making them more easily understandable to the reader than the writings of his predecessors like Mīr Dāmād.<sup>8</sup> Since Mulla Ṣadrā'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.<sup>9</sup> The works dealing with metaphysics and intellectual sciences include: *al-Asfār al-Arba'ah*; *al-Mabda' w-al-Ma'ād*; *Sirr al-Nuqtah* (possibly not authentic); *al-Shawāhid al-Rubūbiyyah*, his most lucid and masterly work; *al-Hikmat al-'Arshīyyah*, glosses upon the *Hikmat al-Ishrāq* of Suhrawardi Maqtūl; commentary (*sharḥ*) upon the *Hidāyah* of Athīr;<sup>10</sup> glosses upon the metaphysical parts of ibn Sīnā's *Shifā'*; *Fi Ittihād al-'Aqil w-al-Ma'qūl*; *Fi Ittiṣāf al-Māhīyyah w-al-Wujūd*; *Fi Bad' Wujūd al-Insān*; *Fi al-Taṣawwur w-al-Taṣdīq*; *Fi al-Jabr w-al-Taḥwīd*; *Fi Hudūth al-'Ālam*; *Fi Ḥashr*; *Fi Sarayān al-Wujūd*; *Fi al-Qadā' w-al-Qadar*; *Fi Tashakhkhuṣ*; *al-Masā'il al-Qudsiyyah*; *Iksīr al-'Ārifīn*; *al-Wāridāt al-Qalbīyyah*; *al-Qawā'id al-Malakūtiyyah*; *Hall al-Mushkilāt*

<sup>7</sup> He in fact criticizes ibn Sīnā for having spent his time composing works on other sciences like mathematics and medicine.

<sup>8</sup> The story is told in most of the traditional sources mentioned above that Mulla Ṣadra once asked Mīr Dāmād why he was respected by all the religious authorities while Ākhūnd, despite his powerful family, was molested so much by some of the 'ulamā'. Mīr Dāmād answered that although they were both saying the same thing, he hid his ideas within so many difficult expressions that only the *élite* would be able to understand them while Mulla Ṣadra wrote so clearly that anyone with a knowledge of Arabic could detect the trend of his ideas.

<sup>9</sup> See also *Raiḥānat al-Adab*, pp. 458-61, where fifty works by him are mentioned, and A. A. Zanjāni, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-22 where he mentions twenty-six metaphysical and philosophical and seventeen religious works some of which are of doubtful authenticity. Refer also to J. 'Alī Yāsīn, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-62, where twenty-six works are named.

<sup>10</sup> The *Kitāb al-Hidāyah* dealing with a complete cycle of *Hikmat*, i.e., logic, natural philosophy, and metaphysics, was composed by the seventh/thirteenth-century Persian author, Athīr al-Dīn Mufaḍḍal ibn 'Umar al-Abhari; it soon became one of the basic books of instruction in the *madrasahs*. The tenth/sixteenth-century commentary upon it by Kamāl al-Dīn Mibudī was the best known before Mulla Ṣadra composed his own commentary upon it.

*al-Falakiyyah*; introduction to *'Arsh al-Taqdīs* of Mīr Dāmād; *al-Mazāhir*; glosses upon *Rawāshih al-Samāwīyyah* of Mīr Dāmād, *Khālq al-A'māl*; *Kasr al-Aṣnām al-Jāhiliyyah*; *al-Mizāj*; *al-Ma'ād al-Jismāni*; *Tanqīyah* in logic; *dīwān* of poems in Persian; and answers to various questions on philosophy.

The works that are primarily concerned with the religious sciences include the Qur'ānic commentary: *Mafātih al-Ghaib*, *Asrār al-Āyāt*; commentary upon a large number of the verses of the Qur'ān; commentary upon a few prophetic *ahādīth fi Imāmah*; glosses upon the Qur'ānic commentary of Baidāwi; glosses upon the *Tajrīd* of Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, and upon Qūshjī's commentary upon the *Tajrīd* (of doubtful authenticity); glosses upon the commentary upon the *Lum'ah*, commentary upon the *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* of Kulaini, one of the four major sources of Shī'ah Law;<sup>11</sup> *Mutashābih al-Qur'ān*; and a Persian treatise called *Sih Aṣl* on the soul and its destiny.<sup>12</sup>

Mulla Ṣadra 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 *Hidāyah*.<sup>13</sup> They deal mostly with the Sufi doctrine of the unity of Being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), which may be considered to be the central theme of Mulla Ṣadrā's doctrinal formulations. For example, in one of the quatrains he says:

The Truth is the spirit of the universe and the universe the body,  
And the orders of the angels are the senses of this 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 Ṣadra 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 Ṣadra consisted in uniting and harmonizing religion and the intellectual sciences. All of his works, even in philosophy, are replete with the Qur'ānic verses in support of his conclusions; and all of his religious works, even the Qur'ānic commentaries, are full of gnostic and intellectual interpretations. One can only say that some of Akhūnd'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

<sup>11</sup> The *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* was also commented upon by Majlisi as we have mentioned in the previous chapter. The commentary of Mulla Ṣadra which is of a more intellectual nature is one of the most important Shī'ah works written in the Ṣafawid period and is perhaps his most significant religious composition.

<sup>12</sup> This unpublished treatise the manuscript of which exists in the Majlis Library (MS. 103) in Teheran is the only known prose work of Mulla Ṣadra in Persian, all the other above-mentioned writings being in Arabic.

<sup>13</sup> The manuscript of the *Sharḥ al-Hidāyah* in the Miṣḥkāt Collection at Teheran University, MS. 254, is in Mulla Ṣadrā's own handwriting; several quatrains appear in the opening pages which are without doubt his own.



they all bear the fragrance of gnostic doctrines. Among writings which are of a more gnostic vein one may mention *al-Shawāhid al-Rubūbiyyah*, *al-'Arshīyyah*, *Asrār al-Āyāt*, and *al-Wāridāt al-Qalbīyyah*, and among those which are presented in a more discursive language are the *Sharḥ al-Hidāyah* and the commentary upon the *Shifā'*.

Without doubt the most important work of Mulla Ṣadra is the *Asfār al-Arba'ah*. It is comparable in dimension and scope to the *Shifā'* and the *Futūḥāt al-Makkīyyah* and in a way stands midway between the Peripatetic encyclopedia of ibn Sīna and the compendium of esoteric sciences of ibn 'Arabi. The title of *Asfār* itself has been the cause of much difficulty to the few Orientalists who are acquainted with the book. The word *asfār* 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 books on travel and E. G. Browne believed that the title meant simply "the four books."<sup>14</sup>

Both views are, however, erroneous. Actually, *asfār* means journeys but not the account of travels in the ordinary sense of the word as Gobineau understood it to be. As Mulla Ṣadra himself mentions in his introduction to the book, the *Asfār* consists of the following four stages or journeys of initiatic realization (*sulūk*): (i) the journey of the creature or creation (*khalq*) towards the Creator or the Truth (*Ḥaqq*), (ii) the journey in the Truth with the Truth, (iii) the journey from the Truth to creation with the Truth, and (iv) 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 *Asfār* 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; 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 views of previous sages and philosophers so that the work as a whole is quite voluminous.<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> E. G. Browne, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 430.

<sup>15</sup> The 1282/1865 Teheran lithographed edition with the commentaries of Sabziwāri on the margin runs over a 1,000 large pages and the new edition by Mr. Tabāṭabā'i with running commentary by himself and several other Hakims of the Qājār period including Sabziwāri and Mulla 'Alī Nūri is planned in nine 400-page volumes of which three have appeared so far. The *Asfār* which is used in the graduate school of the 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 Hāji Mulla Hādi Sabziwāri, the greatest Persian Hakim after Mulla Ṣadra, taught the complete *Asfār* to his advanced disciples over a six-year period.

## B

## SOURCES OF MULLA ŞADRĀ'S DOCTRINES

According to Mulla Şadra, there are two forms of knowledge: that derived from formal instruction (*al-'ilm al-şuwari*) 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 (*tajrīd*) of the intellect.<sup>16</sup> There are then, according to this view, two sources for Mulla Şadrā'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 Imām," the source of all inner illumination, we have little to say except to emphasize its importance in Mulla Şadrā's view.

It is with the first category that we are primarily concerned here. There are five principal elements which are clearly detectable in the new synthesis brought about by Mulla Şadra; they are also found, though less explicitly, in the doctrines of the Şafawid 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 Şhī'ah Imāms.<sup>17</sup> Among these sources the last two are of particular importance. Mulla Şadra 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 Imāms especially as contained in the *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 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 Şhī'ism.

Mulla Şadra, 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 Ḥakims, 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

<sup>16</sup> Mulla Şadra, *Mafātih al-Ghaib, al-Miftāh al-Thālith, al-Mashhad al-Thāmin*.

<sup>17</sup> See the preceding chapter in which the formative elements of Şhī'ah intellectual life leading to Mulla Şadra and other Şafawid sages have been discussed.



and sciences other than metaphysics.<sup>18</sup> For Mulla Şadra, 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 when Mulla Şadra wishes to reject some aspects of the teachings of either the Peripatetics or the Illuminationists he appeals so often first to the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth and then to those fragmentary sayings of the pre-Socratic philosophers with which the Muslims were acquainted.

### C

## MULLA ŞADRĀ'S METHOD AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HIS SCHOOL

The particular genius of Mulla Şadra 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 the harmony of which he sought to reveal in his own life as well as in his 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'ān and the sayings of the Prophet and the Imāms, and these in turn became unified with the gnostic doctrines which result from the illuminations received by a purified soul.<sup>19</sup> That is why Mulla Şadrā's writings are a combination of logical statements, gnostic intuitions, traditions of the Prophet, and the Qur'ānic verses. Through the symbolic

<sup>18</sup> See *Asfār*, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1282/1865, Book II, Section IV. Mulla Şadra 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 *waḥdat al-wujūd* which is the basis of the gnostic doctrines of ibn 'Arabi. Mulla Şadra in fact identifies the water of Thales with the *naḥas al-Raḥmān* 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 who, as Mulla Şadra writes, "have adopted the light of *Hikmat* from the lamp of prophecy."

<sup>19</sup> For an account of the relation of Mulla Şadra to Şhī'ism and his success in unifying the three above-mentioned elements, see M. H. Tabāṭabā'i, "Muşāḥibih-i Ustād 'Allāmiḥ Tabāṭabā'i ba Professor Henri Corbin dar Bāriḥ-i Şhī'ah," *Sālānih-i Maktab-i Tashayyu'*, No. 2, 1339 Solar, pp. 61-64. This is one of the most important works written recently by a Şhī'ah authority on the general perspective of Şhī'ism and the various sciences developed by the Şhī'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 Şhī'ism and the relation between Şhī'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 Şhī'ism.



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 Fārābi and ibn Sīna—the latter particularly in his Qur'ānic commentaries—had aimed and which Ghazālī, Suhrawardi, and the whole chain of sages extending from the Saljūq to the Şafawid period had sought to achieve from various points of view.<sup>20</sup>

In metaphysics or, more generally speaking, *Hikmat* itself, Mulla Şadra 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 Sīna, and the Illuminationistic or *ishrāqī* school founded by Suhrawardi Maqtūl.<sup>21</sup> Mulla Şadra 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 Ākhūnd's time. That is why Mulla Şadra is often credited with founding a new and original form of wisdom in the Muslim world which is usually called *al-Hikmat al-Muti'āliyyah* as distinguished from *al-Hikmat al-Mashā'iyyah* (Peripatetic philosophy) and *al-Hikmat al-Ishrāqīyyah* (Illuminationist theosophy).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> It may at first seem surprising that Mulla Şadra wrote a treatise against those who called themselves Sufis. But if we consider the social and political conditions of the later Şafawid 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 Şadrā's attack on it. However, the "Sufis" whom Mulla Şadra 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 an esotericism that they themselves did not possess. Otherwise there is not the least doubt of Mulla Şadrā's connection with Sufism—although he preferred to use the name gnostic (*'arif*) rather than Sufi—nor can one doubt in any way the gnostic quality of his doctrines.

<sup>21</sup> See the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtūl.

<sup>22</sup> If we have translated *Hikmat* as philosophy in one case and as theosophy in the other, it is because the meaning of this 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 that term is currently understood in European languages.

D

DIVISION OF THE SCIENCES

Before discussing the basic features of Mulla Şadrā'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 *Asfār*, 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.<sup>23</sup>

In the treatise *Iksīr al-‘Arīfīn*, he outlines a somewhat more complete and in a way more original division of the sciences.<sup>24</sup> According to this scheme, the sciences (*‘ulūm*) are either of this world (*dunyawi*) or of the other (*ukhrawi*); the first is divided into three categories: the science of words (*‘ilm al-aqwāl*), the science of acts (*‘ilm al-af‘āl*), and the science of states of contemplation or thought (*‘ilm al-aḥwāl* or *afkār*).

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 *Sharī‘ah* are created; and, finally, what belongs to the acquisition of spiritual and moral virtues and the casting away of evil from which the "science of the path" (*‘ilm al-ṭarīqah*), i.e., Sufism, comes into being. As for the science of states 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 (*lauḥ al-maḥfūz*), and the knowledge of the Exalted Pen (*al-qalam al-a‘lā*), i.e., of the divine decree and of the first determination of the divine essence which Mulla Şadra, following the earlier Sufis, calls also by the name of the reality of Muḥammad (*al-ḥaqīqat al-Muḥammadiyyah*). These sciences also include the knowledge of death, resurrection, and all that pertains to life hereafter.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> See J. Muşliḥ, *Falsafih-i ‘Āli ya Hikmat-i Şadr al-Muti‘allihīn*, Vol. I, University Press, Teheran, 1337 Solar, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Şadr al-Dīn Şhīrāzi, *Rasā‘il*, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1302/1884, pp. 279-86.

<sup>25</sup> Mulla Şadra 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:

Among all 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 principal 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 Şadra 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."<sup>26</sup>

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 Şadra 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 ŞADRĀ'S DOCTRINES

In discussing the basic principles of *Hikmat* as understood and expounded by Mulla Şadra, 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 Şadra.

There are four topics in each of which Mulla Şadra 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 polarization, (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 Şadra.

1. *Unity and Polarization of Being*.—The cornerstone of Mulla Şadrā's

(i) differences in the science of unity leading to the creation of sects like the atheists, etc.; (ii) the science of prophecy leading to separation between Muslims, Christians, Jews, and other religious groups; (iii) the science of Imāmate leading to division between the *Shī'ahs* and Sunnis; and, finally, (iv) the science of jurisprudence leading to the creation of various schools and interpretations of Law. Mulla Şadra 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. *Rāsū'il*, pp. 287-88.

<sup>26</sup> J. Muşlih, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.



doctrines is the principiality and the unity and gradation of Being. As we have already mentioned,<sup>27</sup> one of the major points of contention among Muslim philosophers and theologians concerned the question whether Being or the quiddities (*māhīyyāt*) of things are principial. We saw that the Muslim Peripatetics like the Sufis believed in the principiality 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 Maqtūl and followed by Mulla Şadrā's own teacher, Mir Dāmād, developed a "metaphysics of essences" and held the opposite view that existence is an accident and that the essences are principial. In this debate Mulla Şadra sided definitely with the Peripatetics and Sufis in accepting the principiality of Being, and opposed the Illuminationists.

On the question of the unity and gradation of Being, however, Mulla Şadra 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 principial with respect to its own quiddity. According to Ākhūnd, 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 glowworm, 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.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, Being, no matter where it manifests itself, appears always with its attributes or armies (*'asākir*), as they are traditionally called, such as knowledge, will, power, etc.<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup>

The various beings in the world of manifestation are all limitations of the one reality or Being. These limitations are abstracted by the mind and become the forms of quiddities (*māhīyyāt*) of things, and when transposed into the principial domain, they become the Platonic ideas or archetypes. Unlike Being which is objectively real and in fact is the reality of the cosmos, the *māhīyyāt*

<sup>27</sup> See Chapter XIX on Suhrawardi Maqtūl.

<sup>28</sup> Mulla Şadra 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 chapter of the *Asfār*.

<sup>29</sup> See Seyyed Hossain Naşr, "The Polarisation of Being," *Pakistan Philosophical Journal*, Vol. III, No. 2, October 1959, pp. 8-13.

<sup>30</sup> The doctrine of the unity and gradation of Being in Mulla Şadra is not new; it was expressed clearly five centuries before him by ibn 'Arabi. Mulla Şadra, 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.

are accidents of Being abstracted by the mind without having a reality independent of Being. Even the archetypes (*al-a'yān al-thābitah*) 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 *māhīyyāt* 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 *māhīyyāt*, above all substances and accidents. It is the "Form of forms" and the Agent of all acts. By manifesting Itself longitudinally (*tūli*) It brings into being the various orders of Being from the archangels to terrestrial creatures and by manifesting Itself latitudinally (*'arḍi*) It creates the various members of each order of Being.<sup>31</sup> 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 of them; their being is in fact this very knowledge without which they would have no share whatsoever in Being.

Since Being is unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in unity,<sup>32</sup> it partakes of logical distinctions and divisions while remaining in essence indivisible and above all polarizations. Mulla Ṣadra goes into great detail about the various divisions and categories of Being and in fact most of the first book of the *Asfār* is concerned with them. We mention here a few of the divisions which Ākhūnd discusses with great rigour in his various writings, especially in the monumental *Asfār*.

One division of Being is into connective being (*al-wujūd al-irtibā'i*) and self-subsistent being (*al-wujūd al-naḥsi*). 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

<sup>31</sup> In dividing the hierarchies of universal existence into longitudinal and latitudinal orders Mulla Ṣadra follows the scheme of *ishrāqi* angelology, which was discussed in the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtūl.

<sup>32</sup> What distinguishes the gnostics from the Ḥakīms 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 (*ḥāl*) 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 Ḥakīms, however, from a theoretical and more logical point of view, do not take particular perspective of the traveller upon the path (*sālik*) into consideration and have even criticized some of the gnostics for considering multiplicity to be completely unreal.



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 in 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 of itself, i. e., the Being of God. From another point of view Mulla Şadra considers the being of all things other than God to be the connective being (*wujūd al-rābi*) and only the Being of God to be Being *per se*.<sup>33</sup>

Another division of Being adopted by Mulla Şadra is that of the necessary (*wājib*), possible (*mumkin*), and impossible (*mumtani'*) beings which nearly all the Muslim philosophers and many theologians coming after ibn Sīna and, following his example, have accepted.<sup>34</sup> 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 *māhīyyāt* 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 or 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 *māhīyyah*. One can say that It is without *māhīyyah* or that Its Being and *māhīyyah* 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 *māhīyyāt* are either particular or universal; the latter either exist before particulars or are abstracted by the intellect from particulars.<sup>35</sup> The universals

<sup>33</sup> By this latter distinction, Mulla Şadra 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.

<sup>34</sup> See ibn Sīna, *Kitāb al-Shifā' (Ilāhīyyāt)*, Teheran, lithographed edition, pp. 291 ff.

<sup>35</sup> The feature which distinguishes particulars from one another and determines all other qualities in them is, according to Mulla Şadra, their degree of being.



which exist independently of all particulars are the archetypes of Platonic ideas upon the reality of which Suhrawardi Maqtūl had insisted against the view of the Peripatetics. Mulla Ṣadra likewise criticizes Aristotle and Ibn Sīna 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.<sup>36</sup> Ākhūnd praises Suhrawardi Maqtūl and accepts fully the reasons he had given for the existence of the Platonic ideas or "masters of the species" (*arbāb al-anwā'*). 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 (*ṭawr*) 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 Ākhūnd is famous is called *imkān al-ashraf* 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 being necessitates the existence of these forms in the intermediate world of souls or the world of inverted or reflected forms (*al-amthāl al-mu'allaqah*) and these in turn necessitate their existence in the spiritual world of simple intellectual substances.

After showing that the *māhīyyāt* are in reality limitations of being, Mulla Ṣadra goes on to assert that the logical distinction made by Aristotle and all

<sup>36</sup> Mulla Ṣadra 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 ṭabā'aka al-tām*)," *Aṣfār*, 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 récit d'initiation et l'hermétisme en Iran," *Eranos Jahrbuch*, Vol. 17, 1949, pp. 121-88.

the later philosophers between substance and the accidents which together form the ten categories concerns only the *māhīyyāt*; 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 *māhīyyah* 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.<sup>37</sup> 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 Şadra calls this first manifestation of the divine essence extended being (*wujūd al-munbasit*), the first intellect, the sacred effusion (*faid al-muqaddas*) or the Truth of truths (*ḥaqīqat al-ḥaqā'iq*) which he considers to be one in essence but partaking of degrees and stages of manifestation.<sup>38</sup>

He divides reality into three categories: of the divine essence, of "Absolute Being" which he identifies with extended being, and of relative being which is that of the creatures.<sup>39</sup> The cause of all things, therefore, is extended being which in turn is 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 Şadra 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 (*anfās*), 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

<sup>37</sup> For the general discussion on cause and effect, see J. Muşlih, *op. cit.*, pp. 85 ff.

<sup>38</sup> It is this "simple being" or the supreme intellect which the Sufis before Mulla Şadra identified with the reality of Muḥammad. See ibn 'Arabi, *La sagesse des prophètes*, tr. T. Burckhardt, Albin Michel, Paris, 1955, pp. 181 ff.

<sup>39</sup> According to a principle—which is another of the well-known doctrines formulated by Mulla Şadra and is called *basit al-ḥaqīqah kull al-ashyā'*, 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; 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.

(*mujarradāt*). That is why, as Ākhūnd 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 *'ālam al-jabarūt*, 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 Ṣadra 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-ḥarakat al-jauhariyyah*),<sup>40</sup> 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 (*kāif*), place (*makān*), and substance,<sup>41</sup> 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 upon its substance, if that substance were to change, its essence would also change and lose its identity.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> See J. Muṣliḥ, *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 Ākhūnd is referring here.

<sup>41</sup> Mulla Ṣadra placed so much emphasis upon this point that he discussed it not only in the First Book of the *Asfār* but in many other chapters of the work and in nearly all of his other books as well. See also H. A. Rāshid, *Dau Filsūf-i Sharq wa Gharb*, Parwin Press, Iṣpahān, 1334 Solar, pp. 50ff., and J. Muṣliḥ, *op. cit.*, pp. 128ff. Mulla Ṣadra in the Second Book of the *Asfār* and other places insists that he is not the first among the Ḥakīms 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'ānic 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" (lvi, 59-61, Pickthall's translation) in support of his view.

<sup>42</sup> See ibn Sina, *Dānish-Nāmeḥ-i 'Alā'i*, (*Ṭabī'īyyāt*), 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 sublunary region. But by 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 Ṣadra, 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



Following the Sufis, Mulla Ṣadra 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.<sup>43</sup> 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.<sup>44</sup> In order to prove this assertion, Ākhūnd makes use of several arguments. For example, he writes that it is an accepted fact that accidents have 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 Ṣadra, 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 (*ṣūrah nau'īyah*) which determines the species and identity of the body. Each of these is reached. Moreover, substantial change for the Aristotelians is sudden and instantaneous while for Ākhūnd it is gradual like other forms of motion. Also, substantial change in the Aristotelian sense is limited to the sublunary region, while for Mulla Ṣadra the whole of gross and subtle manifestation partakes of substantial motion. Ākhūnd'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.

<sup>43</sup> Ibn Sina, *Shifā' (Ṭabī'īyyāt)*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>44</sup> The idea that God annihilates and re-creates the world at every moment is one that is shared by the majority of the Sufis. Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmi expresses it:

"Every moment the world is being renewed, and we  
unaware of its perpetual change.

Life is ever pouring in afresh, though in the body  
it has the semblance of continuity."

R. A. Nicholson, *Rūmi, Poet and Mystic*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1950, p. 117. See also T. Burckhardt, *Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*, tr. D. M. Matheson, Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1959, Chap. IV.

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 is 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 Ṣadra identifies with the intelligences, above all change.

Time, for Ākhūnd as for Aristotle, is the quantity of motion, which, in a world of continuous substantial motion, becomes an inherent feature of cosmic existence.<sup>45</sup> 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 Ṣadra, 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 reaching 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.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Substantial motion is essentially a rebirth because it always means the attainment of a new state of Being.

<sup>46</sup> From what we have said above it is clear that in Mulla Ṣadrā'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 Ṣadrā'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-Barakāt al-Baḡhdādi for whom also time is the measure or dimension of existence. See S. Pines, *Nouvelles études sur Awḡad al-Zamān Abu'l-Barakāt al-Baḡhdādi*, Librairie Dur-lacher, Paris, 1955, Chap. II.



Mulla Şadra 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 Ākhūnd 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 essence or *in principio* but not in time and the view of Mīr Dāmād about *al-ḥudūth al-dahri*.<sup>47</sup> Mulla Şadra believes that creation is in time (*al-ḥudūth al-zamāni*) 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 Ākhūnd, following the Sufis, calls the reality of Muḥammad.<sup>48</sup> 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.<sup>49</sup> This last intellect is like a mill that grinds out new forms at every moment to feed the *hylé* of the world. It governs the world according to divine decree and gives revelation to prophets and 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 Şadra 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 Ākhūnd considers knowledge and being, or, from

<sup>47</sup> In *Faṣl* 33 of the first book of the *Asfār*, Ākhūnd 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 their celestial archetypes or Platonic ideas.

<sup>48</sup> See Chapter XLVII.

<sup>49</sup> See Mulla Şadra, *al-Wāridāt al-Qalbīyyah*, *Rasā'il*, pp. 243-49.



another point of view, the knower and the known,<sup>50</sup> to be essentially the same and identifies the being of things with God's knowledge of them.<sup>51</sup> 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 the 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 knowledge is identical both with Being and quiddity, since God's quiddity is the same as His Being.<sup>52</sup>

Mulla Ṣadra 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.<sup>53</sup>

Mulla Ṣadra divides knowledge (*'ilm*) into acquired (*ḥuṣūli*) knowledge and innate (*ḥudūri*) knowledge and, like the Illuminationists, divides the

<sup>50</sup> The world of change here as in the case of Suhrawardi Maqtūl means the whole visible universe and not only the sublunary region of the Aristotelians. According to Mulla Ṣadra, 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.

<sup>51</sup> The principle that the intellect, intelligence, and the intelligible are one (*ittiḥād al-'āqil w-al-ma'qūl*) is another point in which Mulla Ṣadra opposed the previous Muslim philosophers. This principle, which was accepted by the Neo-Platonists, was rejected by ibn Sīna (see *Ishārāt*, Haidari Press, Teheran, 1379/1959, Vol. III, pp. 292-93) and other Peripatetics. Ākhūnd, while acknowledging his debt to Porphyry and earlier Greek philosophers (see his *Rasā'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-Dīn Kāshāni and before him abu al-Ḥasan 'Āmiri in his *Kitāb al-Fuṣūl fi al-Ma'ālim al-Ilāhiyyah* had accepted this principle (see M. Minosie, "Az *Khazā'in-i Turkiyyah*," *Revue de la Faculte des Lettres*, Universite de Teheran, Vol. IV, No. 3, Mars 1957, p. 59), but it was Mulla Ṣadra 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 *Asfār*, pp. 277ff.

<sup>52</sup> "God's knowledge of things is identical with their being" (Mulla Ṣadra, *al-Shawāhid al-Rubūbiyyah*, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1236/1820, p. 36).

<sup>53</sup> See Mulla Ṣadra, *Sharḥ al-Hidāyah al-Athīriyyah*, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1315/1897, pp. 308-09.

latter category into the knowledge of a thing of 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-wujūd al-'aini*) of forms, while man's knowledge leads only to their mental existence (*al-wujūd al-dhīhni*). 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.<sup>54</sup>

According to Mulla Şadra, 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 establishes 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 Şadra 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.<sup>55</sup>

The soul (*nafs*), according to Mulla Şadra, is a single reality which first

<sup>54</sup> See his *Rasā'il*, p. 240, where he quotes the Qur'ānic statement that "not a particle of dust in the heavens and earth is hidden from God's knowledge" as a support and consequence of his conception of divine knowledge.

<sup>55</sup> Ākhūnd 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.

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.<sup>56</sup> The substance of the human sperm is at first potentially a plant; 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 and potentially either an angel or a disciple of the devil.<sup>57</sup> All of 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.<sup>58</sup> The soul is, therefore, brought into being with the body but it has spiritual subsistence independent of the body.<sup>59</sup> 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.<sup>60</sup> Finally, in man the five inner faculties: *sensus Communis* (*hiss al-mushtarik*) which perceives forms, apprehension (*wahm*) which perceives meanings, fantasy (*khayāl*) which preserves forms, memory (*dhākirah*) 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.<sup>61</sup> Throughout its development it is the same

<sup>56</sup> The whole of the fourth book of the *Asfār* 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 Ṣadra often speaks of the complete science of things as *mabdā' w-al-ma'ād*, the origin and end, and has even a book by this name. He identifies the science of *mabdā'* with theodicy and metaphysics and that of *ma'ād* with psychology and eschatology.

<sup>57</sup> The view of Mulla Ṣadra 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.

<sup>58</sup> Mulla Ṣadra, *al-Shawāhid al-Rubūbiyyah*, pp. 152ff.

<sup>59</sup> That is why Akhūnd writes that "the first seed of the universe was the intellect and the last stage is also the intellect which is the fruit of that same tree" (*ibid.*, p. 165).

<sup>60</sup> This principle which in Arabic is called *jismāniyat al-ḥudūth wa rūḥāniyat al-baqā'* is another of the doctrines for which Mulla Ṣadra is famous.

<sup>61</sup> We have not enumerated these faculties in detail because Mulla Ṣadra follows the earlier Muslim authors especially ibn Sīna on this point. See Chapter LXVI on "Natural History" regarding the various faculties.



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.<sup>62</sup> 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.<sup>63</sup>

Although the enumeration of the inner faculties by Mulla Ṣadra is essentially the same as that made by previous Muslim authors borrowing it from Aristotle, there is one point in which Mulla Ṣadra 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 Ṣadra, 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 *Ākhūnd*, 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 Ṣadra, like other Sufis, compares the soul to the cosmos on the one hand and to the Qur'ān on the other, identifying the higher states of being of the soul with the esoteric meanings of the Qur'ān.<sup>64</sup> There are seven degrees of existence for the soul as there are seven heavens and seven levels of interpretation of the Qur'ān. These degrees he enumerates as nature (*ṭabī'ah*), soul (*nafs*), intellect (*'aql*), spirit (*rūḥ*), secret (*sirr*), hidden secret (*khafī*).

<sup>62</sup> *Al-Shawāhid al-Rubūbiyyah*, pp. 134ff.

<sup>63</sup> By emphasizing the immanent aspect of the development of the soul, Mulla Ṣadra does not forget the transcendent factor, for in the treatise *Iksīr al-Ārifīn* he writes that the archangel Isrāfīl blows life into the body and gives it the power of sensation and motion, that Mikā'il enables the body to assimilate food and sends it its sustenance, that Jibrīl gives it instruction regarding the revelation and acts of worship and finally that 'Izrā'il enables the soul to abstract forms from matter and to separate itself from the body. *Rasā'il*, pp. 306-07.

<sup>64</sup> Concerning the traditional conception of cosmic becoming, see A. K. Coomaraswamy, "Gradation and Evolution," *Isis*, XXXV, 1944, pp. 15-16; XXXVIII, 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.

and the most hidden state (*akhfa*) which is that of perfect union with God. 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 Ṣadra from another point of view the soul has two faculties the practical (*'amali*) and the theoretical (*'ilmi* or *nazari*), which 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.<sup>66</sup>

As for the theoretical faculty it too is divided into four stages: the *potential* or *material* intellect (*'aql al-hayūlāni*) 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 intellectual demonstrations and is either acquired or bestowed as a divine gift and finally the *acquired* intellect (*'aql al-mustafād*) 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 Ṣadra 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'ān and the Ḥadīth and of the gnostics. According to Ākhūnd, the relation of this world to the next is like that of the mother's womb to this world. While the child is in his 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 men 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.

Ākhūnd divides cosmic beings into five classes each of which has a destiny and an end proper to its nature:<sup>67</sup> the pure intelligences separated from all

<sup>65</sup> According to a famous *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, accepted by the Shi'ahs and the Sunnis alike, the Qur'ān has seven levels of meaning the last known only to God. It is from the esoteric interpretation of the revealed book that Mulla Ṣadra and Sufis before him have drawn the gnostic doctrines inherent and hidden in the Islamic revelation as they are in all other revelations.

<sup>66</sup> *Iksir al-'Arifin, Rasā'il*, p. 295. This terminology is a very old one in Islam; it was adopted by the early Sufis from the traditions of the Prophets and Imāms.

<sup>67</sup> *Al-Shawāhid al-Rubūbiyyah*, p. 140.



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-nāṭiqah*), 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 (*'ālam al-mithāl*);<sup>68</sup> 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 Şadra considers it to be one of the great mysteries of metaphysics revealed only to those who have reached the highest stage.<sup>69</sup> 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 the 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 *Ākhūndī* 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 the body according to all the meanings we can give to the word "body."

<sup>68</sup> Mulla Şadra, *Risālah fi al-Ḥaşhr*, *Rasā'il*, pp. 341-58.

<sup>69</sup> In the case of animals, after death they join the masters of their species (*rabb 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 men.



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 Şadra 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.<sup>70</sup>

F

SIGNIFICANCE OF MULLA ŞADRA AND  
HIS INFLUENCE

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the importance of Mulla Şadra 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 Şadra for taking certain principles from ibn 'Arabi, Fārābi, and Suhrawardi Maqtūl 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 a metaphysics of one's own as if metaphysics were a mechanical invention. The principles have always been and will always be the same. What determines the originality of an author in a traditional civilization like that of Islam is his ability to reinterpret and reformulate the eternal verities in a new light and thereby create a new intellectual perspective.

Regarded in this way, Mulla Şadra must certainly be considered to be one of the most significant figures in the intellectual life of Shī'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 the 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'ān. In all these matters he represents the final stage of effort by several

<sup>70</sup> See Mulla Şadra, *al-Mabdā' w-al-Ma'ād*, 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.

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.<sup>71</sup>

More specifically, Mulla Şadra was able to harmonize his doctrinal formulation with the teachings of Islam in such a way as to overcome all the major difficulties which the Peripatetic philosophers met in the face of the teachings of the Qur'ān and for which al-Ghazālī criticized them so severely.<sup>72</sup> 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 Şadra, 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 eleventh/seventeenth-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 Qājār period, the separation brought about by Ākhūnd 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, Ākhūnd 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 centuries and a half has centred around Mulla Şadra. Of his immediate students, Mulla Muḥsin Faḍl, 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī, and Qāḍī Sa'īd Qumī, all of whom are among the leading figures of Shī'ah Islam, we need say little here for they have already been discussed in a previous chapter.<sup>73</sup> It need only be added that these men in turn produced a generation

<sup>71</sup> This esoteric view expressed in his commentary upon the *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* as well as in the *Asfār* was one most attacked by the exoteric 'ulamā'. 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 esoteric view meant for the saintly and appealing to the contemplative aspect of man, can take into consideration the relativity of heaven and hell with respect to the divine essence without in any way denying the reality or "eternity" of reward and punishment in the life hereafter with respect to human existence here.

<sup>72</sup> For the background leading to Mulla Şadra, see Chapter XLVII on "The School of Iṣpahān" in this work. See also Mulla Muḥsin Faḍl, *al-Maḥajjat al-Baiḍā'*, Vol. I, Islāmiyyah Press, Teheran, 1379/1959, introduction by Sayyid Muḥammad Miṣḥkāt, pp. 10-23, in which the background leading to Mulla Şadra as well as the distinguishing principles of his own doctrines is discussed.

<sup>73</sup> It will be remembered that al-Ghazālī in his *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl* considered the philosophers to be infidels on three points: their rejection of the resurrec-

of students who extended the teachings of Ākhūnd far and wide.<sup>74</sup> In the Qājār period, after a short interim of anarchy caused by the Afghān invasion, the school of Mulla Ṣadra was once again revived, the most famous of its members being Hāji Mulla Hādi Sabziwāri, Mulla 'Ali Nūri, author of one of the most important commentaries upon the *Asfār*, Shāikh Aḥmad Aḥsā'i, founder of the Shāikhī movement and the commentator upon Mulla Ṣadrā's *Mashā'ir*, Mulla 'Ali Mudarris Zunūzi, author of a significant work *Badā'i' al-Ḥikam* in Persian and glosses upon the *Asfār*, and Muḥammad Hidaji, also the author of a commentary upon the *Asfār*.<sup>75</sup>

The influence of Ākhūnd is to be met with wherever the traditional school of *Ḥikmat* is still preserved and taught in Persia.<sup>76</sup> All the adherents of this school have regarded Mulla Ṣadra as their master and it is no exaggeration to say that Ākhūnd stands along with Fārābi, ibn Sīna, al-Ghazāli, Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsi, Suhrawardi Maqtūl, and ibn 'Arabi among the principal formulators of the Muslim intellectual sciences and, though not well known outside Persia, is no lesser a figure than his more famous predecessors.<sup>77</sup> 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.

tion 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-Ghazāli*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1953, p. 37.

From what we have discussed of Mulla Ṣadrā'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.

<sup>74</sup> Mulla Ṣadrā's doctrines were especially influential in India to which country one of his disciples by the name of Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Kāshāni migrated—after reaching a wild state of ecstasy during one of Mulla Ṣadrā's lessons—and where he attracted many disciples. The works of Mulla Ṣadra have continued to be taught in the Islamic schools of the Indian sub-continent, especially his *Sharḥ al-Hidāyah* which came to be known by the author's name as *Ṣadra*. Many glosses have been written on it by various philosophers and scholars in India such as Muḥammad Amjad al-Ṣādiqi (d. 1140/1727), Mulla Ḥasan al-Lakhnawi (d. 1198/1783), Muḥammad A'lam al-Sindili (d. 1250/1834), and 'Abd al-'Ali Baḥr al-'Ulūm who lived in the thirteenth/nineteenth century. Numerous manuscripts of these and other glosses on the *Sharḥ al-Hidāyah* are to be found in such libraries as the Raza Library of Rampur and the Khuda Bakhsh Library in Patna (see the *Catalogue of Arabic and Persian Manuscripts in the Oriental Library at Bankipur*, Vol. XX [Arabic MSS.], Bihar and Orissa, 1936, MSS. No. 2351, 2368, 2371-78).

<sup>75</sup> See Chapter XLVII on "The School of Iṣpahān."

<sup>76</sup> For a list of the names of Mulla Ṣadrā's disciples in the Qājār period, see *Raiḥānat al-Adab* and Gobineau, *op. cit.*, pp. 103ff.

<sup>77</sup> Iqbāl's statement that, "It is, moreover, the Philosophy of Ṣadra which is the source of the metaphysics of early Bābism" (*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.



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## Part 6. Political Thought

## Chapter XLIX

## IBN KHALDŪN

## A

The consideration of ibn Khaldūn'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 Khaldūn'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 Khaldūn 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 Khaldūn to the investigation of the phenomenon of government, which is both a constituent part and the "form" (*ṣūrah*), 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]."<sup>1</sup> 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 Khaldūn 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 Khaldūn raises a number of problems

<sup>1</sup> Q. I 278ff. Cf. Book 4, Part 4, Chapter XLVI for bibliographical information about ibn Khaldūn's works and other works cited in the footnotes. Complete bibliographical information will be given in this chapter only for works not already cited.

crucial for understanding the character of both his own science 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 Khaldūn'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 Khaldūn does not pretend to be an impartial historian; he assumes the role of a severe critic. This 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,<sup>2</sup> ibn Khaldūn 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.<sup>3</sup> 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 of necessity to the formation of political life and subject it to certain natural and necessary laws of human association.<sup>4</sup>

Like culture as a whole, political life is considered by ibn Khaldūn 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.<sup>5</sup> 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 (*mizāj*). In culture, ibn Khaldūn considers the efficient cause of the movement to be a specific property of the human soul, i.e., social solidarity (*'aṣabīyyah*) 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.<sup>6</sup>

This genetic method is supplemented by the analytical method through which ibn Khaldūn distinguishes and compares the various forms of political power, and the institutional arrangements within each form. Apart from the purely natural regime in which a tyrant or small bands or groups give free

<sup>2</sup> Q. I, 278; II, 201.

<sup>3</sup> Q. I, 278: 5-7, 337-38, 394:3, 415:5; II, 126.

<sup>4</sup> Q. I, 247-48, 291:15-16, 293, 294:16-18, 299-300, 309, 336-38, 342; II, 19:4-5, 65ff., 93ff., 106-07, 128.

<sup>5</sup> Q. I, 299-300, 305-06, 309ff.

<sup>6</sup> Q. I, 291:15-16, 293, 294:16-18, 299:14, 331:1-2, 342; II, 93ff. 108ff.



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.<sup>7</sup>

Throughout this discussion, ibn Khaldūn 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-Fārābī 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.<sup>8</sup> In this context, al-Fārābī employs the two central terms which have come to be associated with ibn Khaldūn's new science, i.e., '*umrān*' and '*aṣabīyyah*.'<sup>9</sup> Since al-Fārābī 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 Khaldūn'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 to live; and in elaborating all the natural

<sup>7</sup> Q. I, 342ff.; II 126ff.

<sup>8</sup> *Talkhīṣ Nawāmīs Aflātūn* ("Compendium Legum Platonis"), ed. Franciscus Gabrieli ("Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi, Corpus Platonium, Plato Arabus," Vol. III), London. The Warburg Institute, 1952, pp. 16-18.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17:4, 18:2 and 6, 24:10, 33:13, 41:6.

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 Khaldūn does not attempt to present it as a new version of political philosophy or as a substitute for it, 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 Khaldūn 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 Khaldūn's new science of culture.

Immediately after formulating the basic principles of the new science,<sup>10</sup> and asserting its relative independence and newness, ibn Khaldūn 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."<sup>11</sup> "Nor does it belong to the science of 'political government' [*siyāsāt al-madanīyyah*], for political government is the administration of the household or the city as is obligatory [*bima yajib*] according to 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."<sup>12</sup> Only after having stated this difference does ibn Khaldūn 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'īf*]. That is why they deserted it."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Q. I, 61; cf. above, Chap. XLVI.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Q. III, 322, where ibn Khaldūn 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.

<sup>12</sup> Q. I, 62:3-10.

<sup>13</sup> Q. I, 63:5-8.

Ibn Khaldūn'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 of 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 has 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 Khaldūn 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 Khaldūn 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 Khaldūn 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 nature); and their concern with strictly natural principles, as evidenced in Plato's and al-Fārābī's treatment of the laws, is subsidiary and accidental to their attachment to these other principles.

Ibn Khaldūn 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 Khaldūn and Muslim political philosophers, and to prove the superior character of the new science as compared to the traditional political science. Yet ibn Khaldūn'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 Khaldūn 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 Khaldūn cites what is mentioned by wise men in their proof of the necessity of prophecies, what is mentioned in the fundamentals of jurisprudence (*Uṣūl al-Fiqh*) in proving the necessity of languages, and what the jurists (*fuqahā'*) mention "in the justification of legal prescriptions through their purposes."<sup>14</sup> 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; men 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 of 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 Khaldūn's refutation 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

<sup>14</sup> Q. I, 63-64.

his science. However, "The philosophers (*falāsifah*) 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 (*ḥukm wāḍi'*). 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 and on them be completed without disacknowledgment or [angry] reproach.' This proposition by the philosophers (*ḥukamā'*) 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 (*'aṣabīyyah*) 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."<sup>15</sup>

On the surface ibn Khaldūn's argument is extremely simple, if not naïve. The supposed demonstration of the philosophers is based on the minor premise that every ruler must rule with a divine Law.<sup>16</sup> 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 rulers without divine authority. This simple fact could not have escaped the notice of the philosophers whom ibn Khaldūn calls "wise men," and the issue cannot be dismissed on this level.

## D

There are two possible philosophic approaches to the study of man and society: the first, which is characteristic of ibn Khaldūn'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-

<sup>15</sup> Q. I, 72:7-73:5.

<sup>16</sup> Q. I, 345-46.

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 ilāhi*) in the order of investigation.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup>

The comprehensive works of ibn Sīnā, which ibn Khaldūn specifically has in mind in discussing this issue, present us with two features significant for understanding ibn Khaldūn'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.<sup>19</sup> Ibn Sīnā's works thus point to the fact that both "natural" and "divine" political sciences owe their origin to the philosophers. Yet in studying ibn Sīnā's "natural" version of political science, we come to realize the significant difference between him and ibn Khaldūn: ibn Sīnā 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 till after the completion of divine science; or, as ibn Khaldūn explains, it needs "additional" arguments which cannot be presented prior to the investigation of the world

<sup>17</sup> *Iḥṣā' al-'Ulūm* (La statistique des sciences), ed. Osman Amin (2nd ed., Cairo, Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabi, 1949), pp. 102 ff.

<sup>18</sup> In al-Fārābī'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 Sīnā's comprehensive philosophical works relegate political science to the very end to be treated as an ancillary to divine science. This arrangement 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 Sīnā in particular, the "branches" (*furū'*) of divine science are concerned with the study of revelation, miracles, resurrection, and reward and punishment; cf. al-Fārābī, *Iḥṣā'*, pp. 99-101; ibn Sīnā, *Aqsām al-'Ulūm al-'Aqlīyyah* (The Parts of Rational Sciences) in *Tis' Rasā'il*, Cairo, Maṭba'ah Hindīyah, 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 Khaldūn, 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.

<sup>19</sup> *Uyūn*, pp. 40-46, 59-60; cf. pp. 16-17, *Ishārāt*, pp. 119-37, 176-222; *Najāt*, pp. 157-93, 284, 38: "Nafs," *Shifā'*, pp. 157-268, "Siyāsah," *Shifā'* ("La sociologie et la politique dans la philosophie d'Avicenne") ed. Moḥammad Yūsuf Mūsa ("Memorial Avicenne" I), Cairo, Institute Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1952, pp. 8-27.



and of the place of man within it. (2) Further, in his "Parts of Rational Sciences," ibn Sīna 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.<sup>20</sup> In addition, that part of political philosophy which deals with political governments studies all classes of governments, good and bad, those based on kingship as well as those based on prophecy and divine Laws.<sup>21</sup> 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 a 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 *Shifā'*, for instance, indicate that ibn Sīna 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 Imāmate), and other matters relating to governments and ethics.<sup>22</sup> The whole discussion is, thus, centred around prophecy and presupposes its "obligatory" character.

Ibn Khaldūn's first and foremost observation on the total scope of the subject-matter of "divine" political science is that it is not natural (*ṭabī'i*) or necessary (*ḍarūri*), 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 that revelation, divine Laws, and divine governments, and the concern with resurrection and reward and punishment, to be necessary conditions for 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 it 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.<sup>23</sup> Given human nature, prophecy and revelation are

<sup>20</sup> *Aqsām al-'Ulūm*, p. 105.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 107-08. This philosophic discussion of the prophetic regime, according to ibn Sīna, is contained in Plato's works on the *nomoi*.

<sup>22</sup> "Siyāsah," *Shifā'*, pp. 8ff.

<sup>23</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this problem, cf. Leo Strauss, "The Law of Reason in the *Kuzari*" 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.

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 may be followed and preserved. To be obeyed and preserved, this 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 Khaldūn 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.<sup>24</sup> 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,<sup>25</sup> and that the authority of unaided human reason is sufficient to prove that. (Ibn Khaldūn says, for instance, that the authority of human reason is "sufficient" for "forbidding injustice."<sup>26</sup>) Divine government is not only a 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 conventions.

Ibn Khaldūn's second major observation is that the premises and, consequently, the conclusions of "divine" political science are not rationally demonstrable (*burhāni*), 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 that 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

<sup>24</sup> Cf. above, pp. 966-67.

<sup>25</sup> Not that a particular language, etc., is necessary, but that some language is necessary.

<sup>26</sup> Q. I, 346:4-5.

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 by divine Laws.

We are now in a better position to understand the reason why ibn Khaldūn 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 science 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 Khaldūn 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.<sup>27</sup>

, E

Ibn Khaldūn'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 Khaldūn'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

<sup>27</sup> Cf. above, p. 965; Q. III, 73.



conclusions based on rational inquiry. It is characteristic of ibn Khaldūn 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 *Mutakalimūn* and the political theology of the philosophers.

Religiously, ibn Khaldūn 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 (*muḥaqqiqūn*). He thus shows a predilection for pure religion and pure philosophy over against any kind of theology which is necessarily a confused mixture of both.

It is noteworthy that in the crucial passage where ibn Khaldūn criticizes the divine science and the political theology of the philosophers, he mentions al-Fārābi and ibn Sīna but not ibn Ruṣhd.<sup>28</sup> Of Muslim philosophers, it was precisely ibn Ruṣhd who (like ibn Khaldūn) was a recognized religious judge (*qāḍi*) and a philosopher who criticized al-Fārābi and ibn Sīna 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.<sup>29</sup> It is not possible here to enter into the historical and doctrinal developments that led to ibn Ruṣhd's new attitude towards theology. For our immediate purpose we need only note that in this decisive respect ibn Khaldūn is following in the footsteps of one of his 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-Fārābi and ibn Sīna. To understand his specific reasons for criticizing them, we must now analyse his treatment of Muslim dialectical theology (*Kalām*), and of the divine science and political theology of the "philosophers."

"Dialectical theology," says ibn Khaldūn, "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."<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Q. III, 213.

<sup>29</sup> *Faṣl al-Maqūl* (Traité décisif), ed. L. Gauthier, 3rd ed., Alger, Editions Carbonel, 1948, pp. 20ff.

<sup>30</sup> Q. III, 27:1-3.

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 generally accepted opinions about them, based on the command of their prophet-legislator.<sup>31</sup> 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 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.<sup>32</sup>

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 who attack them by the use of rational arguments. This happened in Muslim history with the rise of the Mu'tazilites, the Shī'ites, and other 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),<sup>33</sup> 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 the rational support offered by dialectical theology is only dialectical, sophistical, or rhetorical (i. e., based on common opinions); it has no scientific value.<sup>34</sup>

While discussing the emergency of dangerous innovations, ibn Khaldūn notices a certain identity of origin and a certain parallelism between the opinions of the innovators (the Mu'tazilites and the Shī'ites) and the writings and opinions of the philosophers "which are in general at variance with the beliefs of the divine Law."<sup>35</sup> 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

<sup>31</sup> Q. III, 29-30.

<sup>32</sup> Q. III, 31-35.

<sup>33</sup> Al-Fārābi, *Iḥṣā'*, pp. 108-13.

<sup>34</sup> Q. III, 40-42, 45-49.

<sup>35</sup> Q. III, 40, cf. also 41.

or Caliphs to the Prophet)<sup>36</sup> of the opinions of the innovators or of the Mu'tazilite and Shī'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 Khaldūn 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 around this divine science.

In contradistinction to all dialectical theologians, philosophers suppose that "all" existence can be apprehended by "mental contemplation and rational syllogisms."<sup>37</sup> It thus appears that they include all "spiritual" beings 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 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."<sup>38</sup>

But philosophy does not content itself with presenting theoretical knowledge as a superior alternative to 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 promised by the prophet-legislators, this philosophic 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.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Q. I, 345-46.

<sup>37</sup> Q. III, 210:2-5, 211:15-17.

<sup>38</sup> Q. III, 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.

<sup>39</sup> Q. III, 210:7-8, 211-12.



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 possible only within the limited range of what can be humanly experienced and known. Yet philosophers in general, and al-Fārābi and ibn Sīna 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]."<sup>40</sup> 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."<sup>41</sup> Since Plato was indeed the great master of al-Fārābi and ibn Sīna in their exposition of divine matters, and the *Timaeus*<sup>42</sup> and the *Laws* were their models, we are faced again with the 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-Fārābi and ibn Sīna 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 prerequisite 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 Khaldūn's position.

In his section on "divine science" (*ilm ilāhi*) in the "Enumeration of the Sciences," al-Fārābi 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 existents involves no injustice or irregularity; and finally "sets out to refute corrupt

<sup>40</sup> Q. III, 121, 213-18.

<sup>41</sup> Q. III, 215:12-13.

<sup>42</sup> The quotation from Plato apparently refers to *Timaeus* 28C; cf. Rosenthal's translation of Q. Vol. III, p. 252, n. 1029.

opinions" about God.<sup>43</sup> The relation between political science, treated by him in the following chapter, and this last function of divine science is not immediately clear, although the inclusion of dialectical theology (*Kalām*) 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.<sup>44</sup> But here he does not speak about the relation between this theology and the examinations conducted in divine science. We conclude that al-Fārābi leaves the problem of the relation between divine science and political theology set up for the inhabitants of the city ambiguous, at least in his more public writings.

At first sight, ibn Sīna 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 science 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.<sup>45</sup> It is true, as ibn Khaldūn observes, that ibn Sīna 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 Khaldūn 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 Sīnā'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.<sup>46</sup> 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 Khaldūn 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 Sīna seems indeed to argue in the context that the realization of prophecy is necessary as a preparation for the existence of the "good order"

<sup>43</sup> *Iḥṣā'*, pp. 99-101.

<sup>44</sup> Cf., e.g., *Ārā' Ahl al-Madīnat al-Fāḍilah* ("Der Musterstaat"), ed. Fr. Dieterici, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1895, pp. 5ff.

<sup>45</sup> "Siyāṣah," *Shifā'*, pp. 12ff. Consider the frequent repetition of *wa-yajibu* (and it is obligatory) throughout the text.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9:8 and *passim*.

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 Sīna leaves many questions unanswered, or that his presentation is as ambiguous as that of al-Fārābi. There is, thus, ample justification for ibn Khaldūn'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 Khaldūn 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 though beginning with the opposite extreme of the starting-point of the 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 Khaldūn 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 sciences) which are in fact the philosophic versions of dialectical theology (*Kalām*). He accepts the former (i.e., logic, natural science, mathematics), while rejecting the latter.<sup>47</sup>

Ibn Khaldūn'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 Khaldūn is silent on this subject; he does not attempt a direct refutation of this contention.

<sup>47</sup> Q. III, 212-20.



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 "promised" happiness is radically different from 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 practised 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 form 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.<sup>48</sup> 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 Khaldūn 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 practising the demonstrative sciences (logic, natural science, mathematics)

<sup>48</sup> Q. II, 127.

and the useful arts (e.g., medicine, music, and jurisprudence). But, above all, he should, like ibn Khaldūn, 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.

F

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 the manner in which they expressed it. When, in addition, this polemic is presented to the reader to draw his 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 it is designed to serve. Ibn Khaldūn'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 Khaldūn, 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 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.<sup>49</sup> 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 as 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 questioned; 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 not contribute to it by presenting themselves to non-philosophers in the guise of dialectical theologians and mystics, as ibn Sīna 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 Khaldūn'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 of divine Law is higher than 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

<sup>49</sup> Q. III, 121–24



in nature, and rational moral laws are not essential to man's nature or the nature of society.<sup>50</sup> There can, consequently, be no theoretical science of ethics or politics except in the extremely limited sense developed by Khaldūn 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 the 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 the 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 overpowering will of God, and in the certainty of the rewards and punishments in the world to come; they are thus

<sup>50</sup> 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 Khaldūn'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.

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 Khaldūn'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 Khaldūn 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 Khaldūn 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 Khaldūn'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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## BOOK FIVE

### OTHER DISCIPLINES

(Covering Both the Early and the Later Centuries)

#### Part 1. Language and Literature

##### Chapter L

#### 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 *ḥarakah* (moved or vocalized) and *sukūn* (quiescent consonant) corresponding to the alternation in the lifting and lowering of the camel's feet. (Cf. the *ḥabab* 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-Khalīl 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 sixteen metrical 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 last 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-cum-literary fairs, e.g., that of 'Ukāz, religious such as at Mecca, and cultural as that at Hīrah, to evolve a common language and widely appreciated norms and forms of artistic composition, though, naturally enough, they exhibited peculiarities of usage in 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 Hīrah 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 specially 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 *qāfiyah*. It is sometimes overlooked that the *qāfiyah* constituted an essential element—and not an additional, far less artificial, embellishment in the structure of Arabic poetry. In other words, verse without *qāfiyah* 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 *qāfiyah* 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 *qāfiyah* 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.<sup>1</sup> 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 *qāfiyah* in helping memorization as alluded to before.

<sup>1</sup> 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 *qāfiyah* in the *fātiḥah* (opening word) itself." *Al-Shi'r w-al-Shu'arā'*, Cairo, 1367/1947, I, p. 36.

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 supernatural 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.<sup>2</sup> 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 *jāhiliyyah*—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.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the two oldest kinds of verse were the *hijā'* (satire) and the *ḥamās* (self-glorification) with the keynote of the *ḥamās* or desperate pursuit of unbridled aggression. True, the *nasīb* (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 *qaṣīdah*. 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 *hijā'*, which has throughout maintained its independent form, the *ḥamās* in its kindred form of *madīḥ* (eulogy) came to assume the central position in the structure of the *qaṣīdah*, which was devised specially to subordinate the *nasīb* and many other minor forms of occasional verse to subserve it. This "loose-knit" 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.<sup>4</sup> The

<sup>2</sup> It was perhaps on account of this special knowledge that he was called *shā'ir*, the "kenner," who *knew* better than others. There is, however, another view which traces the word to its Hebrew counterpart 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 *ḥukkām*. *Arabic Literature*, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> The schooling of the impulses through *ḥudūd Allah* (limits of the Sacred Law) points the difference between the *jāhiliyyah* and Islam.

<sup>4</sup> Consistently with the Arab habit of ascribing long, gradual developments to particular persons, the innovation of the *qaṣīdah* is said to have originated with



order in the composition of the *qaṣīdah* is invariably as follows. First come the *nasīb* by way of a prelude; second, the *madīh* as the main part; and third, the *khātimah* (epilogue) which is mostly didactic. A certain proportion was observed particularly between the first two parts on the principle that the *nasīb* should neither overshadow the *madīh* nor pass without fulfilling its function of catching the ear of the audience for the latter.

*The Nasīb.*—Usually the poet pictures himself as confronting, in the course of his journeys to and from, the remains of the encampment which once has been the scene of his love. This gives him the opportunity to depict with remarkable pathos the scene of 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 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,<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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 this relish for musing which earned for the image of the beloved (*khayāl* 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 one.” For the rest, the pursuit of love is only reminiscent of “the hot chase of a game.” The only relieving feature is that the Arab lover insists on a response to his love, and that without any trace of cringing.

Muhalhil b. Rabī'ah (c. 500 A.D.), whose very name bears testimony to his contribution. Al-Jumāhī (*Ṭabaqāt*, Cairo, 1952, p. 24) dates it from the time of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib and Hāshim b. 'Abd Manāf.

<sup>5</sup> 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. *Raghibat al-'Āmil*, VII, p. 39.

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 townsfolk of Baghdād, 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 whom 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 Madīh.*—The *nasīb* formed only a prelude to catch the ear of the audience, the main theme being the *madīh*. 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 *ḥamās* already noted, the overpowering 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 acknowledgment of merit on the other side. Those who refused to be restrained by the collective interest and initiative of the tribe in the practice of these same virtues were designated the *ṣa'ālīk*, 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 Hīrah, the panegyric tended to be more and more personal and acquired features of flattery.

*The Khātimah.*—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 custom<sup>6</sup> 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 the Jewish and Christian poets and such pagan poets as were influenced by their thought (e.g. Zuhair and the Ḥanīfs) 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 antithesis of *hamās*) stand out as streaks of early morning light in the surrounding darkness. Such poetry flourished mostly in Ḥīrah and the oasis towns like Yathrib and al-Tā'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 'Abbāsīd period, the purveyors not only of wines but also of the etiquette of wine-drinking.<sup>7</sup> 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 *qaṣīdah* presented a series of thoughts moulded in self-contained verses strung together in the most impressive form of a single metre and *qāfiyah*. 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 *nasīb* and the *madīh*, 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 *ḥusn al-istitrād* (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

<sup>6</sup> The stock phrase attributed in the Qur'ān to the pagans in defence of their ways that "they found their forefathers practising them" faithfully exposes their lack of thought and reasoning.

<sup>7</sup> Vide al-Ma'arri, *Risālah al-Ḡhuṣṣān*, ed. Bint al-Shāṭi, p. 246.



preoccupation with a hard and meagre subsistence in a monotonous natural scene contributed to averse uss 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 *qaṣīdah* proved accommodating enough to change.

In addition to *hijā'*, there was one more form of artistic poetry, namely, the *riṭhā'* (elegy), which maintained its position independently of the *qaṣīdah*. Although this form too had its own clichés and was dominated by the spirit of *ḥamās* 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;<sup>8</sup> unconventional pieces prompted by events of everyday life were allowed to lapse. Yet a number of them noted for wit and humour (*al-mulāḥ*) are available for enjoyment on informal occasions.

*Islam and Poetry.*—Wherever the ideals of the *jāhiliyyah* 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., *hijā'*, *ḥakhr*, and *ḥamās*). Al-Jumaḥi 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.<sup>9</sup> 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-'aṣabiyyah*) 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 Muḥammad 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'ān as incapable of leadership due to lack of moral thinking and purposeful activity.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Al-Jumaḥi, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197; see also p. 217 where the same reason is adduced for the meagreness of poetry in al-Ṭā'if and 'Umān.

<sup>10</sup> Qur'ān, xxvi, 224 *et seq.* There is an exception in favour of those who are devoted to righteous belief and good deeds.

Severe penalties had also to be meted out to a number of them such as *abū 'Azza*, *al-Naḍr b. al-Ḥārith* 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 Muḥammad, 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 *jāhiliyyah* were not the only thing involved; their art itself was threatened with dislodgment from the position of supremacy enjoyed theretofore. Was there not the Qur'ān 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'ān 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'ān did. If it were not poetry it could only be grouped along with the utterances of a soothsayer (*kāhin*) or a person in trance (*majnūn*). 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 to 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 *jāhiliyyah* outlook on finding the Qur'ān to be merely a bundle of "the stories of the ancient peoples" (*asāṭir al-awwālīn*). Soon they propped up one of them, *al-Naḍr b. al-Ḥārith*, to draw the people away from the Qur'ān with his skill in reciting the stories of *Rustam* and *Isfandiyār*. As a matter of fact, the form of the Qur'ān 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 counterparts (*mathāni*), the endings (*ḥawāṣil*) 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'ān: it is clear and easily intelligible (*mubīn*), yet pure and elegant. But whatever the elegance of form and diction, the uniqueness of the Qur'ān 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'ān 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.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The example of the Qur'ān illustrates the principle of novelty in literary



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 to 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 would not taboo poetry; rather, he would listen eagerly to the verse of Umayyah b. abi al-Ṣalt 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'b 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'ād, and recalling her physical charms, not excluding the intoxication of the saliva compared to wine. The *madīh* puts on a new aspect in so far as the glorification of the new ideal is concerned.<sup>12</sup> But the poet did not yet know how to restrain his passion for satire; he had to make amends for suppressed expressions on the Anṣār. 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.<sup>13</sup> 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 fully legitimate in the context of Islam's recognition of merit only in the lawful pursuit, and not in renunciation, of sensuous pleasure. As the examples of Dābi' b. al-Ḥārith and al-Ḥuṭai'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 universal human interests to flattery of personages, conduced inevitably to concentration on the theme of love in poetry and song. These arts were cultivated in the Hijāz by the sprightly and intelligent youth from among the nobility of the Anṣār and the *Muhājirīn*, 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,

form. In order to achieve the paramount purpose of communication and effect, novelty must always be embedded in familiarity.

<sup>12</sup> 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-Jumaḥi, *op. cit.*, pp. 202-03.

<sup>13</sup> An excellent example of the change of values in this respect is provided by the *hijā'* of al-Najāshī which was taken by 'Umar to be an eulogy, *vide* ibn Qutaibah, *op. cit.*, I, p. 290.



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 interchange 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.<sup>14</sup> 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 *jāhiliyyah* 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 handy for development as an independent form, which, by the way, marked the beginning of the breaking-up of the "loose unity of the *qaṣīdah*."

The development of the independent form of the *ghazal* took two distinct and parallel lines. First, the licentious (*al-ibāhiyy*) *ghazal*, best represented by 'Umar b. abi Rabī'ah (d. c. 101/719), flourished in the towns and faithfully reflected the high life obtaining there. As compared with the pre-Islamic *nasīb*, 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.<sup>15</sup> 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 far and near. 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

<sup>14</sup> Up till the days of 'Umar, Arabian music was nothing but intonation of voice in the manner of a camel-driver reciting his songs (*vide al-Aghāni*, VIII, p. 149, quoted in *Fajr al-Islām*, p. 120). This accounts most plausibly for the absence of reference in the Qur'ān to music and dancing while the symbolization of wine is so commonplace.

<sup>15</sup> *Vide al-Jāhiz* quoted in *Duḥā al-Islām*, I, p. 15.

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 around the popular stories of Majnūn-Laila and Jamīl-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 overshadowed by a *tête-à-tête* 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-Ruqayyāt (d. c. 80/699–700) one finds him mentioning Umm al-Banīn, the wife of al-Walīd 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 *hijā’* 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-Aḥwāṣ, 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 *hijā’* of al-Ḥuṭai‘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 specially designed to be set to music. With this purpose they naturally preferred 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 preoccupation of the scholars with such pre-Islamic poetry as might be helpful in the study and preservation of the idiom of the Qur'ān. With regard to its appreciation, the time factor alone was of the prime importance; hence the prejudice in favour of the pre-Islamic verse became stereotyped, and all-pervading. It was ibn Khaldūn 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'ān and the Ḥadīth; 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, no matter if it is disobeyed, are all traceable direct to the influence of Islam 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 *naqā'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 Khaldūn 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.<sup>16</sup> No wonder that the view of ibn Khaldūn should remain unattended until it found an echo in Ṭāḥa Ḥusain, 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 Khārijites. 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 to 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 Khārijites, the purely ancient Arab tradition as mellowed by 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

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, *Maqaddimah*, Chap. VI (49).



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-Akḥṭal—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 *qaṣīdah* with its carefully chosen diction and high-flown style. The Christian al-Akḥṭal, 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 Anṣār. 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 a nostalgia in the mind of some poets who introduced a new theme, viz., the comparison of the 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 *qaṣīdah*, 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-Rummaḥ (d. 117/755). It was somewhat in the same spirit that the oldest and the simplest form of *rajaz* was employed in long *qaṣīdahs* pedantically overloaded with rare vocabulary.

*The 'Abbāsīd Era.*—With the advent of the 'Abbāsīds the corruptive patronage of the Court, which siphoned poetic talent into the *madīḥ*, 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 was bound to seek an outlet in new forms and modes of poetry. Fortunately the traditional *qaṣīdah* 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 was required was to salvage the various themes from

regimentation by the all-engrossing passion of tribal solidarity as signified by the supremacy of the *madīh*. 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 into independent kinds.

*Further Development of the Ghazal.*—It will be remembered that Islam, 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 affirmations of nature. Significant is the use in the Qur'ān of this very imagery of women 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 had 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 Sulaimān 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 a threat of legal cognizance and penalty. But calmly the poet asked him: "The sanction behind the penalty?" "Of course, the Qur'ān," replied the monarch, whereupon the poet retorted: "All right, the Qur'ān itself assumes my innocence when it says of the poets that they 'celebrate in speech what they do not practise!'"<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup> In the words of abu Nuwās, 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 *madīh* in relation to their inflated sense of vainglory. At the palace the poet was promoted to the position of a boon companion who shared the privacy and the intimacy of the patron, and enlightened, diverted, and amused him with appropriate citations,

<sup>17</sup> Ibn Qutaibah, *op. cit.*, I, p. 451.

<sup>18</sup> 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.



impromptu compositions, and ready wit. It is legitimate to link this institution with the life of the pre-Islamic poet, al-Nābighah, at the Court of Hīrah, but one has to take note of the steadily increasing dissoluteness and sexual exhibitionism which began with al-Walīd II and reached its climax in abu Nuwās.<sup>19</sup> This exhibitionism was designated separately as *al-khalā'ah al-mujūn* 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—undeniably a saving grace about it. When devoid of wit and shorn of all 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 Baghdād which was torn by Persian-Arab rivalry—a rivalry fanned by the alignment of the Persian element with the 'Abbāsids. In Baghdād 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—*zindīqs* as they were called.<sup>20</sup> 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 Māni as the Bacchus-like patrons of libertinism as against the restrictions on pleasure symbolized by Islam. Anyway, there is little doubt that this cultural arrogance

<sup>19</sup> It is only an exuberance of popular fancy which has foisted the *mujūn* of abu Nuwās on the company of Hārūn al-Rashīd. Ibn Khaldūn has noted the incongruity of it with the restraint and dignity of the bearing of the great monarch.

<sup>20</sup> An exact parallel is to be observed in our own day: Is it not that wine-drinking, ball-room dancing, and cabaret shows are associated with the superiority of the cultural taste and the intellectual refinement of Western provenance?



was linked with the aspiration to greater and greater political control, which made the 'Abbāsids 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 *zindīq*-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.<sup>21</sup> Thus the poetry of *Bashshār* (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 of 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 'Abbāsids 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 Nuwās to be overtaken by remorse and pious reflection in old age. Hence, *al-shaib w-al-shabāb* (old age and youth) developed into a recurring and semi-independent theme closely associated with the *nasīb*. It is characterized by recollections of the pleasures which are no more within 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.

<sup>21</sup> It is not merely a sentimental reaction but a perfectly reasonable attitude that the liberties taken by Iqbāl's "love" in the presence of God be denied to one who talks of God from the atheistic viewpoint. A verse of Hāfiẓ 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-Manṣūr, on behalf of Muṭī' b. Iyās. He pleaded that Muṭī' was only a *fāsiq* (libertine) and not a *zindīq*, i.e., not committed to overthrowing the existing order.

*Moral, Philosophical, and Mystic Poetry.*—It would be a very lopsided view indeed if we imagined the 'Abbāsīd society to be merely that which is pictured by the boon companions of the *élite* 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-'Atāhiyah (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-'Atāhiyah sometimes appears as the spokesman of the downtrodden 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-'Alā' 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 around the austere as exemplified by the particular features of Indian philosophy adopted by him. Still more important is to remember that pure philosophy proved no more delectable in verse than religion. Even though abu al-'Alā' was a master of literary arts, his philosophical poetry remained a simple statement of judgment and argument un-clothed in poetic imagery; hence it provided enough justification for denouncing it as "no poetry at all" (ibn Khaldūn). 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.<sup>22</sup> 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-'Alā'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 al-'Alā', they were widely enjoyed but seldom respected.

<sup>22</sup> In our own time Iqbāl succeeded eminently where abu al-'Alā' failed miserably. Iqbāl'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.

In contrast with philosophy, mystic ideas belong essentially to the theme of love and naturally command for their expression all the paraphernalia of love 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-'Alā', 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 around 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 *nadīm*-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 *madīh*, the *qaṣīdah*, which was in vogue. In view of the rigidity of its forms already noted, it is no surprise that it required the highest skill to handle it with success. In any case, the monotony of the stereotype 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 'Abbāsids *vis-à-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 Ḥamdānids under the shadow of the Crusades. Another theme cognate with it was that of the prison-poems (*al-ḥabsīyyāt*) best represented by abu Fīrās (d. 357/968). They are an impressive blend of nostalgia for home, pathos of suffering, and indomitable courage.

*Complaint against Time* (*Shakwah al-Zamān*).—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 of 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 their dynasties. It is only in the late 'Abbāsid period that the complaint against "Time"<sup>23</sup> 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 for 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 *ikhwāniyyāt* 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 *literator* 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 Baghdādian 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

<sup>23</sup> This is the "abuse of time" which is expressly prohibited by the Prophet. Only he would curse the stars who believes himself 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. Iqbāl, *Asrār-i Khudī*.

period, which often monopolizes the larger part of long *qaṣīdahs*, 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 of the tasteful and the elegant, who even used them as symbols of moods and sentiments in their exchanges of love.<sup>24</sup> No surprise that the description of flowers (*al-zahrīyyāt*) should grow into a semi-independent branch of poetry in which al-Ṣanūbari (d. 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-tardīyyāt* (venery poems). It also reflected in ample measure the trappings of luxury and civilization around an old traditional interest.

*Panegyrics on the Prophet* (*al-Madā'ih al-Nabawīyyah*).—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 *qaṣīdah*. 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-Kumayrī. It soon became a panegyric on the family of 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 misrule coupled with the fervent hope of return to ideal conditions at the hands of the virtuous Imāms. The two sides carried on the old bout right through the 'Abbāsīd period during which the 'Alid 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-Būṣīrī (died 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 *qaṣīdah*, 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 speci-

<sup>24</sup> See the interesting treatise on elegant manners by al-Waṣṣhā' (Leiden, 1887).

fically 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 *qaṣīdahs* were designated the *badī'īyyāt*. 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 *madīh*, the tendency to short pieces devoted to single or closely allied themes. However, the only departure from the tradition with regard to the *qāfiyah* was the adoption from the Persian of the *muzdawaj*, i.e., tenzon with each verse having a separate rhyme for its two hemistiches (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 *zindīq* 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-shi'r al-qaṣāṣīyy*) 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 the content. Abu al-'Atāhiyah, 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 Bashshār, 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-Khalīl has left behind a few verses which are like a formula for the rhythmic beating of the feet.<sup>25</sup> Further, the attempt to evolve an artistic form for the special purposes of

<sup>25</sup> Vide *Risālat al-Ghufrān*, p. 183.



music and dance took the direction of adaptation of the old tradition rather than a complete innovation. The full length of a poem was divided into parts consisting of two or more verses, each part having a different single rhyme for its several hemistiches 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-tasmîl*). 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-muwash-shah* (from *wishâh* 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 the 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 *qāfiyah* 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 highly 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 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 a 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'ān and the Ḥadīth.*—The unique position of the Qur'ān as the first book in Arabic has already been noted. It for the first time made the Arabs fully aware of the potentialities of prose as an artistic form. Still more important in another way was the normative influence of the Ḥadīth. It is certainly wrong to assume that the influence of the Qur'ān 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'ān. On the other hand, the Ḥadīth 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'ān and the Ḥadīth 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 wandering into every valley" (Qur'ān)—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 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 specially 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 Sāssānian 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 'Abbāsid 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-Jāhiz (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-Jāhiz's "Book on Animals" (*Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*), 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 specially 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 by the *qaṣṣās* (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 they continued to be regarded below the dignity of a scholar. Of course, the stories of love which were 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 Majnūn or the profane love of Waḍḍāḥ 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 interconnected 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 storehouse for such stories. The Persian *afsānah*, 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 supernatural 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 overlooked in making any sweeping generalizations in regard to the state of society. The overtone is particularly deceptive in regard to historical personalities as, for example, Hārūn al-Rashīd, 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 *Hazār Afsānah* itself that popularly idealized historical personalities were woven into the texture with a view to imparting a touch of reality to the fiction. Yet it is remarkable that this particular branch, as contrasted with that of *Kalīlah wa Dimnah*, was successfully cultivated at Baghdād and Cairo. The anonymous *maddāḥs* 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 sufficiently 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/fifteenth 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 to 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 were 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 *Al/ Lailah wa Lailah*.

The *Sīratu 'Antar*, another notable work of the same class, bears the impress of conscious art, its texture being loose-rhymed prose embroidered with some ten thousand verses. In point of content, a hero of the pre-Islamic times is made to live through five hundred 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 into 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, the *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'ān. It will, however, be observed that the reliance of the Qur'ān 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'ān 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 *Kalīlah wa Dimnah* by ibn al-Muqaffa' 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 (Risālah) and Rhetorical Maqāmah.*—The extraordinary 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 other 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 specially 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-risālah*) was the *maqāmah*, 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 an 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 'ulamā' and the lovers, was successfully attempted in every age. It has throughout remained a typically indigenous product, specially 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 *maqāmah* 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-'Alā' al-Ma'arri borrowed the wings of the popular traditions relating to the Prophet's Ascension (*al-mi'rāj*) to the heavens. His *Risālat al-Ghufrān* is really a *maqāmah* cycle under the overall covering of a *risālah*. 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 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 *maqāmah* for an audacious burlesque of contemporary state of learning and society, which imparted a unique quality to the work. The style 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 Ṭufail (d. 580/1184) entitled *Ḥayy Bin Yaqzān* is a complete surprise in Arabic literature in more than one way. 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 subordinated 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 for the reader. The merit of a historian like al-Ṭabari (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 of 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-Mas'ūdi (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 form for historical writing. Such development had to wait till the beginning of the eighth/fourteenth century when ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqa 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-Ṭiqṭaqa 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 the 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 'Abbāsīd 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 *Kitāb al-I'tibār* of 'Uthmān 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 Jubair (d. 614/1217-18), it is not overplayed at the expense of the content. Al-Ghazālī's *al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl* forms a class by itself—an autobiographical 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, this 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 intervenning between it and the frank hedonism of the *jāhilīyyah*.

Turning to prose, one finds Arabic offering, at its best, aphorisms, apologues, popular fables characterized by the spirit of adventure, and picaresque romance (*maqāmah*). 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 market-place, were read in book form in Europe. This was bound to produce a certain revulsion at a later period when they were found 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'rāj* into the *Divina Commedia* and the Solitary Man into *Robinson Crusoe*.

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## Chapter LI

## ARABIC LITERATURE: GRAMMAR AND LEXICOGRAPHY

### A

## GRAMMAR

The intellectual activity of the early Muslims stemmed directly from their devotion to 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—Makkah and Madīnah—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'ānic verses.<sup>1</sup> 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'ānic 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'ān. 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.<sup>2</sup> Actually, however, only a few of the Arabs concerned themselves with those branches of studies which involved the use of the method of *qiyās*, i.e., analogy and deduction.<sup>3</sup> Such creative intellectual activity was notably a 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 at Jundi-Shāpūr; hence, the mental attitudes of its inhabitants bore the stamp of philosophical and 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 *Ajamīs* 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 *Shu'ūbiyyah* 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'ān. It was a clear parallel to early *Shī'ism*, which was calculated to work out the political ascendancy of the Persians but only under the supreme and authoritarian overlordship of the House of the Arabian Prophet. Basrah and Kūfah, the two cantonments of the Arabs, provided ideal conditions for fruitful contact between the Arabs and the non-Arabs. Of particular importance was the proximity of the two towns to the northern Arabian desert, long regarded as the preserve of the linguistic

<sup>1</sup> This is amply borne out by the different versions of what prompted abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali to turn to grammar.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> This applies equally to grammar and to *al-rā'i* in the realm of *Fiqh*.

norm, and the market-place of al-Mirbad—on the outskirts of Baṣrah—was no less a close-by rendezvous of the *A'rāb* (Bedouin Arabs of the desert) and the *līterātī* until the former, becoming aware of the demand, themselves came to offer their linguistic materials to the *élite* of Iraq and western Persia.

According to the classical tradition, it was abu al-Aswad (Zālim b. 'Amr) al-Du'ali (or al-Dili), a poet, warrior, and teacher (died in 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'āwiyah at Ṣiffin. 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.<sup>4</sup> 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 actually was. Till the time with which we are concerned, the Arabic script, originally taken over from the Syriac-Nabataean writing, remained without a system of *i'rāb*, i.e., vowel-marks. Nor was there any established practice as to *i'jām*, 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.<sup>5</sup> In the 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 first the innovation was opposed by Ziyād b. Abīhi, the Governor of Baṣrah, 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:

- (i) the vowel "a," the pronunciation of which needs a full upward opening (*fathah*) of the mouth, to be marked with a dot above a letter.
- (ii) 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.

<sup>4</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, "Abu al-Aswad."

<sup>5</sup> 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*.



(iii) the vowel "u," the pronunciation of which needs a rounded closing (*ḍammah*) of the lips, to be marked with a dot in front of the letter.<sup>6</sup>

This system of dots is to be seen in one of the oldest copies of the Qur'ān 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.<sup>7</sup>

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-'Arabīyyah*, i.e., the art of speech in the correct and characteristic Arab way. The use of vowel-endings itself was known as *al-i'rāb*, i.e., rendering into the proper Arabic way.<sup>8</sup> The *al-'Arabīyyah* was undoubtedly an embryonic form of Arabic grammar.

The emphasis on *al-'Arabīyyah* grew in proportion to the need for saving the Qur'ān from being consigned to antiquity. So far the method used was mere *talqīn*, i.e., putting the particulars in the mouth of the pupil. Only the necessary terms and signs for indicating the different vowels in speech and writing had been devised. As yet there was no *ta'līl* or reasoning on the basis of general principles governing the incidence of the *i'rāb*. But certainly the *i'rāb* 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

<sup>6</sup> It will be remarked that the other synonyms such as *naṣb*, *jarr*, and *raf'* also refer to the same varied movement of the mouth. Closely parallel to the Arabic terms are the Persian equivalents: *zīr*, *zabar*, and *pīsh*.

<sup>7</sup> The Syrian Christians of the West had another system, first introduced in second/eighth century, in which letters of the 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:  $\sphericalangle$  from  $\iota$ ,  $\sphericalright$  from  $\epsilon$  (somewhat doubtful), and  $\sphericalup$  from  $\alpha$ . 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-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, the Governor of Iraq, by Naṣr b. 'Āṣim (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  $\iota$ ,  $\epsilon$ , and  $\alpha$  is sometimes ascribed to al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad, which is supported by the title *Kitāb al-Naqṭ w-al-Shakl* among his works.

<sup>8</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ashbāh w-al-Nazā'ir*, Hyderabad, 1359/1940, I, p. 76.

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 Baṣrah with 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abī Ishāq al-Ḥaḍramī (d. 117/736) and his pupil, abu 'Amr 'Isa b. 'Umar al-Thaqafī (d. 149/767). Both the teacher and the pupil were non-Arab clients (the latter being the client of none other than Khālīd b. al-Walīd) who relished putting the Arabs to shame on the score of incorrect speech. They had a reputation for boldness in *'ilal w-al-qiyās*, 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-Nābighah, not to speak of the contemporary al-Farazdaq. When the latter composed a vitriolic satire against his dogmatic critic, ibn 'Abī Ishāq would only retaliate by pointing out a grammatical mistake even in the satirical verse.<sup>9</sup> The pupil elaborated the method explicitly, as in discovering principles which held good generally and in listing the deviations as *luḡhāt*, 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-laḥn*, 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 *élite* of the Court and the administration as well as the circles of the learned such as the traditionists and the jurists. But the deterioration, 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'ānic text as to make the ordinary speech conform to the standards of its idiom.<sup>10</sup> It was at this very time that *al-Nahw*, the science of "the proper way of the speech of the Arabs" (ibn Jinnī), was fully recognized as an independent branch of study and the term *al-naḥwi* became widespread in popular parlance.<sup>11</sup>

The Baṣrah school reached its perfection in the following age, which produced such giants as al-Khalīl and Sībawaihi. Al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad, a truly versatile genius of Arab descent (al-Furhūdi/al-Farāhīdi, al-Azdi), whose contribution alone would outweigh the achievement of the host of non-Arabs, was born in 100/718-19 and died some time between 170/786 and 175/791. There can be no greater testimony to his high powers of 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

<sup>9</sup> Al-Jumāḥī, *Ṭabaqāt*, Dār al-Ma'ārif, Cairo, 1952, pp. 16-17.

<sup>10</sup> J. Fuck, *al-'Arabīyyah* (Arabic translation), Cairo, 1951, pp. 26, 65, 74.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

*al-i'rāb* 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 pupils made a fortune with the learning imbibed from him. It fell to the lot of his Persian pupil Sibawaihi,<sup>12</sup> 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. 'Uthmān b. Qanbar), a native of Shirāz who died at the young age of about forty 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 *Kitāb* 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 from, and 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'rāb*, 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 into "ism," "fi'l," and "ḥarf" 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 to the problem, 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'rāb* taken by them in those positions.<sup>13</sup> These positions came to be designated by distinctive terms and certain rules were laid as to the *i'rāb* appropriate for those positions. 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 for *'ilal* and *qiyās*, which was exhibited in an equal measure in grammatical and literary studies as well as in *Fiqh* and jurisprudence.<sup>14</sup> This flair certainly

<sup>12</sup> The reading "Sibūyah" is not supported by comparison with "Niṣṭawaihi," which latter is in no doubt because of its occurrence in the rhyme of a verse. *Vide* ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, "Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. 'Arafah."

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Fuck, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>14</sup> What distinguished the *Fiqh* of abu Ḥanīfah 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 Hijāz 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 Ḥanīfah, who wanted to run down his school of *Fiqh*, thought it necessary



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.<sup>16</sup>

The cornerstone of Arabic grammar is the correlation of the *i'rāb* of the different parts of a sentence based on the theory of an *'āmil*, 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 *Kitāb al-'Awāmil* 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 'Īsa b. 'Umar and others. Unless, therefore, this *'āmil* 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 'Abbāsīd 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, this development took place when a Mu'tazilite Mutakallim and a *nahwi* were combined in the person of abu al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. 'Īsa al-Rummānī (d. 384/994). Actually, the process must have started with the Kūfan grammarian, al-Farrā' (d. 207/822), who was also a Mu'tazilite. Under the patronage of al-Māmūn he produced the *Kitāb al-Hudūd*, which must have been the first attempt, so to say, to "philosophize" Arabic grammar. However, the process reached its culmination in al-Rummānī 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-Sīrāfī (abu Sa'īd al-Ḥasan b. 'Abd Allah) were thoroughly understood without a teacher, those of abu 'Alī (al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad) al-Fārisī were only partly so, whereas those of al-Rummānī were not intelligible at all.<sup>16</sup> Even abu 'Alī al-Fārisī, who, according to the above testimony, was himself partly affected by the innovation, is reputed to have commented that if *Nahw* be what was expounded by al-Rummānī, then he had nothing to do with it, and *vice versa*. Undoubtedly, al-Rummānī 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-Sīrāfī, were easily comprehended by the average student. There was a similar

to make fun of the application of his methods to grammar. Cf., Fuck, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>15</sup> M. Ḥamīdullah, "Influence of Roman Law on Muslim Law"—a paper read before the All-India Oriental Conference, December 1941.

<sup>16</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Udabā'*, " 'Alī b. 'Īsa."

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. But the latter was considered to have already possessed a separate entity with a different development.

While the general trend at Baṣrah 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 (Muḥammad b. abi Sārra 'Ali) al-Ru'āsiyy took it over as the basis of the rival school of Kūfah founded by him in the later half of the second/eighth century. The Kūfans would assiduously collect such instances as violated the general rules of the Baṣrans and would treat them not as exceptions but as the basis of another general rule opposed to that of the Baṣrans. This school achieved a meteoric rise in importance under the favour of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphs. Two of its very influential representatives at the Court were: (a) al-Kisā'iyy (abu al-Ḥasan 'Ali b. Ḥamzah), the Persian pupil of both al-Khalil and abu Ja'far al-Ru'āsiyy, who came to be regarded as the compeer of Imām abu Yūsuf under Hārūn al-Raṣhīd, and (b) al-Farrā' (Yaḥya b. Ziyād), the Dailamite, who was appointed tutor to al-Māmūn's sons and was designated as *Amīr al-Mū'minīn* in the realm of *al-Naḥw*. Ultimately, however, Baghdād proved a veritable crucible for the gradual fusion of the two schools through interchange. 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-Fārisi, who has been mentioned above, had an illustrious pupil called 'Uṭhmān b. Jinni (d. 392/1002), the son of a Greek slave, regarded as the last of the philosopher-grammarians. But ibn Jinni did not help in clothing the 'āmil theory with the armoury of logic; rather he submitted the 'āmil 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 Maḍḍā," the Zāhirite Qāḍī of Cordova under the Muwāḥḥids, who in his *al-Radd 'ala al-Nuḥāt* attempted something in grammar akin to al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut* 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 'āmil 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 Baṣrah 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-'Alā', that he ('Isa b. 'Umar) was a greater master of Arabic than Ma'add b. 'Adnān, the progenitor of the Arabs! And both 'Isa b. 'Umar and abu 'Amr b. al-'Alā' exhibited a tendency to prefer such readings of the Qur'ān as, in their opinion, were more in consonance with the general rules of grammar.<sup>17</sup> 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 Kūfah. Rather the latter erred on the other extreme; it is said of al-Kisā'iyy that in his avid search for the unusual and the exceptional he would not pause to test the reliability of his sources. None the less, a relieving feature of the situation was that dogmatism always felt compelled to bow before actual usage, as typically exemplified in the contest between Sībawaihi and al-Kisā'iyy at the Court of Hārūn al-Rashīd.<sup>18</sup> Ultimately, Baghdād 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,<sup>19</sup> but it reappeared prominently later on and is justly parodied by abū al-'Alā' al-Ma'arri in his *Risālat al-Ghufrān*.<sup>20</sup> 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 'āmil theory, which, however, did not fructify. On the whole, the Arabic grammar remains a magnificent achievement—religious in spirit,

<sup>17</sup> 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'ān 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'ān on the basis of pre-Islamic poetry. Apart from any religious sentiment, the Qur'ān is the oldest and the most reliable book; other sources, though relating to anterior times, are posterior to it in point of actual compilation. *Tārīkh al-Lughāt al-Sāmīyah*, Cairo, 1926, pp. 169 *et seq.*

<sup>18</sup> The reference is to what is known as "al-Mas'alah al-Zunbūriyyah." When Sībawaihi challenged al-Kisā'iyy on a point of grammar, the matter had to be referred for decision to the Arabs. It is alleged that the Arabs were bribed to save the face of the royal tutor. The incident affected Sībawaihi so deeply that perhaps it caused his death prematurely.

<sup>19</sup> Once when al-Kisā'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." Yāqūt, *op. cit.*, "'Isa b. 'Umar," last paragraph. This tendency is to be compared with the *hiyal*—permissible tricks for evading the Law—in which some of the legists exhibited their acumen.

<sup>20</sup> Al-Ma'arri contrives to bring the grammarians and the poets in the heaven together when the latter protest at the former's purely speculative interpretation of verses, e.g., v. 152 of the *Risālah*, ed. Bint al-Shāṭi, Cairo.



linguistic in material, scientific in methods, and logical in form—which has been eminently successful in preserving the Qur'ān and keeping its idiom unchanged yet alive throughout the centuries.

B

LEXICOGRAPHY

The preservation of the Qur'ān 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-'Arabīyyah*, 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.<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup> 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'ān was revealed. That is to say, either the citations should belong to the period contemporary with, or immediately antecedent to, the Qur'ān or be culled 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 that time uncorrupted and untainted by 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 *A'rāb*, 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 specially noted for their profundity in the field of *al-lughah* (Arabic usage)

<sup>21</sup> In the words of abu 'Ubaidah introducing his *Majāz al-Qur'ān*: "The Qur'ān was revealed in clear Arabic language and those who heard it recited by the Prophet had no need of asking for its meaning . . ."

<sup>22</sup> Cf. the saying attributed to ibn 'Abbās: When you be in doubt about any rare expression of the Qur'ān, seek it in poetry. Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Muḏhir*, ed. Muḥammad Aḥmad Jād al-Maula and others, Cairo, II, 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-Qaṭṭā' (*al-Af'āl*, 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 (*kāfir*).

with its ancillary branches of *al-shi'r* (poetry), *al-akhbār* (historical annals), *al-ayyām* (accounts of tribal wars), and *al-ansūb* (genealogies). The most prominent name among these scholars is that of abu 'Amr b. al-'Alā' (70/689–154/770), an Arab nobleman of Baṣrah and an associate of 'Īsa b. 'Umar. His collection of Arabic philology, when piled up, touched the ceiling of his room. He set fire to this vast collection when he was overwhelmed by a fit of 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-Khalīl, whom we have mentioned before, burst with the idea of arranging and fitting the vocabulary into the orderly scheme of a lexicon. Actually, al-Khalīl is known as the author of the first Arabic lexicon called the *Kitāb 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-Khalīl, the idea of a lexicon and the scheme thereof were first conceived by him. Let us now examine what the scheme is like.

Al-Khalīl starts with (a) reducing all words to their roots, i.e., the radical letters (*al-uṣūl*) which form an immutable kernel in contradistinction to those that are added (*al-zawā'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 *hamzah*.

The above framework is in line with al-Khalīl's attempt at a computation of Arabic vocabulary, which is a further proof of his originality. This quest he pursued on the same structural basis in a mathematical way. By multiplying the 28 letters of the alphabet by 27 (28 minus 1, to drop out double letters) he got 756 forms of the biliteral (there being no unilaterals in Arabic). Dividing this number by 2, he had 378 combinations irrespective of the order of the two letters. Taking these biliteral 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-Khalīl 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 combinations 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 (*maqlūb*), 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 out to the lips, which produced the 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.<sup>23</sup> The phonetico-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'ān. With the emphasis on recitation it was but natural that phonetics should receive special attention and that there be a grouping of letters on that basis. Actually, evidence is not wanting that the linguists did engage themselves in such a study; there were some differences too between the Basrans and the Kūfans as to the order of the alphabet on the basis of phonetics.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, al-Khalil also paid some regard to the frequency of the letters in use; otherwise 'ain would not have come first in order.<sup>25</sup>

No doubt, the general lexicon of al-Khalil represented an idea much in advance of his time; for the following one 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-silāh* (the weapons), and the like. Similarly, special features of the Arabic usage were also singled out for monographic treatment: (a) *al-muthallathāt*, (b) *al-maqṣūr w-al-mamdūd*, (c) *al-itbā' w-al-muzāwajaḥ*, (d) *al-ajnās*, and (e) *al-nawādir*. Some philologists wrote running commentaries (concerned merely with the meaning of selected words and phrases supported with illustrations from other sources) on the Qur'ān and the sayings of the Prophet under such captions as *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth*, *Majāz al-Qur'ān*, *Ma'āni al-Qur'ān*, etc. The veterans in this field were two Arabs and two non-Arabs, one of the latter being from the distant province of Sind:

<sup>23</sup> 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-Suyūṭi, *op. cit.*, II, p. 342) should be taken merely as a recollection of the old borrowing.

<sup>24</sup> Ibn Duraid, *Jamharat al-Lughah*, Hyderabad, cf. the Preface: cf. also al-Suyūṭi, *op. cit.*, I, p. 85.

<sup>25</sup> Al-Suyūṭi, *op. cit.*, I, p. 90.



(1) Al-Aṣma'i (abu Sa'id 'Abd al-Malik b. Quraib), an Arab of Baṣrah, was born in 122/739 or 123/740 and died in about 217/832. He amused Hārūn al-Raṣhīd with his stock of interesting anecdotes about the life of the *A'rāb*.

(2) Abu Zaid (Sa'id b. Aus) al-Anṣārī was another Arab of Baṣrah who reached Baghdād during the time of al-Mahdi and died about 215/830, then over ninety years of age. He was not inhibited by partisanship and eagerly learnt from al-Mufaḍḍal and other Kūfans. 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-Muṭhanna, a *maula*, said to have been of Persian Jewish descent, was born in 110/728 at Baṣrah where he spent most of his life. He was patronized by the Barāmīkah and was summoned to Baghdād by Hārūn al-Raṣhīd to read his works to him. While rendering yeoman service to the Arabic philological studies, he collected the *mathālib* or the vices of the Arab tribes and caused such offence to tribal pride that at his death in 210/285 nobody attended his funeral.

(4) Ibn al-A'rābi (abu 'Abd Allah Muḥammad b. Ziyād) was the son of a Sindian slave and the foster-child of the famous Kūfan philologist, al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabbi. 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-Aṣma'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 Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, born at Baṣrah in 223/837 and died 321/933) who enjoyed the patronage of the Mikālidis of Fars. Though ibn Duraid claims that his work is much easier for reference than that of al-Khalīl, 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-taṣrīf* (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 *hamzah*. Similarly, lack of clarity as to the distinction between *al-uṣūl* and *al-zawā'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 *nawādir* 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 Duraid 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 earlier 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 *Tahdhīb*, whose author, abu Mansūr Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Azhari (d. 370/980), a pupil of ibn Duraid, was urged to wanderlust in the desert for the collection of *al-lughāt*. Incidentally, he fell a captive into the hands of a Bedouin tribe; this provided him with the desired opportunity. Equally important is *al-Muḥīṭ* of al-Ṣāhib b. 'Abbād, 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 *Ṣiḥāḥ* of al-Jauhari, abu Naṣr Ismā'il b. Ḥammād (died about 398/1007), a native of Fārāb who settled down at Nishāpūr. The very name *Ṣiḥāḥ* reminds one of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī. It has already been hinted at that the method of collecting *al-lughāt* 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 in that of the former. This is aptly illustrated by the example of al-Aṣma'i, who is held to be trustworthy in regard to *Ḥadīth*, but he risks conjectures in matters pertaining to the *lughāt* and even embellishes anecdotes for the sake of amusement.<sup>26</sup> Anyway, it is worthwhile to note that even the nomenclature of the *Ḥadīth* such as the *mutawāṭi'* and the *āḥād* was applied to the *lughāt* and the degree of reliability of any particular usage determined accordingly. In the beginning it was not uncommon even to mention the *isnād* or the chain of narrators and to discuss the personal character and reputation of the transmitters.<sup>27</sup> Thus, a compendium of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* was sought to be arrived at in the field of *lughāt* parallel to a similar, though much more scrupulously worked out, effort in the field of religious tradition.<sup>28</sup> It has, however, to be noticed that the *Ṣiḥāḥ* 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 deal of corruption also set in. All this necessitated a re-examination of the work in glosses and commentaries by later writers.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Aḥmad Amin, *Ḍuḥā al-Islām*, Cairo, 1952, II, p. 301. Abu 'Ubaidah once ridiculed al-Aṣma'i's extreme cautiousness in the interpretation of the Qur'ān by asking him whether he was sure of the meaning of *al-khubz* (bread). Cf. Yāqūt, *op. cit.*, "Ma'mar b. al-Muthanna."

<sup>27</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 118 *et seq.*

<sup>28</sup> Just because the sciences of al-Ḥadīth and *al-lughah* were recognized as twins, the highest academic title for the learned in either was the same, *al-ḥāfiẓ*. *Ibid.*, II, p. 312.



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 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 had a unique importance for purposes of rhyme (*qāfiyah* and *saʿj*). Apart from the merits of this integrated scheme, the development and standardization of *al-taṣrīf* (etymology) at the hands of al-Mazīnī (abu 'Uthmān Bakr b. Muḥammad, d. 249/863), ibn Jinnī, and al-Rummānī during the course of the fourth/tenth century removed a good deal of the confusion which marred the works of al-Khalīl 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-Muḥkam* by the blind Spanish scholar, ibn Sīdah (abu al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Aḥmad?, 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-Khalīl for its arrangement.

(2) *Al-'Uḥāb* (incomplete) was composed by Raḍī al-Dīn Ḥasan al-Saghānī, born in Lahore in 570/1174. He settled at Baghdād where he dedicated his work to ibn al-'Alqamī, the minister of al-Musta'ṣim, whence he was sent out twice as ambassador of the 'Abbāsīd Caliph to the Court of Iltutmish at Delhi.

(3) The *Lisān al-'Arab* was compiled by ibn Mukarram/ibn Manzūr (Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad), 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 Sīdah.

Of the latter category, the work which achieved a high degree of popularity is the *Qāmūs* of Majd al-Dīn al-Fīrūzābādi (Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb) who died in 816/1413. It draws upon *al-Muḥkam* and *al-'Uḥāb*.

Yet another work which deserves special mention is the *Asās al-Balāghah* of the well-known Mu'tazilite al-Zamakhshari (abu al-Qāsim Jār Allah Maḥmūd b. 'Umar, born 467/1074 and died 538/1143). The author was a native of Khwārizm who spent a long time in Makkah and Baghdād. 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 *Asās*, which is in the alphabetical order with reference to the first (and then 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 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-Mukhaṣṣaṣ*, a twin of the general lexicon, *al-Muḥkam*, by the Andalusian ibn Sīdah. In *al-Mukhaṣṣaṣ*, the vocabulary is grouped under subject headings, e.g., the hair, the eye, etc., which are classified into "books" such as that of "human body." Even if the position of *al-Muḥkam* is not wholly unsurpassed, that of *al-Mukhaṣṣaṣ* is definitely so.

Once the framework of a general lexicon was fixed, the running commentaries on the rare and difficult words in the Qur'ān and/or the Ḥadīth were also brought under that form.<sup>29</sup> 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 encyclopedias (*al-mausū'āt*). It may be observed in this connection that interest in language and literature, which the scheme of a lexicon was originally designed to subserve, 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'ān and the Ḥadīth or who would be unable to recall poetry, proverbs, and pithy 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 task; they showed themselves to be scrupulous in method and honest in purpose. But the scope of the linguistic studies was bound in course of time to extend beyond what was strictly relevant to the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth. 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 whole, there is no doubt that a fair degree of reliability was achieved. In the same way it is impossible to claim that the entire vocabulary and 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

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *Kashf al-Zunūn*, II, pp. 1204-06.

concerned themselves too exclusively with the idiom of the Qur'ān and showed no interest in contemporary deviations from the same, tantamounts 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 specially suited to the genius of the language. Even the model which has become so popular in modern times is traceable to al-Zamakhshari.

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## Chapter LII

### 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, *Balāghah*—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 the Arabs. For, although the Arabs achieved a high measure of perfection in their poetry two centuries before Islam, they did not reach the maturer 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 market-places in the Hijāz 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-Nābighah al-Thubyāni, and their judgments and criticisms were handed down to posterity by the *rāwīs* (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 market-place. 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-Nābighah was the greatest of the *Jāhiliyyah* poets, and when he was asked the reason for this pronouncement, he answered: "Al-Nābighah 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'ān 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 heads:

1. Literary aspect of the Qur'ānic *i'jāz* (eloquence of discourse), and the extent to which literary criticism could aid in discovering the secrets of that *i'jāz*.
2. Unique and sometimes obscure usages of the Qur'ānic style.
3. Authenticity of literary texts transmitted by the *rāwīs* 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 the 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 text-books. 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 *Balāghah*. This was mainly the outcome of the Muslims' preoccupation with problems of the Qur'ānic exegesis and *i'jāz*. 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 *Balāghah*. In fact, that science dominated the Arabic critical field all through the later centuries of Islam from the seventh/thirteenth to the twelfth/eighteenth.

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 *Kitāb al-Aghāni* (Book of Songs) by abu al-Faraj, would also claim a place among the books of literary criticism. The same can be said of books, such as al-Bāqillānī's *I'jāz al-Qur'ān*, which dealt exclusively with the unique excellence of the Qur'ān.

But in 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. One of the early grammarians, philologists, and literary critics of the first stage in Arabic authorship was ibn Sallām (d. 231/845). His book *Ṭabaqāt al-Shu'arā'* 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 Sallām 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 Sallām'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 Sallām failed to support judgments he passed on poets and poetry by analysing 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-Jāhiz (d. 255/869), who was one of the leading Mu'tazilites and writers of the third/ninth century, tried in his book *al-Bayān w-al-Tabayīn* to give a picture of criticism in the 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-Jāhiz's book was an echo of the intellectual life of the Arabs of the third/ninth century. At that time the mosques of Kūfah and Baṣrah were not only places for worship and administration of justice, but also schools for the teaching of language, grammar, Ḥadīth, 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-Jāhiz's book can be grouped under the following headings: (i) Correctness of pronunciation and defects caused by deformities of the vocal organs. (ii) Proper and improper employment of language and harmonious and disharmonious use of words. (iii) 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. (iv) 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), the author of many books on literature and Qur'ānic usages. In one of his books, *al-Shi'r w-al-Shu'arā'*, 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 *badī'* 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-Badī'* was the first attempt at a systematic treatment of the figures of speech, which he divided into three main categories: (i) the metaphor which is the pillar-stone of poetry; (ii) artifices connected with the form only and not with the essence of poetry, such as assonance (*tajnīs*) and antithesis (*muṭābaqah*), and (iii) the dialectical style which takes the form of a logical argument (*al-mabḥaṭh al-kalāmi*). By quoting copious examples from the Qur'ān, the Hadīth, 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 Bashshār, Muslim ibn al-Walīd, and abu Nuwās. These modern poets of the 'Abbāsīd 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 *Badī'*, by Aristotle's writings, especially the *Rhetorics* translated into Arabic during the third/ninth and fourth/tenth 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 Qudāmah 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 that 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-Bāqillāni (d. 403/1012), who gives a scholarly account of the Qur'ānic *i'jāz*; al-Āmidī (d. 371/981), who leaves us the best classical Arabic comparison between two great poets, representatives of two schools of poetical art; and al-Qādi al-Jurjāni (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-Isfahāni (d. 356/966), the writer of *Kitāb al-Aghāni* (the Book of Songs), a unique book of its kind in the literatures of the world. And the second is that of abu Hilāl al-'Askari (d. 395/1004), who attempted to give a complete systematic manual of Arabic rhetorical and critical principles as they were known in his time. Now, to take the general contributions first. The "Book of Songs" is a literary encyclopedia, in twenty 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-Aghāni* 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 systematize and enlarge upon the earlier general attempts of al-Jāhiz, ibn al-Mu'tazz, and Qudāmah. The two Arabic rhetorical conceptions of *faṣāḥah* and *balāghah* 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 thirty-five, which is more than double the number given earlier by ibn al-Mu'tazz.

Al-Jurjāni's treatise on *i'jāz* 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'ānic literary excellence. In doing this the author subjected some of the highly esteemed Arabic poems to a severe test of criticism to show the fallibility of human products. The Qur'ānic *i'jāz*, 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'jāz*, peculiar to Muslim culture, we meet again in a different setting when we come to 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjāni.

The two treatises which exemplify Arabic criticism proper in its methodical form are those of al-Āmidī and al-Qādi al-Jurjāni referred to earlier.

Al-Āmidī's *Muwāzanah* (Comparison) between abu Tammām and his disciple and kinsman al-Buḥturi 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-Āmidī'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 fore-runners 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" (*Wasāṭah*) of al-Qāḍī al-Jurjānī 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 *Wasāṭah* 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 *badī'*, all received a masterly analysis at the hands of al-Jurjānī. 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 past and contemporary. In short, the *Wasāṭah* of al-Jurjānī along with the

*Muwāzanah* of al-Āmidī represents the peak of practical Arabic criticism and illustrates the Arabs' mature efforts in that field of literary study.

3. The climax of the Arab contribution to the theories of literary criticism is still to be reached in the fifth/eleventh century at the hands of 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 471/1078), the author of the two well-known critical books: *Dalā'il al-I'jāz* and *Asrār al-Bai'iqhah*. The first book, although primarily concerned with explaining the secrets and signs of the Qur'ānic *i'jāz*, 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 in different 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 preoccupation 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-Qāhir 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-Dalā'il* was the consideration of the place of words and meanings in the art of expression. Some of the ancients, e.g., al-Jāhiz, had considered eloquence to be mainly dependent on the quality of the verbal elements, that is, the words. But, argued 'Abd al-Qāhir, 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 is 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 and 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 indefinitiveness, 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-Qāhir to the study of the Qur'ānic 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'āni*).

In this analysis of the *Dalā'il*, 'Abd al-Qāhir 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-Qāhir, in his second book *Asrār al-Balāghah*, to go deeper into the aesthetic side of literature and find out the secrets behind the feeling 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 Tammām? 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-Qāhir 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 (*bayān*) 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 human souls enjoy being transferred from the hidden to the visible, from the 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 in creating 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-Qāhir'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-Qāhir in some aspects of his theory. Al-Jāhiz, 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-Qādi al-Jurjāni 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-Qāhir 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, do 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-Qāhir, 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 Rashīq al-Qairawāni (d. 436/1044), the author of a standard book on the art of poetry entitled *al-'Umdah fi Mahāsin al-Shi'r wa Adābih*. It is one of the fullest treatments of the technicalities of Arabic poetry and its principal kinds. Another fifth/eleventh-century critic is ibn Sinān al-Khafāji al-Ḥalabi (d. 466/1073), the author of *Sirr al-Faṣāḥah*. Ibn Sinān'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 Khwārizm (d. 538/1144), the Qur'ānic commentator, deserves a special mention here because of his consistent application of the rhetorical approach to the explanation and interpretation of the Qur'ān. His book *al-Kashshāf* claims a high place among the Qur'ānic commentaries. He is also the compiler of *Asās al-Balāghah*, an Arabic dictionary, which is unique in its attention to original and metaphorical usages of the Arabic language. A later author and critic, Ḍiā' al-Dīn ibn al-Aṭhīr (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-Sū'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 of 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 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-Athīr was so convinced of the originality and applicability of his method that he claimed for himself the title of *mujtahid* or Imām in the same way as the founders of Muslim schools of jurisprudence, Mālik and al-Shāfi'i, for example, were regarded by posterity.

We may end this series of the great minds with Yahya ibn Ḥamzah al-'Alawi (d. 729/1328), one of the Imāms of Yemen and the author of *al-Ṭirāz al-Mutaḍammīn li Asrār al-Balāghah wa 'Ulūm Ḥaqā'iq al-I'jāz*. 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-Qāhir 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-Athīr. The motive for writing his book, he indicates, was to help his students understand al-Zamakhshari's approach to the Qur'ānic exegesis and *i'jāz*. 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 *Faṣāḥah* and *Balāghah* which are called *ma'āni* and *bayān* 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'qūb al-Sakkāki al-Khwārizmi (d. 626/1228), the author of *Miftāḥ al-'Ulūm*. 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-Ṭirāz*. In the third division of these sciences, al-Sakkāki puts *'ilm al-ma'āni* and *'ilm al-bayān* 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-Sakkāki seems to have carried to a logical conclusion the distinction which 'Abd al-Qāhir indicated between questions of speech, structure and composition and those of signification and effectiveness. To this dual division, al-Sakkāki appended a small section on the special aids to speech beautification, which later became the domain of a third separate science, namely, *badī*. This process of narrowing the critical field to *Balāghah* and of demarcating its science was completed and standardized a century later by al-Khaṭīb al-Qazwī (d. 739/1338) who condensed al-Sakkāki's *Miftāḥ* into a text-book called *Matn al-Talkhīṣ*.

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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 nine hundred 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 twelfth/eighteenth 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 has 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 fifteen out of the twenty-one 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 *Gāthās*, 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 granted 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 in the 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 ("Pārsis"). 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 that 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 centuries and a half 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 "Fahlaviy-yāt," 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 "Huzvāresh" or "Zuwārishn." 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 Pāzand" 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 Tukhāri, Sughdian, and Khwārizmi.

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 Sāssānian 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 "Pāzand." The contemporary Dari has also been employed in some of the inscriptions of Sāssānian 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 Saljūq 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/eleventh 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 till 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 vestiges of Pahlawi in the form of inscriptions and coins in Ṭabaristān in the north of Iran date back to the middle of the fifth/eleventh 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 Sāssānian 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 Sāssānian period, flourished on a vast scale. It is an undeniable fact that, while during the four hundred years which immediately preceded the Saljūq period, Dari had been recognized as the literary language of the country, Pahlawi had flourished in the north, south, and west of the present-day Iran. Of this only a specific form of verse known as "Fahlaviyyāt" has come down to us, the quatrains of Bābā Ṭāhir-i 'Uryān of Hamadān being its most remarkable specimen.

## B

### THE BEGINNING OF MODERN PERSIAN LITERATURE

The present-day language of Iran is the latest evolutionary form of "Dari" and is known as "Fārsi" 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 Transoxiana and Khurāsān, to wit, Samarkand, Bukhāra, Balkh, Merv, Herat, Ṭūs, and Nishāpūr. These centres



extended even to Sistān. This explains why the most eminent poets of this language down to the Saljūq period hailed from these particular cities. Gradually, Dari expanded from Khurāsān and Transoxiana to other parts of Iran, so that by the Ghaznawid period it had extended to Gurgān, Dāmghān, and Rayy, and by the Saljūq era it had travelled as far away as Ādharbāijān, Iṣbahān, and Hamadān. In the province of Fars it did not achieve the status of a popular language even in the days of Sa'di and Hāfiẓ. 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 Shirāzi language.

The rules of prosody of Arabic poetry were formulated by Khalil ibn Aḥmad. 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 *afā'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 Bābā Ṭāhir 'Uryān of Hamadān. 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*," "*tarjī'-band*," "*tarkīb-band*," "*musammāt*," "*muthallaḥ*," "*murabba'*," "*mukhammas*," "*mustazād*," and "*rubā'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 owe 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 Ṭāhirids (205/820–259/872) and later the Ṣaffārids (254/867–296/908) played a worthy 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 Sāmānid Court and in the vast regions lying between the Chinese frontiers and Gurgān on the Caspian Sea. The Court of Naṣr bin Aḥmad, the Sāmānid 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 two hundred years till the end of the fifth/eleventh century. The greatest Iranian poets of this school who flourished during the fourth/tenth century were Rūdaki (329/941), Shahid Balkhi (325/937), and Daqīqi (341/952). Early in the sixth/twelfth century it gave way to naturalism. In the 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 its earliest stages it merely laid emphasis on piety and godliness and no elaborate system had yet evolved. Kūfah and Baṣrah were the earliest centres of this movement. Later, however, Baghdād stole the limelight and became associated with great names in mysticism. From Baghdād it spread out in two directions, viz., North Africa and the "Maghrib" on the one side and north-east of Iran, that is, Khurāsān 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 Khurāsān 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. This tradition still lives in mystic verse, no matter Persian, Urdu, or Turkish. The earliest amongst the great Sufis to compose verse in this fashion is the celebrated poet abu Sa'īd abu al-Khair (357/967-440/1049). Sanā'i (437/1046-525/1131), Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār (627/1229), and Maulāna Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmi, (604/1208-672/1273) may be considered the greatest of the symbolists among the poets of Iran. *Ḥadiqat al-Ḥaqīqah* of Sanā'i, *Manṭiq al-Ṭair* of 'Aṭṭār and the *Mathnawi* of Rūmi 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 (*futūwwat*). 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 (*Futūwwat Nāmeḥ*). This particular institution travelled from Iran to all the Islamic countries as far away as North Africa and the "Maghrib" and it 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 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 *Shāh Nāmeḥ*, 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 till a century and a half ago. Amongst the most important of these are, chronologically speaking, *Garshāsp Nāmeḥ* of Asadi (465/1073) which was completed in 458/1066, *Wis-o Rāmīn* of Fakhr al-Dīn Asad of Gurgān (middle of the fifth century A.H.), and the quintet (*khamseh*) of Nizāmi of Ganjeh who remained devoted to its composition from 572/1176 to 599/1202. Nizāmi'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 his unique influence, amongst the most notable of them being Amīr Khusrau of Delhi (651/1253–725/1325), Khawājū-i Kirmānī (689/1290–763/1362), and Jāmi (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 'Al-Sher Nawā'i (844/1440–960/1500) composed in the Chaghātā'i, i. e., the eastern dialect of Turkish, and the epics of Fuzūli of Baghdād (970/1562) in the Āzari, i. e., the western dialect of the Turkish language.

Amongst 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 Khurāsān 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 *Kalīleh 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 Anushīrwān (Nushīrwān 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 Rūdaki, the greatest poet of the Sāmānid period and one of the great names in Persian poetry in its whole history of the last twelve hundred years. Only a few couplets of this long poem have survived.

Another book which dealt with practical philosophy like *Kalīleh wa Dimneh* was the famous work *Sindbād Nāmeḥ*. This was also rendered into verse by Rūdaki. That is why his name has been prefixed with Hakīm or philosopher since old. This also suggests that there was a considerable element of philosophy in his poetical works. Another great contemporary of Rūdaki, namely, Shahīd Balkhī, was known as one of the famous philosophers of his time. He had also entered upon a controversy with yet another famous physician-philosopher Muḥammad bin Zakariya Rāzi 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. Kisā'i of Merv was one of them. Firdausī and 'Unṣuri also enjoyed the title of Hakīm or philosopher for having introduced philosophical themes in their works. The great poet Nāṣir Khusrau (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 Ismā'īlite point of view. The Ismā'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 Naṣr Fārābī (d. 339/950), ibn Sīna (d. 428/1037), Khwājah Naṣr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (597/1201–672/1274), Imām Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī (554/1159–606/1209), Afdal al-Dīn Kāshānī (d. 615/1218), Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī Maqtūl (d. 587/1191), Jalāl al-Dīn Dawwānī (830/908–1426/1502–1503), Mir Sayyid Sharīf Gurgānī (740/816–1339/1413), Mir Muḥammad Bāqir Dāmād (d. 1041/1631), Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, i. e., Mulla Ṣadra (d. 1050/1640–1641), and Hāji Mulla Hādī Sabziwāri (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-Dīn Kāshānī composed a considerable amount of verse. Philosophical thought also found expression in the quatrains of the famous scholar and philosopher ‘Umar Khayyām (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 effect a close harmony between Greek thought, i. e., the philosophy of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, 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/fourteenth century Hāfiz, the great immortal poet of Iran, while following the naturalist school which had reached its highest point of glory in Rūmī’s poetry (606/1200–691/1292) 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/fifteenth 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 Jalāl al-Dīn Akbar (r. 963/1556–1014/1605) and his successors, namely, Jahāngīr (r. 1014/1605–1037/1628), Shāhjahān (r. 1037/1628–1068/1658), and Aurangzīb (r. 1069/1658–1118/1707). Under the patronage of these Courts, rich and exquisite works of poetry were produced. There is a large number of poets who attained eminence in this style, popularly known in Iran as the Indian School of poetry. Among them ‘Urfī (963/1556–999/1591), Nazīrī (1023/1614), Zuhūrī (1024/1615), Ṭālib Āmulī (1036/1627), Qudsi (1056/1646), Kalīm (1061/1651), and

Šā'ib (1012/1603–1083/1672) had been attracted from Iran and they provided both stimulus and schooling to numerous well-known poets of the local origin. The most brilliant amongst this galaxy of poets were Faiḍi (953/1542–1004/1596), abu al-Barakāt Munir (1055/1645–1099/1688), Ghani (1072/1661–1134/1722), Nāsir 'Ali (1108/1696), Ghanimat (1107/1695), Ni'mat Khān 'Ali (1121/1709–1184/1771), Bidil (1134/1722), Nūr al-'Ain Wāqif (1190/1776), Sirāj al-Dīn 'Ali Kānī (1169/1756), Ghālib (1213/1798–1285/1868), 'Ubaidi Suhrawardi (1300/1889), Shibli Nu'māni (1274/1857–1332/1914), Girāmi (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 Muḥammad Iqbāl (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 twelfth/eighteenth 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, Afghānistān, 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 part of Iran, were Muslims. Only with regard to Daqīqi, the celebrated poet of the Sāmānid period, it has been contested by a few scholars that he belonged to the Zoroastrian faith. But even this cannot be taken for granted. In the eighth/fourteenth century, however, a Zoroastrian poet Bahrām bin Puzh rendered two books of the Zoroastrian religion into verse, namely *Zartuštī Nāmeḥ* and *Arda Virāf Nāmeḥ*.

## 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.

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 a 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 'Abbāsid 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 were mostly written in Arabic. Some of the Iranian historians also selected Arabic as their vehicle of expression. Most of the religious literature, including jurisprudence (*Fiqh*), *Hadīth*, and commentary on the Holy Qur'ān, was also produced in Arabic. From the earliest Islamic 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 Sīna, Nāṣir *Khusrau*, Afdal al-Dīn *Kāshāni*, and abu Raiḥān al-Bīrūni 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 *Ā'in-i Akbari* of abu al-Fadl.

The excessive use of Arabic words in Persian prose started in the fifth/eleventh century. *Kalīleh wa Dimneh* which was rendered into Persian by Nasr Allah b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd from the Arabic version of ibn al-Muqaffa' may be regarded as the first specimen of this type of writing. Amongst other books written in this style may be enumerated *Marzbān Nāmeh* of Sa'd al-Dīn of



Varāvin, *Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, *Tārīkh-i Mu'jam*, and *Durrah-i Nādirah*, the last being the work of Mirza Mahdi Khān, the historian of the Court of Nādir Shāh. But the number of such books is very small. In fact, ninety-nine Persian books out of one hundred 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 exceedingly sophisticated style of Persian prose in which the content was obscured by vague rhetoric and long and repetitious sentences reached its zenith in the ninth/fifteenth and tenth/sixteenth centuries. It also penetrated into the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent where we find in *Seh Nathr-i Zuhūri* and *Rasā'il-i Tughrā-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 Allāmi*. 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. This "Court style" originated in Iran in the sixth/twelfth century, enjoyed a large, uninterrupted era of popularity and found its best specimen in *Manshaat-i Mirza Tāhir Wahīd* composed in the eleventh/seventeenth century. It was, however, dealt a fatal blow by Mirza abu al-Qāsim Qā'im Maqām Farāhāni (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'ān, 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 prerequisite for learning the 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 lexicographers would include in the prefaces to their works. The compilation of 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 Muslims of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. That is why books on this 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 Qatrān Urūmawi, the famous poet who lived in Tabrīz and died in 465/1075. This book is now extinct. After him Asadi of Tūs, who also lived in Ādharbāijān and died in the same year as Qatrān, completed his famous dictionary which is the oldest extant work on the subject.

As mentioned earlier, the Saljūqs had carried their official language, Dari, right into Ādharbāijān 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 Ādharbāijān.

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 eleventh/seventeenth 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 Jahāngīri* of Jamāl al-Dīn Inju, *Farhang-i Rashīdi* of 'Abd al-Rashīd of Thatta, *Burhān-i Qāṭi* of Muḥammad Husain Tabrīzi, *Aṣif al-Lughāt* of 'Aziz Jang Bahādur, *Bahār-i 'Ajam* of Tek Chand Bahār, *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat* of Sirāj al-Dīn 'Ali Khān Ārzu, *Ghiyāth al-Lughāt* of Muḥammad Ghiyāth al-Dīn, *Farhang-i Anand Rāj* of

Muhammad Pādshāh Shād, and *Mustaliḥāt al-Shu'arā'* compiled by Vārasteh. The number of lexicographical works compiled in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent exceeds one hundred of which the oldest, viz., *Adab al-Fudalā'* of Qāḍi Khān 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 five hundred 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 this language. As a consequence, a few dictionaries, to wit, *Lughāt-i Ḥalīmi*, *Lughāt-i Sha'ūri*, *Dasīnah-i Kabīr*, and *Lughāt-i Shāh-nāmeḥ* of 'Abd al-Qādir Baghdādi, 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 Iran, but they have also special interest in the publication of literary works 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 two thousand.

## 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 been translated into a European language was *Gulistān* of Sa'di. Gradually, the works of Firdausi, Ḥāfiẓ, 'Umar Khayyām,



Nizāmi, Jāmi, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmi, Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār, Nāṣir Khusrau, and others were also 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 thirteenth/nineteenth 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 famous works *West-östlicher Divan*, and gave to a section of this book the title of "Kitāb-i Ḥāfiz." The well-known English poet Edward Fitzgerald also published a small collection known as *Rubā'iyāt-i 'Umar Khayyām* which he claimed to have translated from the Persian collection of Khayyām's quatrains. Actually, however, not all these quatrains are by Khayyām 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 Khayyām, Sa'di, and Ḥāfiz.

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## 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 Üongolia and date from the second/eighth century. These consist of inscriptions on two steles in honour of two princes of the Turkish dynasty of the Eastern Kök Türk State, and a third erected in honour of its old minister. The history of the Eastern Kök Türk State 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/thirteenth 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, Syriac, and Brahmi runes. The Uygur alphabet remained in use until the twelfth/eighteenth 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/thirteenth to ninth/fifteenth centuries among the Golden Horde and the Timūrids for the Kipchak and *Chaghata'i* languages. As late as the early tenth/sixteenth century there were still in the Imperial Chancellery in 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



divergencies are obviously in the main due to the passage of time and to influences from the outside.<sup>1</sup>

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 Uyghur of the pre-Islamic period, there developed in the fifth/eleventh century under the Karakhānids, 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 *Qutādghu Bilīg* (The Science of Happiness), composed by Yūsuf Khāş Hājib, and the *'Atabāt al-Haqā'iq* (The Threshold of Facts), composed by Adīb Aḥmad. There is, further, a translation of the Qur'ān. Besides these works there is another dating from the same century, the *Dīwān-o Luḡat al-Turk* of Maḥmūd al-Kāshghari composed in Baghdād 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.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> General Works on the Development of the Turkish Language and Literature: Krymski, *Istoriya turciyi i yeya literatuy*, 2 Vols., Moscow, 1916; M. Fuad Köprülüzade, *Türk edebiyatı tarihi*, Istanbul, 1926, 386 pp. + 7 maps (incomplete); "Türk edebiyatına umumî bir bakış," *Türk dili ve edebiyatı hakkında araştırmalar*, Istanbul, 1934, pp. 1-25; "Un aperçu général sur la littérature turque," *Ankara*, February 26, March 5 and 19, 1942; A. Bombaci, *Storia della letteratura turca*, Milano, 1956, 526 pp.

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<sup>2</sup> V. V. Barthold, "The Turks and the Qara-Khanids," *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, translated from the Russian by V. and T. Minorsky, I, Leiden, 1956, pp. 17-24; O. Pritsak, "Die Karachaniden," *Islam*, XXXI/1, 1953, pp. 17-68; A. A. Valitova, "Yusuf Balasagunskiy i ego 'Kutadgu bilig,'" *Kratkie Soobşçeniya Inst. Vostokovedeniya*, IV, 1952, pp. 56-63; A. Bombaci, "Kutadgu Bilig hakkında bazı mülâhazalar," *F. Köprülü Armağanı*, Istanbul, 1953, pp. 65-75; M. Fuad Köprülüzade, "II. asır Türk şairi Edip Ahmet," *Türk dili ve edebiyatı hakkında araştırmalar*, Istanbul, 1934, pp. 68-73; "Divan-i Lûgât al-Türk," *ibid.*, pp. 33-34; "Le 'Divanı Luḡat al-Türk,'" *Ankara*, January 30, February 6, 1936; "Hibet al-Hakayık tetkiklerinin bugünkü hali," *ibid.*, pp. 91-112; "Le quatrain dans la poésie classique turque," *Ankara*, November 27, 1941; C. Brockelmann, "Altturkestanische Volksweisheit," *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift*, VIII, 1920, pp. 49-73; "Mahmud al-Kaşghari über die Sprachen und Stämme der Türken im 11. Jahrhundert," *Körösi Csoma-Archivum*, I/1, 1921, pp. 26-40; "Altturkestanische Volkspoesie I," *Asia Major*, Proband, 1923, pp. 3-24; "Altturkestanische Volkspoesie II," *Asia Major*, I, 1925, pp. 22-44; "Volkskundliches aus Ostturkestan," *Asia Major*, II, 1925, pp. 110-24.



Islam was established during the fourth/tenth century in the Bulghār kingdom of Kama also. But data are lacking to enable us to decide if there also existed any literature. In any case Bulghār elements are found in the sepulchral inscriptions of the eighth/fourteenth century in the Volga region.<sup>3</sup>

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/twelfth century in West Turkestan.

In the seventh/thirteenth 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 a uniform language for a considerable section of the Muslim Turkish peoples. At first Turkish literary activity under the Saljūqs in Asia Minor was to some degree bound up with that of Central Asia and Eastern Europe. The seventh/thirteenth 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.<sup>4</sup>

Literary activity on the northern shores of the Black Sea, in Khwārizm which included the mouth of the Sir Darya, in the capital Sarāy, and in the Crimea attained a considerable development by the beginning of the eighth/fourteenth century but no uniform literary language developed. The elements of the literary language of the Karakhānid 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/thirteenth century until the beginning of the tenth/sixteenth century. They all deal with the Kipchak but contain elements from other Turkish dialects in varying degrees.

The prose work *Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyā'* (Stories of the Prophets), with passages in verse written by N. Rabghūzi, finished in 710/1310, although lacking

<sup>3</sup> C. Gérard, *Les Bulgares de la Volga et les Slaves du Danube*, Paris, 1939; J. Benzing, "Die angeblichen bolgartürkischen Lehnwörter im Ungarischen," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, CVIII, 1944, pp. 24-27; M. Räsänen, "Der Wolga-bolgarische Einfluss im Westen im Lichte der Wortgeschichte," *Finnisch-ugrische Forschungen*, XXIX, 1946, pp. 190-201; O. Pritsak, *Die bulgarische Fürstenliste und die Sprache der Protobulgaren*, Wiesbaden, 1955, 101 pp. + 3 plates.

<sup>4</sup> V. Gordlevskiy, "Hodja Ahmed Yesewi," *Festschrift Georg Jacob*, Leipzig, 1932, pp. 56-67; A. K. Borovkov, "Očerki po istorii uzbekskogo yazyka," *Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie*, V, Moscow-Leningrad, 1948, pp. 229-50; M. Fuad Köprülüzade, *L'Influence du Chamanisme tucō-mongol sur les ordres mystiques musulmans*, Istanbul, 1929, 19 pp.

aesthetic value, is of great literary importance. Another religious work in verse is the *Mu'in al-Murid* of Shaikh Sharif Khwajah (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. Khwarizmī's poem *Mahabbatnāmah* (The Book of Love), composed in 754/1353, is another work of high literary merit. Seif-i Sarāyī's translation of *Gulistān* (The Rose-Garden) that appeared in 782/1380 is another prose and verse book of high literary value. The religious work *Nahj al-Farādīs* (Way to the Paradises) of Maḥmūd b. 'Ali (716/1316) is, properly speaking, a "Forty-Hadīth" book in simple prose with no aesthetic aims. Finally may be mentioned the religious prose work *Mī'rājūmah* (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; *Irshād al-Mulūk w-al-Salātīn* composed by Barka Faqīh in 789/1387; *Kitāb fi al-Fiqh bi al-Lisān al-Turki*, originating probably from the ninth/fifteenth century; *Kitāb fi 'Ilm al-Nashshab wa Kitāb fi Riyādat al-Khail*, a book on the art of horsemanship translated from Arabic for soldiers in about 808/1405; *Kitāb al-Da'wa*, another book on the art of horsemanship also translated from Arabic in 844/1440.<sup>5</sup>

We may date to the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries the beginning of the development of the different literary languages in different parts of the Muslim Turkish world.

The Chaghatā'i language and literature which developed under the Timūrids, the descendants of the second son of Chingiz Khān, represent the most brilliant phase of the development of Central Asiatic Turkish literature. Names are known of a few Turkish poets who lived in the eighth/fourteenth century. But the works which have survived belong to the first half of the ninth/fifteenth century. Sakkāki was a panegyrist. Another famous poet was

<sup>5</sup> M. Fuad Köprülüzade, "Gazneliler devrinde Türk şiiri," *Türk dili ve edebiyatı hakkında araştırmalar*, Istanbul, 1934, pp. 26-32; "II. asırda bir Türk filologu. Fahreddin Mübarakşah ve eseri," *ibid.*, pp. 123-54; "Harezmsahlar devrinde bir Türk filologu. Muhammed b. Kays ve eseri," *ibid.*, pp. 155-61; "La poésie turque sous les Gaznevīdes," *Ankara*, November 28, 1935; "Un philologue ture à la cour de Harezmsāh," *ibid.*, January 13, 1938; "Altın Ordu'ya dair yeni vesikalar," *Bellekten V*, 1941, pp. 397-436; T. Halasi-Kun, "Philologica I," *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, V/1, 1947, pp. 1-37; "Philologica II," *ibid.*, VII/2, 1949, pp. 415-65; A. Zajaczkowski, "Zabytek jezykowy z Złotej Ordy, 'Husrev z Şirin' Qutba," *Rocznik Orientalistyczny*, 19, 1954, pp. 45-123; "Kutb'un Husrev u Sirin adlı eseri hakkında," VIII, *Türk Dil Kurultayı*, Ankara, 1960, pp. 159-64; *Manuel arabe de la langue des Turcs et des Kiptchaks (Époque de l'État mamelouk)*, Warsaw, 1938, xxi + 56 + 16; *Glosy tureckie w zabytkach. I, Katechizacja turecka Jana Herbininsa*, Wroslow, 1948, 76 pp.; M. Th. Houtsma, *Ein türkisch-arabisches Glossar*, Leiden, 1894, 114 + 57 pp.; *al-Qawānīn al-Kulliyah fi Lughat al-Turkiyyah*, Istanbul, 1928, 94 pp.; *al-Tuhfat al-Dhakīyyah fi al-Lughat al-Turkiyyah* (tr. B. Atalay), Istanbul, 1945, 296 pp. + 91 pp. in facsimile.

Lutfi. To the same period belong the panegyrist Mir Haidar Majdhüb (Turkish Tilbe), Amiri, Sayyid, Ahmad Mirza, Gadā'i, Yaqini, and 'Atā'i.

In the second half of the century Chaghatā'i literature reached its zenith in Mir 'Ali Shir Nawā'i. In his *Diwān* (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 *Muḥākamat 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. Nawā'i is considered to be one of the greatest personalities and intellectuals in Turkish literature. The prince and patron of Nawā'i, Sultān Husain Baiqara, was also a poet.

The founder of the Timūrid Empire in India in the first half of the tenth/sixteenth century, Bābur Shāh, was also the author of a number of poems, but he is most celebrated for his *Khāṭirāt-i Bāburi* (Memoirs of Bābur) or *Bāburnāmah* (Bābur 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 Chaghatā'i literature.

Minor personalities of the classical period are Hamidi, Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ, Shabāni, etc.

Under the Uzbeks, who drove the Timūrids out of Central Asia and Eastern Persia in the second half of the tenth/sixteenth century, Turkish poets and writers stuck to old Chaghatā'i models without producing anything new or original. The historian abu al-Ghāzi Bahādur Khān in the twelfth/eighteenth century probably stands alone in endeavouring to avoid in his work Persian and Arabic as well as Chaghatā'i Turkish words.

Of importance is Mirza Mahdi Khān's *Sanglākh* (Stony Place), a Turkish-Persian dictionary composed in 1174/1760 with its extensive preface on classical Chaghatā'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 fourteenth/twentieth 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.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> A. Z. V. Togan, "Ali Sir Neva'i," *İslām Ansiklopedisi*, I, 1941; A. Caferoğlu, "Çağatay türkçesi ve Neva'i," *İstanbul Üniversitesi Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi*, II/3-4, 1948, pp. 141-54; "Modern Azerbaijan edebiyatına toplu bir bakış," *Azerbaycan Yurt Bilgisi*, IV, 1954, pp. 40-48; "Adharı (Azəri)," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition; "Büyük Azəri âlimi Mirza Kâzım Bey," *Azerbaycan Yurt*



From the fifth/eleventh 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.

*Bilgisi*, I, 1932, pp. 62-68; "Ismail Bey Gaspirinski, 'Terciman' in 50 yıllığı münasebetiyle," *ibid.*, pp. 165-69; "Die türkische Sprachforschung und Professor Dr. Mehmet Fuad Köprülü," *Der Neue Orient*, IX, 1929, pp. 40-45; W. Barthold, "Baykarā," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1959; J. B. Harrison, P. Hardy, and F. Köprülü, "Babur," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition, I; L. Bouvat, "Shaibani," *ibid.*, IV, 1926; B. Spuler, "Abu 'l-Ghāzi Bahādur Khān," *ibid.*, I; J. Eckmann, "Mirza Mehdīs Darstellung der tschagataischen Sprache," *Analecta Orientalia Memoriae Alexandri Csoma de Körös Dicata*, Budapest, 1942-47, pp. 156-220; K. H. Menges, "Das Čajatajische," *der Darstellung von Mirzā Mahdī Xān*, Wiesbaden, 1956, No. 9, pp. 627-739; H. Eren, "Çağatay lûgatleri hakkında notlar," *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, VIII, 1950, pp. 143-45; P. Horn, *Geschichte der türkischen Moderne*, 2. Auflage, Leipzig, 1909; M. Hartmann, *Dichter der neuen Türkei*, Berlin, 1919; "Aus der neueren osmanischen Dichtung," *Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen*, XIX-XXI; Th. Menzel, *Die türkische Literatur der Gegenwart*, Neue Ausgabe, 283 pp.; "Tewfik Fikret," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, IV, 1929; A. Fischer and A. Muhieddin, *Anthologie aus der neuzeitlichen türkischen Literatur*, I, Leipzig-Berlin, 1919; E. Saussey, *Prosateurs turcs contemporains*, Paris, 1935, xxiii, 385 pp.; K. Akyüz, *Batı tesirinde Türk şiiri antolojisi*, 2. baskı, Ankara, 1958, XV, 857 + XLV pp.; O. Spies, "Der türkische Bauer in der Erzählliteratur," *Die Welt des Islams*, Neue Serie IV/1, 1955, pp. 40-46; *Türkische Chrestomatie aus moderner Literatur*, 1957; J. Deny, "Shināsı," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, IV, 1927; "Ahmad Wafik Pasha," *ibid.*, new edition; M. Kaplan, Namık Kemal, *Hayatı ve eserleri*, Istanbul, 1948, VI + 240 pp.; A. H. Tanpınar, "Abd al-Hakḥ Hāmīd (Abdülhak Hāmīd)," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition; S. E. Siyavuşgil, "Ahmed Midhat Efendi," *İslām Ansiklopedisi*, I; J. H. Kramers, "Sāmī, Shams al-Din, Sāmī Bey Frāsheri," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, IV, 1925; K. Akyüz, *Tevfik Fikret*, Ankara, 1947, x + 354 pp.; P. N. Boratav, "Hüseyin Rahmî'nin romancılığı," *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, III/2, 1944-45, pp. 205-12; W. Björkman, "Ahmad Rāsim" and "Mehmed Emin Bey," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition; N. S. Banarlı, *Yahya Kemal yaşarken*, Istanbul, 1959, VII + 209 pp.; H. Yücebaş, *Bütün cepheleriyle Mehmet Âkif*, Istanbul, 1958; Z. F. Fındıkoğlu, *Ziya Gökalp, Sa vie et sa sociologie*, Paris, 1936; U. Heyd, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism (The Life and Teachings of Ziya Gökalp)*, London, 1950, 174 pp.; Gökalp, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization, Selected Essays of Ziya Gökalp*, tr. and ed. with an introduction, by N. Berkes, 1959, 336 pp.; Y. Bey Vezirof, *Azerbaycan edebiyatına bir nazar*, Istanbul, 1337 A.H., 103 pp.; B. Çobanzade, *Azerî edebiyatının yeni devri*, Baku, 1930; M. A. Nazim, "Azerbaydjanskaya khudojestvennaya literatura," *Trudi aterbaydjanskogo filiala*, XXX, Baku, 1936; M. E. Resulzade, *Cağdaş Azerbaycan edebiyatı*, Ankara, 1950; *Antologiya azerbaydjankoy poesii*, Moscow, 1939; V. Minorsky, "The Poetry of Shāh Ismē'il I," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, X/4, 1942; A. Genceli, "Tebrizli Saib," *Türk Amacı*, I, 1942-43, pp. 33-37, and II, 1942-43, pp. 52-60; A. V. Yurtsever, *Sabir'in Azerbaycan edebiyatında yeri*, Ankara, 1951; H. W. Brands, "Akhund-zāda," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition; Battal-Taymas, "Kırımlı filolog-şair Bekir Çobanzade'yi tanıtma tecrübesi," *Türk Dili Araştırmaları*

Parallel to the political and social development, Anatolian Turkish literature has had an uninterrupted development from the time of the Saljūqs 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/Thirteenth Century.*—Already in the seventh/thirteenth century there developed in Anatolia a Turkish literature based mainly on the Oghuz dialect. The well-known Persian mystic Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmi and his son Sultān Walād produced some Turkish verses; Aḥmad Faqīh wrote a fairly long mystic poem; and Shaiyyād Ḥamzah left poems of different *genres*.

Yūnus 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 Dahhāni. 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 'Alī's *Qiṣṣah-i Yūsuf* (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.<sup>7</sup>

*Yıllığı—Belleten*, 1954, pp. 233-73; "Kırımli Bekir Çobanzade'nin şiirleri," *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, XII, 1955, pp. 23-44; A. Samoilovitch, "Açerki po istorii turkmenskoy literatury," *Turkmeniya*, I, 1929; Wl. Zajaczkowski, "Skie literatury turkmeńsiej," *Preglad Orientalicyzny*, I/4, 1952, pp. 106-11; E. Bertels, "The Study of the History of Turcoman Classical Literature in the Soviet Union," *Papers Presented by the Soviet Delegation at the XXIIIrd International Congress of Orientalists*, Iranian, Armenian, and Central Asian Studies, Moscow, 1954, pp. 65-78; "Makhtumkuli o khudoshestvennom tvorchestve," *Sov'et Edebiyatı*, 1944, No. 7, pp. 128-31; M. F. Köprülü, "Çağatay edebiyatı," *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, III, 1945, pp. 270-323; "Ali Sir Nevaî ve tesirleri," *Türk dili ve edebiyatı hakkında araştırmalar*, Istanbul, 1934, pp. 257-72; "Un grand poète turc, Ali Sir Nevaî," Ankara, October 15, 1936; "Ziya Paşa," *Cumhuriyet*, March 16, 1928; "Azeri," *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, II, 1942, pp. 118-51; "Hasan oğlu," *Darülfünun Edebiyat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, IV/1, 1925, pp. 77-98; "Habibi," *ibid.*, VIII/5, 1932, pp. 86-133; "Ismail Bey Gaspirinski," *Azerbaycan Yurt Bilgisi*, II, 1933, pp. 154-55; "Turkoman Literature," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, IV, 1931.

<sup>7</sup> Fr. Taeschner, "Zwei Gazels von Gülşehri," *Aramağanı*, Istanbul, 1953, pp. 479-85; *Gülschehris Mesnewi auf Achî Evran, den Heiligen von Kirschehir und Patron der türkischen Zünfte*, Wiesbaden, 1955, VIII + 81 + 13 pp.; Gülşehri, *Mantıku 't-tayr* (in facsimile), preface by A. S. Levend, Ankara, 1957, 32 + 298 pp.; F. Iz, "Ashik Pasha," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, I, new edition; A. S. Levend, "Âşık Paşa'nın bilinmeyen iki mesnevisi," *Türk Dili Araştırmaları Yıllığı* —

*Eighth/Fourteenth Century.*—The literary development followed the same line in the eighth/fourteenth 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 Qūniyah, Nigde, Ladik, Kāstāmonu, Sinop, Sivas, Kirsehir, Bursa, and Iznik.

Among the leading poets Aḥmad Gulshahri should be mentioned for his artistic merit. He put into Turkish the *Mantiq al-Ṭair* (Speech of Birds) of the Persian poet 'Attār, 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 Pāsha with his long poem *Gharībnāmah* (Book of the Stranger). He is a mere imitator of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmi and Sultān Walad. There also exists a number of detached mystical poems from the pen of 'Ashiq Pāsha, but all are far from showing the lyrical merit of Yūnus Emre.

In the second half of the century we find classical mystic poetry attaining high perfection in Nasīmi. He is a great poet whose mystic lyrics are most expressive. His style is simple but full of power and harmony. In his *Dīwān* 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'ūd's love story in verse, *Suhail wa Naubahār* (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 Nasīmi, Aḥmadi is the greatest poet of this period. He is the author of the *Iskandarnāmah* (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 *Dīwān* is more interesting from the artistic point of view. Among his poems there are some which are of local interest.

Further, we must mention Qādi Burhān al-Dīn who has left a *Dīwān* 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 prose works are to be mentioned an anonymous translation of *Kalīlah*

*Belleten*, 1953, pp. 205-55 + 13 + 15 in facsimile; "Âşık Paşa'nın bilinmeyen iki mesnevisi daha," *ibid.*, 1954, pp. 265-76 + 3 + 4 in facsimile; M. Fuad Köprülüzade, "Nesimî'ye dair," *Hayat*, I, 1927, p. 382; "Kadi Burhaneddin," *Dergâh*, II, 1922, pp. 180-81; Hoca Mes'ud, *Süheyl ü Nebahâr*, ed. J. H. Mordtmann, Hannover, 1924, 378 pp. in facsimile; G. L. Lewis, "Aḥmadi," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, I, new edition.



*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/eleventh and sixth/twelfth centuries.<sup>8</sup>

*Ninth/Fifteenth Century.*—In the ninth/fifteenth 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 Qūniyah, the Jandaroghli at Kāstāmonu, 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 Sulaimān Chalabi and Aḥmad. 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 *Shaikhi*. His version of *Khusrau wa Shīrīn* of the Persian poet Nizāmi is more than a mere translation. The *Kharnāmah* (Story of the Donkey) is a masterpiece of satire. He is also the author of a *Dīwān* 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/sixteenth century.

Another great classical poet of the period is Aḥmad Pāsha. 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 Najāti.

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'ān, *Jawāhir al-Aṣdāf* (Gems of Mothers-of-Pearl), and the more popular book *Qırq Vezir Hikayalari* (The Tales of the Forty Viziers).

But it was mainly artistic prose that was cultivated, its most brilliant representative being Sinān Pāsha with his *Tadarru' Nāmah* (Book of Supplica-

<sup>8</sup> M. Fuad Köprülüzade, "Anadolu'da Türk dil ve edebiyatının tekâmülüne umumî bir bakış," II. XV. asır, *Yeni Türk Mecmuası*, 5, 1933, pp. 375-94; M. Fuad Köprülü, "Les poètes turcs d'Anatolie au Vème siècle," *Ankara*, February 3, 10, 1938; N. Pekolcay, "Süleyman Çelebi mevlidi, metni ve menşei meselesi," *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi*, VI, 1954-55, pp. 39-64; "Ahmed'in Mevlid isimli eseri," *ibid.*, pp. 65-70; F. K. Timurtaş, "Harnama," *ibid.*, III/3-4, 1949, pp. 369-87; "Seyhî'nin tıp konusunda eseri," *ibid.*, IV/42, 1955, pp. 340-43; "Seyhî'nin hayatı ve şahsiyeti," *ibid.*, V, 1953-54, pp. 91-120; "Şeyhî'nin şöhreti ve tesiri," *ibid.*, VIII, 1958, pp. 84-89; "Şeyhî'nin Husrev u Şirin konusu," *ibid.*, IX, 1959, pp. 89-110; H. İnalçık, "Aḥmad Pāsha, called Bursalı," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition; Fr. Taeschner, "Aḥmad-Pasha-zāde," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition; "Deli Lûtfis Mizah," published by O. Rescher, *Orientalische Miscellen*, II, 1926, pp. 40-43.

tion). His style is artistically elaborated, yet natural and sincere. Other representatives of artistic prose are Sari Kamāl, Āhi, Masīhī, and Ja'far Chalabi.

As a reaction to this ornate language the first representative of the *turki-i basit* (simple Turkish), Wişāli who wrote in 'arūd 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/fifteenth century among the people and especially among the soldiers chronicles which were almost of the nature of epics. The historical works of 'Ashiq Pāshāzādah, Oruch Beg, and others do not differ much in point of style from these anonymous chronicles. The works of Tursun Beg, Bayāti, 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 Luṭfi, which is one of the oldest works of humour in Turkish literature.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> M. Fuad Köprülüzade, "Anadolu'da Türk dil ve edebiyatının tekâmülüne umumî bir bakış," III, XVI, asır, *Yeni Türk Mecmuası*, 7, 1933, pp. 535-53; "Fuzuli'nin yeni eserle'ri," *Azerbaycan Yurt Bilgisi*, I, 1932, pp. 447-48; Milli edebiyat cereyanının ilk mübeşşirleri ve Divan-ı türki-i basit, XVI, asır şairlerinden Edirneli Nazmi'nin eseri, Istanbul, 1928; "Müverrih Âli," *Cumhuriyet*, March 15, 1928; M. Fuad Köprülü, "Les poètes turcs d'Anatolie au XVIème siècle," *Ankara*, February 24, March 4, 1938; "Fuzuli," *Ankara*, March 10, 1938; "Baki," *Ankara*, March 24, 31, 1938; Th. Menzel, "Zāti," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, IV, 1934, pp. 1218-19; A. N. Tarlan, *Hayalî Bey Divanı*, Istanbul, 1945, xxiv + 450 pp. + 16 plates; "Fuzuli'nin bilinmeyen kasideleri," *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi*, III/1-2, 1948, pp. 193-209; "Fuzuli'nin bilinmeyen kasideleri, II," *ibid.*, III/3-4, 1949, pp. 411-27; *Fuzuli Divanı I. Gazel, musammat, mukatta ve rubaî kısmı*, Istanbul, 1950, x + 247 pp.; "Fuzuli'nin bilinmeyen kasideleri, III," *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi*, IV/3, 1951, pp. 257-64; Fevziye Aptullah, "Fuzuli'nin gazellerine dair," *Edebiyat*, 1, 1934, pp. 16-23; H. Çatbaş, "Fuzuli'nin bir mektubu," *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, VI/3, 1948-49, pp. 139-46; Kemal Edib, "Fuzuli'nin bilinmeyen şiirlerinden bir kaçı," *ibid.*, VI/6, 1948-49, pp. 319-28; A. Karahan, *Fuzuli, Muhiti, hayatı ve şahsiyeti*, Istanbul, 1949, xxiii + 309 + 10 pp. + 10 pp. in facsimile + 1 map; A. S. Levend, "Fuzuli'nin Şah u Geda'sı," *Türk Dili*, III/35, 1954, pp. 655-56; H. Mazıoğlu, *Fuzuli - Hafız. İki şair arasında bir karşılaştırma*, Ankara, 1956, 375 pp.; Fuzuli, *Türkçe Divan*, Ankara, 1958, 537 pp.; F. İz, "Bâkî," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition; F. N. Uzluk, "Lâmiî'nin lâtifelerinden," *Türk Dili*, IV/46, 1955, pp. 609-11; Mehmed Ali Aynî, "Kınalızade Ali Çelebi," *Mehmed Ali Aynî, Türk ahlâkçuları*, I, Istanbul, 1937, pp. 77-104; "Khwadja Sa'daddin," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*; Fr. Babinger, "Sehi Çelebi," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, IV, 1926; *Tezkere-i Lâtifi*, edition by Ahmed Cevdet, Istanbul, 1314 A.H., 381 pp.; V. L. Ménage, "Ashik Çolobi," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition; Bahriye Piri Reis, *Das türkische Segelhandbuch für das Mittelländische Meer vom Jahre 1521*, P. Kahle, I, Text, 1. Lieferung; II. Übersetzung, 1. Lieferung, Berlin-Leipzig, 1926; Bergamalı Kadri, *Müeyyiret-ül-ulûm* (facsimile, transcription, text, index), edition by B. Atalay, Istanbul, xx + 247 + 182 pp.

*Tenth/Sixteenth Century.*—In the tenth/sixteenth 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 Baghdād, Diyār-i Bakr, Qūniyah, Kāstāmonu, Bursa, Edirne, Yenije-u Vardar, and Üsküp. 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: Dhāti, Khayāli, Fudūli, and Bāqi. Dhāti wrote a large number of works in poetry and prose which are unequal in merit. His imagination and new ideas made him very popular. Khayāli surpasses Dhāti as a poet. His *Diwān* contains all his works. His most original poems are his love poems. Fudūli must be regarded as the greatest lyrical poet of Turkish literature. Although he used the dialect of Ādharbaijān, 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 Majnūn* 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 Nawā'i has acquired a like reputation throughout the whole Turkish world. He exercised an influence even on the musician poets of the lover classes. Bāqi was undoubtedly the most reputed poet of his time, his fame stretching as far as India. In the expression of sentiment he is below Fudūli, 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 Sulaimān 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: Lāmi'i, Kamāl Pāshāzādah, Jalālzādah, Farīdūn Beg, 'Azmi, Qinalizādah, Khawājah Sa'd al-Dīn, 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 Fuḍūli and Bāqī 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 *Diwān*, though, again, in 'arūd 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 Saljūq tradition. A number of historical works were written in verse. With the exception of the Ottoman history by Ḥadīdi they always deal with a single event or the victories of a single emperor or commander. General histories were composed by ibn Kamāl, Jalālzādah, Muṣṭafa Chalabi, Muḥi al-Dīn Jamālī, Luṭfi Pāsha, Khwājah 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 Shāhi Beg on the model of Nawā'ī's work. This was followed by the works of Laṭifi, 'Ashiq Chalabi, 'Ahdī, and Ḥasan 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 *Bahrīyyah* (Maritime Work) of Piri Ra'īs, and *Muḥit* (Ocean) and *Mir'āt al-Mamālik* (Mirror of Lands) of Saidi 'Ali Ra'īs 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. Wandering musician-poets were to be found wherever people congregated, and love songs, heroic tales, elegies, and folk-songs were recited.<sup>10</sup>

*Eleventh/Seventeenth Century.*—In the eleventh/seventeenth century knowledge of the Ottoman literary language spread among the Muslim lower classes generally and also through districts to the non-Turkish population or Turks speaking a non-Ottoman Turkish dialect. The influence of Turkish literature and culture is found as early as the tenth/sixteenth century in the use of Arabic script by the Muslim Hungarians and Croats. There are

<sup>10</sup> M. Fuad Köprülü, "Les poètes turcs d'Anatolie au XVIIème siècle," *Ankara*, April, 7, 14, 1938; "Nef'i," *Ankara*, May 12, 19, 1938; "Âşık Ömer (xvii. asır saz şairi)," *M. F. Köprülü, Türk saz şairleri*, II, xvi-xviii, *asır*, Istanbul, 1940, pp. 193-256; A. Karahan, *Nabi*, Istanbul, 1953; J. Walsch, "'Aṭā'ī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition; Th. Menzel, "Waisī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, IV, 1933; M. Fuad Köprülü, "Kâtip Çelebi," *Cumhuriyet*, February 25, 1928; "Peçewī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*; "Naima," *Cumhuriyet*, February 27, 1928; "Qoçhi Beg," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*; M. C. Baysun, "Evliya Çelebi," *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*; S. N. Ergun, *Karaca Oğlan*, Istanbul, 1950; M. H. Bayrı, "Şiirlerine nazaran Gevherî," *Yeni Türk Mecmuası*, 75-76, 1939, pp. 103-06.

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 eleventh/seventeenth 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 (*qaṣīdahs*), 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 (*hajwīy-yāt*), on the other hand, are less successful.

Another very important classical poet was Nābi 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 not a dictionary."

The greatest figure in romance poems (*mathnawi*) is Nav'izāda 'Atā'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 Oqchizādah, 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 encyclopedist, Kātib Chalabī'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 Kātib Chalabi, Pachavi, Na'ima, and Qochi Beg. The verse chronicles are much below the level of those of the tenth/sixteenth century. The most notable are those of Riyādi and Qafzādah Fā'idi.

In the field of geography the most important works are those of Kātib Chalabi and abu Bakr Dimashqi. They use European as well as Muslim sources. The *Sayāhatnāmah* (Voyage Book) of Avliya Chalabi is important as history of all aspects 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.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> M. F. Köprülü, "Les poètes turcs d'Anatolie au XVIIIème siècle," *Ankara*, June 9, 1938; "Kodja Raghīb Pasha," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*; "Ahmed Nedim,"

*Twelfth/Eighteenth Century.*—Literature and culture continued in the twelfth/eighteenth century to follow the same lines as in the preceding centuries. There was a vast 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 Nadīm in particular acquired a great reputation. By his original themes, rich imagination, sparkling wit, and 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 *sharqīs*, 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 *türkü*.

Among the great poets of this century special mention must be made of Rāghib Pāsha, the last great poet of the classical period.

The poets of this century practised 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 continued. The last masterpiece of romantic poetry was Shaikh Ghālib'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, 'Uthmānzādah Tā'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 Segbān Bāshī.

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 Muḥammad 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 Ibrāhim Mutafarriqah inaugurated printing in Turkish script, but for several reasons printing remained confined to a very restricted

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Ankara, June 29, 1937; Sadettin Nüzhet, *Şeyh Galib. Hayat ve eserleri*, Istanbul, 1936; M. Fuad Köprülüzade, "Osmanzade Taib'e dair," *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, II, 1928, pp. 427-30.



sphere throughout the century and did not exercise any particular influence on intellectual and artistic life.<sup>12</sup>

*Thirteenth/Nineteenth Century.*—At the beginning of the thirteenth/nineteenth century Ottoman literature sank to a very low level which continued till 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 Mutareim 'Āşim was remarkable for its style and critical analysis. He used even simpler language in his translation of *Burhān-i Qāfi* (The Definite Proof) and the *Qāmūs* (Lexicon). Lastly, mention must be made of the celebrated poet and stylist 'Ākif Pāsha 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, *Dihni*, and Amrāh.

## 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 of 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 a grammatical statement or of a group of statements

<sup>12</sup> M. F. Köprülü, "Les poètes turcs d'Anatolie au XIXème siècle," *Ankara*, June 16, 1938; "Erzurumlu Emrah (xix. asır saz şairi)," *M. F. Köprülü, Türk saz şairleri, Antoloji*, III, xix-xx, esirler, Istanbul, 1940, pp. 577-640; "Âşık Dertli (xix. asır saz şairi)," *ibid.*, pp. 641-704; M. Ş. Ülkütaşır, "Mütercim Âşim (1755-1819)," *Türk Dili*, I/1, 1951, p. 34; A. H. Tanpınar, "Âkif Paşa," *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, I; Z. F. Fındıkoğlu, *Bayburtlu Zihni*, Istanbul, 1950, 125 pp.

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 ones.

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 subordinate 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 religions were no more to be found. In their place, we find Islamic terminology. But this latter was not so 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 an analytical sentence structure was less pronounced. Though subordinate 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 the Khwārizmian 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/fifteenth 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 practised. 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 subordinate 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 subordinate clauses, and a freer word-order in the sentence.

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## Part 2. Fine Arts

### Chapter LV

#### 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, in the time of the 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 the 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 one hundred 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 (*hujarāt*) for the Prophet's wives, all opening into the courtyard.

We have the description of these huts, preserved by ibn Sa'd,<sup>1</sup> 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 × 3 cubits. One could reach the roof with the hand." Such was the house of the leader of the community at Medina.

The Dome of the Rock at 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 sixteen windows and resting on four piers and twelve columns, placed in a circle. This circle of supports was 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 in 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 *ṭawāf*. The piers and columns were so planned that, instead of concealing one another, they permit, from almost any position, a view right across the building. A twist of about 2½ degrees was given to the central ring of supports, with the result that an observer entering by any door can see not only the central column in front of him but also the central 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 (*fusaiḥisa*) like the inner arcades. This was replaced by the present coating of faience by Sultān Sulaimān 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 north to south and 150 m. from east to 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.<sup>2</sup> After the Arab conquest, the *temenos* was divided between Muslims and Christians. Ibn Shākir says that they both "entered by the same doorway, placed on the south side

<sup>1</sup> *Ṭabaqāt*, Vol. XLIII, p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, pp. 344–45.

where is now the great *mihrāb*; 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 "*mihrāb* of the Companions of the Prophet." As for the corner towers, ibn al-Faqīh (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'ūdi<sup>3</sup> says: "Then came Christianity and it became a church; then came Islam and it became a mosque. Al-Walid built it solidly and the *ṣawāmi'* (the four corner towers) were not changed. They serve for the call to prayers at 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 (*ṣaḥn*), an oblong rectangle, surrounded on three sides by a portico. On the south side was the sanctuary nearly 136 m. in length and a little 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 equal halves, each half consisting of eleven 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 *ṣaḥn* 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 (*fusaiḥisa*) 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 7 m. high), where the famous panorama of the Bārada (the river of Damascus) is in full view. When intact the surface of the *fusaiḥisa* 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 *mihrāb* appeared for the first time.

Another building due to al-Walid was the audience hall and *ḥammām*, known today as Quṣair 'Amrah, in Transjordan. It consists of an audience hall about 10 m. 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 *ḥammām*, 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

<sup>3</sup> *Prairies*, Vol. IV, pp. 90-91.



in a Roman bath. But 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: Qaisar (the Byzantine Emperor), Rodorik (the Visigothic King of Spain), Chosroës (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.<sup>4</sup>

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 (*fusaiḥsa*). 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 the first place and Persia the 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 semicircular 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 (*apadāna*) and the flat-roofed portico (*tālār*) of more recent Persian palaces.

At about this time the Aqṣa 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 right and seven to left, each about 6.15 m. 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 to right and left, and eleven "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-Rahmān I, the last survivor of the Umayyad family.

<sup>4</sup> K. A. C. Creswell, "Lawfulness of Painting in Early Islam," *Ars Islamica*, XL-XII, pp. 159-66.

It was added to on three occasions but this earliest part still exists; as at Jerusalem, the aisles, of which there are eleven, 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 8 m. 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 of the span apart. And there can be no doubt about the date, for on the plaster of the vault is a Kūfic 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-'Āṣ. The whole of Egypt was occupied within less than two years and ibn al-'Āṣ made the military camp at al-Fuṣṭāṭ, a site south of modern Cairo. Al-Fuṣṭāṭ continued to be the capital of Egypt until the Fāṭimids in 360/969 founded Cairo. 'Amr constructed a simple mosque at al-Fuṣṭāṭ, 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-Fuṣṭāṭ.

The mosque of 'Amr was first enlarged at the order of Caliph Mu'āwiyah in 53/673<sup>5</sup> and four minarets were erected at the four corners. This was the first time that minarets were introduced in any Muslim structure.

The next major enlargement of this mosque took place during the reign of Caliph al-Māmūn in 212/827 at the hands of 'Abd Allah ibn Ṭāhir, 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 twenty-two windows lighting the twenty-two aisles. There were three *mihrābs* and seven arcades in the sanctuary; each arcade consisted of nineteen arches on twenty columns. The arcades were all braced with decorated tie-beams.

We must now speak of the great mosque of Sūsa on the gulf of Gabes, which, the inscription of its wall tells us, was built by abu al-'Abbās ibn al-Aghlab in 236/850-51. It consists of a perfectly regular rectangle measuring 49.39 m. × 57.16 m. internally, with irregular annexes to east and west. The *ṣaḥn*, measuring roughly 41 m. × 22.25 m., is surrounded by low arcades of slightly horse-shoe form, resting on squat T-shaped piers. There are eleven arches to north and south and six to 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 thirteen aisles, formed by twelve arcades of six

<sup>5</sup> *Idem, A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture*, Pelican Edition, London, 1958, p. 13.

arches running from north to south, each divided into six bays by other arcades running from east to west. Internally it is perfectly plain except for a splay-face moulding, immediately above which is a fine inscription frieze in simple undecorated Kūfic, the maximum height of the characters being 28 m. The frieze in which they are carved curves forward slightly to compensate for 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 Fāṭimids and appears in the Mosque of al-Hākim, 380-403/990-1013.

The Great Mosque of Sāmarra was built by the Caliph al-Mutawakkil; the work was begun in 234/848-849 and finished in Ramaḍān 237/February-March 852. It is 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 sq. m. Only the enclosing walls have been preserved. The mosque proper was surrounded by an outer enclosure, or *ziyādah*, 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. × 444 m. The minaret, the famous Malwiyah, stands free at a distance of 27½ m. from the north wall of the mosque. There is a socle 3 m. high on which rests a spiral tower with a ramp about 2.30 m. wide, which winds round in a counterclockwise 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 on to a steep staircase, at first straight then spiral, leading to the top platform, which is 50 m. 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 Sāmarra.

Ten years later, important works were carried out in the Great Mosque of Qairawān by Abu Ibrāhim Aḥmad, who reduced the width of the central aisles by about 1.20 m. 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 *miḥrāb*. They rise to a height of 9.15 m. and the square thus formed is terminated above by a cornice, its top edge being 10.83 m. from the ground. On it rests the octagonal zone of transition, 2.15 m. in height, which is formed by eight semicircular arches springing from colonnettes resting on little corbels inserted in the cornice just mentioned. The drum is composed of eight arched windows and sixteen arched panels arranged in pairs between the windows. The dome, which is 5.80 m. in diameter, has twenty-four 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 Cantaloup melon, with twenty-four convex ribs (corresponding to the twenty-four concave segments) which taper to nothing at the apex. Abu Ibrāhīm's work was carried out in 248/862. He also lined the *mihrāb* 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 *mihrāb* 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 Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn (254-270/868-884), the first Muslim sovereign of independent Egypt, that Muslim architecture properly developed in the Nile Valley. He was the son of a Turkish slave and was born and brought up in Sāmarra. He proved to be a great administrator and great builder. Al-Qatā'i, the new quarter of al-Fustāṭ, was adorned with magnificent buildings. He built for himself a palace which went by the name of al-Maidān 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 Bāb al-Ṣalāt (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.<sup>6</sup> It exhibits strong influence of the Sāmarra school as ibn Ṭūlūn himself came from Sāmarra and his architects and craftsmen too were mostly Iraqis.<sup>7</sup> 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 Ṭūlūn 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 *ṣaḥn* 302 sq. ft. surrounded by *riwāqs*, five aisles deep. There are thirteen pointed arches on each side. The sanctuary is formed by five arcades of seventeen 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 variety of designs, some composed of straight lines, others triangular, and still others circular and interlacing, is extraordinary. 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 hivestone, is almost a copy of the Malwiyah of Sāmarra. About one-seventeenth of the Qur'ān is inscribed in beautiful Kūfic characters on the wooden frieze round the inside of the building just below the flat timbered roof.<sup>8</sup>

Ṭūlūnid Egypt could also boast of a very unusual structure; it was the palace of Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn's son, Khumārawaih (271-282/884-895). The walls

<sup>6</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān*, Cairo, 1299/1881, Vol. I, p. 97; ibn Taghribardi, *al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fi Mulūk Miṣr w-al-Qāhirah*, Vol. II, Leiden, 1855, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Al-Muqaffa', p. 362, quoted by Guest in *E. G. Browne Memorial Volume*, p. 171.

<sup>8</sup> P. K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, London, 1949, p. 454.

of its golden hall were covered with gold and decorated with bas-reliefs of himself, his wives, and his songstresses.<sup>9</sup> These life-size figures were carved in wood.

Under the 'Abbāsids the Hellenistic influence of Syria was replaced by the surviving influence of Sāssānian Persia, which profoundly modified the art and architecture, and this gave birth to the art of Sāmarra, the influence of which extended to Egypt under ibn Ṭūlūn, and even Nishāpūr and Bahraīn. In palace architecture there was a vast difference between one of the Umayyads and that of the 'Abbāsids, 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 *līwān* (or four radiating *līwāns*) for public audience. The *bait*s also were different, following the type of Qaṣr-i *Shirīn* and not the Syrian type of *Mushatta* and *Qaṣr al-Ṭūba*. The scale was immense and axial planning was a marked feature. But all are built of brick and a great part of that 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 Qairawān from Iraq in 248/862. Bands of inscription were usually made to stand out on a blue background. But the widespread influence of the 'Abbāsīd 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

### I. Muslim Architecture in North Africa

*The Fāṭimids.*—When the Fāṭimids came to power in Egypt in 358/969, they built a new city north of al-Fuṣṭāṭ and called it al-Qāhirah (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 Fāṭimid mosque, completed by al-Ḥākim 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-Ḥākim, was not effected until the beginning of the sixth/twelfth 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 Kūfic inscriptions.

The grandeur of Fāṭimid architecture may well be imagined from the

<sup>9</sup> Ibn Taghribardi, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 57-58; Maqrizi, *al-Khitāṭ w-al-Āthār*, Cairo, 1911, Vol. I, p. 316-17.

testimony of the massive gates of which three are extant in Cairo: Bāb Zawilah, Bāb al-Naṣr, and Bāb al-Futūḥ.<sup>10</sup>

*The Mamlūks.*—While the Ṭūlūnid and Fāṭimid architecture in Egypt was inspired by Iraq and Iran respectively, the Mamlūk monuments were influenced by the Ayyūbi school of Syria. The Mamlūks 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.

Mamlūk 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 Sulṭān Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ayyūbi of the Crusade fame. Although none of these institutions exist today, their impact may easily be noticed in the collegiate mosque of Sulṭān al-Ḥasan (748-63/1347-61).

One of the early monuments of the Mamlūk 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-Manṣūr Saif al-Dīn Qalāwūn (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-Māristān al-Manṣūri, 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.<sup>11</sup>

His son and successor al-Nāṣir (692-740/1293-1340) surpassed him in the construction of public works. He dug a canal connecting Alexandria with the Nile employing one hundred thousand men; built an aqueduct connecting his far-famed citadel al-Qaṣr al-Ablaq (the palace of varied colours) at Cairo with the river; founded thirty mosques at various places in his kingdom; and provided for public use drinking fountains (*sabīls*), baths, and schools. Inside his citadel he built a mosque the material for which was brought from 'Akka.

Another noteworthy builder among the Mamlūks was al-Nāṣir's son, Sulṭān Ḥasan, whose collegiate mosque is the most splendid example of Mamlūk architecture. It consists of a square *ṣaḥn* (central court) which is flanked by four *liwāns* (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 Sulṭān Ḥasan 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 Sulṭāniyyah tomb of Sulṭān Khuda Bandah (d. 706/1306).

During the Mamlūk period the use of brick was abandoned in minaret construction in favour of stone. The cruciform plan of school-mosque structure

<sup>10</sup> Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, p. 380.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 406-07.



was perfected. Domes, renowned for their lightness, beauty of outline, and excessively rich decoration, were constructed. Stones of different colours in alternate courses (*ablāq*) were utilized for striped masonry and decorations. Geometrical arabesques and Kūfic letterings were also profusely used.

Although the last hundred years of the Mamlūk 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 Barqūq (785-800/1383-1398), the Mosque of Qā'it Bay (873-900/1468-1495), and the mosque of al-Ghauri (906-922/1500-1516). The Mosque of Qā'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.

*Qairawān*.—During the reign of Caliph Mu'āwiyah, his famous general, 'Uqbah ibn Nāfi' invaded the Maghrib (the land west of Egypt) and founded the famous military city of al-Qairawān (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-Kūfah, Baṣrah, and al-Fuṣṭāṭ.<sup>12</sup> The famous mosque of Qairawān, the fourth most sacred Muslim sanctuary in the world, was built several times by the successors of 'Uqbah and finally by the Aghlabid ruler, Ziādat Allah I (202-223/817-838).

The Qairawān mosque is a big oblong enclosure. The *ṣahn*, 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 seventeen aisles by sixteen arcades. Each of these arcades consists of seven arches. They are all of the round horse-shoe type. The *miḥrāb* 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 *miḥrāb* are exquisite columns, also made of marble. There is a fine pair of orange-red marble columns situated in front of the *miḥrāb* which is actually a recess, horse-shoe in plan. It is lined with a series of marble panels, twenty-eight 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 *miḥrāb* is decorated with lustre tiles, 139 in number.

At the northern end of the *ṣahn* 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

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 248.

on the African soil and is quite different from the spiral *malwiyahs* of the mosques of Sāmarra and the mosque of ibn Ṭūlūn.

In this region of al-Maghrib is found perhaps the earliest monument of Muslim military architecture. It is known as Qal'ah Bani Ḥammād. This citadel was built by Ḥammād bin Yūsuf 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 Qairawān but, unlike Qairawān, 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-Raḥmān I (139-172/756-788) and his successors built at Cordova, Seville, Granada, and other cities of this westernmost 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,<sup>13</sup> and "the city was adorned with numerous beautiful structures."<sup>14</sup> 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-Raḥmān I founded the independent Umayyad Kingdom of Spain. This process lasted till the death of ibn Aḥmar (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,<sup>15</sup> contained one hundred and thirteen thousand homes, twenty-one suburbs, seven hundred mosques,<sup>16</sup> and three hundred public baths.

One of the first projects of 'Abd al-Raḥmān I was to build an aqueduct for the supply of pure water to the capital. He also built a wall round the city and erected for himself a palace called Munyat al-Ruṣāfah outside Cordova in imitation of the palace built by his grandfather, Caliph Hishām, in northern Syria.

'Abd al-Raḥmān also laid the foundation of the great mosque of Cordova in 170/786. It was finished in a year at a cost of 80,000 dinars (£40,000).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> K. A. C. Creswell, *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture*, p. 227.

<sup>14</sup> Ameer Ali, *A Short History of the Saracens*, London, 1951, p. 515.

<sup>15</sup> P. K. Hitti, *op. cit.*, p. 527.

<sup>16</sup> Maqqari, *Nafh al-Tib*, Vol. I, p. 355.

<sup>17</sup> Ibn Adhari, p. 245, quoted by Creswell, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

It is the third largest mosque in the world covering an area of 26,500 sq. yards. It is a vast rectangle, free on all sides. Covered porticoes surround it on every side except the southern where there are seventeen arches. The sanctuary is a huge hall of nineteen aisles, the roof of which rests on eighteen arcades. It could once be entered from the street by thirteen doors. The *ṣahn* 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, 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-Raḥmān 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."<sup>18</sup> Similarly, al-Ḥakam built a dome in front of the *miḥrāb* 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 round the *ṣahn*, show clear Syrian inspiration, the double tier of arcades are the most original features of the great mosque.

'Abd al-Raḥmān III (207-238/822-852) also erected a palatial mansion and called it al-Zahrā', naming it after his wife. It stood on one of the spurs of the Sierra Morena overlooking the Guadalquivir (*Wādi al-Kabīr*). 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 twenty years. The palace had four hundred 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/thirteenth-century citadel-castle of Alhambra (the Red Palace) built by ibn Aḥmar (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."<sup>19</sup> In the words of Ameer Ali, "The towers, citadels, and palaces [at Alhambra], with their light and elegant architecture the graceful porticos and colonnades, the

<sup>18</sup> Al-Maqqari, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 369-70

<sup>19</sup> P. K. Hitti, *op. cit.*, p. 59



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 a hundred and twenty-eight 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 filagree 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,"<sup>20</sup> 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 Jāmi'ah al-'Ārif). 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-Qaṣr) of Seville is another notable contribution of the Muslims. It was first built by a Toledo architect for the Muwaḥḥid 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 till recently used as residence by the Spanish rulers. There is another Muwaḥḥid 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.<sup>21</sup>

### 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 Ṭariq Khānah 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.

<sup>20</sup> Amcer Ali, *op. cit.*, pp. 567-68

<sup>21</sup> P. K. Hitti, *op. cit.*, p. 595

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 Persia is that of Great Mosque at Qum, south of Teheran. It was built by abu Sa'dain Husain in 256/878 and was eighty 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 Saljūq period and were direct descendants of the Sāssānian domes. The most conspicuous and representative dome of the second type may be seen over the tomb of Sultān Sanjar at Merv (552/1157) while the most renowned earlier example of the third type is the Gumbad-i Qābūs (398/1007).

The Gumbad-i Qābūs was built by Shams al-Ma'ālī 'Abd al-Ḥasan Qābūs, the ruler of Gurgān and Ṭabaristān in 397/1006. This mausoleum is actually a cylindrical tower with a conical top. The inside is empty, a continuous void from 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 Kūfic inscriptions also, one 26 ft. 3 ins. above the ground and the other just under the corbel.

These tomb-towers hold an important place in the Saljūq architecture. They are mostly found in Ādharbaijān and across the border in Qūniyah. Prominent among these are Khalifah Ghāzi at Amasia, the tomb-tower within the mosque of Sultān 'Ali al-Dīn at Qūniyah and 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 steps to these chambers are rarely found. They were entered probably by means of a ladder.

The Saljūqs 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 *ivān* portal leads into an open court; arcades surrounding the court are interrupted by four *ivāns*, two on the longitudinal axis and two on the cross axis with prayer halls at the back of the arcades; the major *ivān* opens into a square sanctuary chamber, crowned by a dome with a *mihrāb* in the rear wall of the chamber.

The earliest Saljūq mosque containing all these elements is the small Masjid-i Jāmi' at Zauara, north-east of Ispahān, which was erected in 530/1135.

During the Saljūq 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 Saljūq 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 Jāmi' Masjid at Ispahān which are assigned to the Saljūqs.

Surface enrichment of the Muslim architecture in Iran was of three types: brick patterns, plaster, and mosaic faience. Decorative brick-lay appeared in pre-Saljūq work, reached its maximum effectiveness under the Saljūqs, and tended to die out in the eighth/fourteenth century. Stucco was an important feature of decoration even in the earliest Muslim monuments and held its popularity throughout. Faience, first used by the Saljūqs on a large scale, developed considerably during the Il-Khānids and reached its zenith under the Timūrids and the Şafawids.

A number of Saljūq monuments contain *mihrābs* 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 Saljūq period. The arabesque and monumental inscriptions in Kūfic and *nasta'liq* writing became an essential part of decoration. For instance, in Merv there still stand the ruins of the tomb of Sultān Sanjar (511-552/1117-1157) the last of the great Saljūqs, decorated on the inside with panels of fine arabesque and inscriptions, both Kūfic and *naskh* in cut terra-cotta. One of the most beautiful Kūfic inscriptions of the Saljūq period is known from a ruined *madrasah* at Karghid in Khurāsān. It contains the name of Nizām al-Mulk, the Grand Vizier of Sultān Alp Arsalān (455-485/1063-1092). The Jāmi' Masjid at Qazwin, built in 509/1116, and the *mihrāb* of Imāmzādah Karrār at Buzūn (528/1134) exhibit the most developed Saljūq style of decoration in stucco and stone. The Jāmi' Masjid at Ardistan (555/1160) has three *mihrābs* 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 Saljūq era not only for the decoration of mosques, but also for that of palaces and houses of the 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 are chiefly found in Rayy (Teheran) and Sawa.

Fifteen Saljūq monuments display, on the interior or the exterior, glazed tiles used in the inscriptions or patterns. Mosaic faience developed in Gumbad-i Kabūd at Marāghah (593/1196) reached a stage at which strips of glazed tiles were set in a plaster ground to form an elaborate strapwork pattern,



splendid calligraphic friezes of lusted faience surmounted dadoes composed of star tiles in golden brown lustre on a white ground, and *mihrābs* were executed in the same material, for instance, the famous *mihrāb* of the Maidān Mosque at Kāshār (623/1226).<sup>22</sup> Mention may be made of Malik Shāh, a great Saljūq monarch (465–485/1072–1092) who made Ispahān, his capital, one of the most beautiful cities in Asia. He built the famous Jāmi' 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 Mīna-i 'Alī and was built by Malik Shāh. 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/thirteenth century. Merv and Nishāpūr fell to Chingiz Khān in 617/1220, and within twenty-five years the entire country was not only occupied but cities were completely burnt, buildings were totally razed to the ground 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 the Il-Khān Mongols stand today.

The Mongols ruled over Iran for about 143 years (644–791/1246–1389). Hulāgu, the founder of the Mongol Empire, assumed the title of Il-Khān and made Tabriz his capital.

The first Mongol construction in Iran was an astronomical observatory built at Marāghah, the summer capital of Hulāgu Khān, at the instance of his famous minister, Naṣir al-Din Ṭūsi, in 678/1279.

But it was Hulāgū's successor, Arghūn, who revived the great architectural tradition of Iran. He began the construction of Arghūniyyah, a splendid suburb of Tabriz. Work was also undertaken at Sultāniyyah near Qazwin and summer palaces were built at Ālatāgh, Mansūriyyah, and Lar.

The Golden Age of Il-Khānid architecture was, however, ushered in by Ghāzān Khān, who embraced Islam and came to throne in 694/1295. Ghāzān 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.<sup>23</sup> He also built his lofty tomb at Shenb. It was twelve-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 Shāfi'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 Ardīliyyah. The tomb was the focal point of the entire built-up area. It was surrounded by gardens which were encircled by a suburb called Ghāzāniyyah. Near each of the gates of this town, which

<sup>22</sup> K. A. C. Creswell, *Persian Art*, ed. E. Denison Ross, London, 1930, p. 53.

<sup>23</sup> Donald N. Wilber, *The Architecture of Islamic Iran—Il-Khānid Period*, Princeton, 1955, p. 17.

soon rivalled Tabriz, was built a caravanserai, markets, and public baths. The name of the chief architect of Ghāzāniyyah was Tāj al-Dīn 'Ali Shāh.

Although Ghāzāniyyah is a heap of bricks today and Ghāzān's famous tomb a crumbling mound of debris, very detailed account of Ghāzān's extensive construction comes to us from the works of Rashīd al-Dīn, Waṣṣāf, Ḥamd Allah Mustaufi, and Shams Kāshāni.

Ghāzān was succeeded by his illustrious brother Olejeitu (705-18/1305-18) who embraced Islam and assumed the name of Muḥammad Khuda Bandah. Olejeitu far surpassed his predecessors in architectural achievements. As a matter of fact, most renowned buildings of the Īl-Khānid period belong to his reign.

Soon after he came to throne, Olejeitu ordered work at Sultāniyyah, a site near Qazwīn. Plan for this new capital was prepared by his father Arghūn but he died before it could be executed. Olejeitu built a wonderful city at Sultāniyyah. The citadel was 500 gaz on a side. It was protected by a wall and sixteen towers of cut stone. The principal mosque was ornamented with marble and porcelain. There were a hospital and a college also. Surrounded by twelve 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 Sultān Muḥammad 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."<sup>24</sup>

The second most famous monument of the Īl-Khānid period was the mosque in Tabriz of Tāj al-Dīn 'Ali Shāh, Olejeitu's minister. Only a very small section of this mosque exists today, but Mustaufi, writing in 736/1335, stated that the main *ivān* of this mosque was a tremendous structure. It was 30.15 m. wide, with side walls 10.40 m. thick. The height up to the vault was 25 m. The pointed arch of the *mihrāb* was supported on two columns of copper, and the *mihrāb* frame was embellished and pointed with gold and silver. According to ibn Baṭṭūtah, the open court of the mosque was paved with marble, the walls were covered with Kāshāni (faince decoration) and there was a square pool in the middle with fountains.

Mention must also be made of the largest and the most revered shrine of Imām 'Ali Ridā' at Meshed and of his sister Fāṭimah 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 Shīrāz as their capital and the Muzaffarids controlled the entire region south of Teheran. Their capital was Yazd. History records that Shīrāz possessed many fine buildings constructed by the Atabeks but hardly any of these structures exists today. The Muzaffarids seem to be

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

more fortunate in that several very famous buildings that owe their existence to these potentates are still extant in Yazd and Kirmān.

Like Iranian art in all its forms, Iranian architecture during the Il-Khānid Mongols was decorative, characterized by precision, clarity, and lucidity. However, contrary to the Saljūq period, the Il-Khānid construction places a decided emphasis upon verticality. A look at the portal of Jāmi' Masjid at Iṣpahān and its north-side arches, the portal of Khānqāh at Natauz, the tomb shrine at Ziārat, the niche of Bāyazid's shrine at Bistām, and Pir-i Bakrām portal proves the point. Chambers too become loftier in relation to their horizontal measurements. *Ivāns* also become narrower but higher.

The Ṣafawid Emperor, Shāh 'Abbās 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 Iṣpahān, the capital, which he built anew. The scheme included the Great Maidān 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 Chahār Bāgh.

Shāh 'Abbās also built the Jāmi' Masjid of Iṣpahān. It has four *ivāns* and a domed chamber with a *mihrāb* on the *qiblah* side. The south-east *ivān* is flanked by two halls, each with eight dome-covered bays and a *mihrāb*. 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 Bukhāra of Sultān Ismā'it (279-294/892-907), the founder of the Sāmānid dynasty. It is a cubical structure with a dome. Its decoration is almost entirely of brick-work. The spandrils of the central arch bear square-shaped *motifs*. The central hemispherical dome is surrounded by four small cupolas on its four corners.

Uskend in eastern Farghanah was another centre of the Sāmānids where four important monuments—one *minār* and three mausoleums—still stand. The *minār* 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.

Merv 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 Hamadāni Masjid in memory of Hāji Yūsuf of Hamadān. Still in good condition, it is used for daily prayers.

The capital of Amir Timūr (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 Tīmūrid buildings follows Khurāsānid tradition although Chinese and Turkish motifs are also visible. They included the famous mosque of Khwājah Ahmad Yassavi constructed in 800/1397 near Samarqand. The architect of this mosque was a Persian from Ispahān. It is an enormous squarish 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 Tīmūrid monuments. The entrance is flanked by two towers like that of a fortress, a product of Tīmūr's warlike mind.

Tīmūr 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 Tīmūrid Court by King Henry III, shows that this palace followed the style of ancient palaces at Nīmrūd and Khursābād. Its surface was completely covered with enamelled tiles like the Ishtar Gate of Babylon.

But it was Samarqand which received Tīmūr's fullest attention. The most prominent building in the city is the mosque of Bibi Khānum, which Tīmūr 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 Jāmi' Mosque in Turkestan. The second masterpiece of this period is Tīmūr's own mausoleum at Samarqand, known as Gour-i Amīr (Amīr's grave). It was constructed by Tīmūr 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 ravishing panels. These mosaics are composed of small pieces as well as 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, Tīmūr, added to this tomb a series of other buildings. He built also a grandiose portal to the shrine.

Tīmūr's son and successor, Mirza Shāh Rukh (807-851/1404-1447), transferred his seat of government from Samarqand to Herāt in Khurāsān. He built there a citadel surrounded by a wall with four gates. The Jāmi' Mosque of Herāt, which stood in the midst of the chief market, was the most beautiful in the whole of Khurāsān. Shāh Rukh's wife, Gauhar Shād Āqa, was also a great builder. She constructed a college at Herāt (820-840/1417-1437). Its architect was Ustād Qawwām al-Dīn of Shīrāz. The original marble slab of this college is still preserved in the Herāt museum. It is calligraphed in thulth style by the renowned calligraphist Ja'far Jalāl of Herāt. Besides, Herāt could boast of Muṣallah, the mausoleum of Gauhar Shād Āqa, and the madrasah of Husain Baiqrah.

### 5. Muslim Architecture in Turkey

The Muslim architecture in Turkey (Anatolia) was inaugurated by the Saljūqs in the fifth/eleventh century. During the course of 250 years of their

rule, the Saljūqs constructed many monumental buildings at Siwās, Qūniya, Kaiserī, Erczrūm, Divriği, Karmān, 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 Saljūq architectural traditions were not only maintained by the Ottoman Turks but reached their zenith both in quality and number in the tenth/sixteenth and eleventh/seventeenth centuries.

The oldest mosque in Anatolia (fifth/eleventh century) built by the Turks is supposed to be the Ulu Cami at Siwās.<sup>25</sup> 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 Saljūq mosques is the Ulu Cami at Divriği (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 Saljūq mausoleums follow the style common in Khurāsān 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 and a conical structure outside. They look like a tent in stone. The tomb of Khalīfah Ghāzi at Amaisia is one of the oldest monuments (541/1146) and the Douer Gumbad (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 Khudāband Khātūn at Nigede (712/1312) contains, besides floral and geometrical ornamentation, reliefs representing birds, stags, and other animals with human heads.

No complete Saljūq palace has survived, but history records several such buildings at Alaniya, Siwās, and Qūniyah. For the pavilion and main building of the Saljūq palaces in Anatolia, the Khurāsān house plan, with a courtyard and four *ivāns*, 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 Siwās (614/1217), the largest of all Saljūq hospitals, had a medical college attached to it.

The Saljūq caravanserais, like their *madrasahs*, had strong gateways for security reasons, with the wall decoration concentrated upon them.

The Saljūq baths differ from those of Damascus in having a plan centred

<sup>25</sup> Behcet Unsal, *Turkish Islamic Architecture*, London, 1959, p. 17



on an octagon with four *ivāns*, and the washing arrangements without a common pool. The Sultān Ḥammām at Qūniyah gives a good idea of Saljūq 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 (*ivāns*) containing water basins and private rooms (*khalwah*).

With the downfall of the Saljūqs (654/1256), Anatolia was divided into more than a dozen independent principalities (*beyliks*) which ruled over various parts of the country for about two hundred years. They were finally overcome by the Ottoman Turks.

The Ottoman Turks ruled over Turkey for almost six hundred 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 twenty domes and twelve 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/sixteenth century was that of Bāyazid 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 *mihrāb*. This principle was accepted by the famous Turkish architect Koca Sinān whose masterpiece is the Sulaimāniyyah Mosque (957-964/1550-1557). The mosque of Sinān Pāsha, Aḥmad Pāsha, Sokkolu Muḥammad Pāsha, Miḥrimah Khātūn, and Rustam Pāsha built by Sinān follow the same style. His great masterpiece, Sebīriyyah Mosque (977-983/1569-1575) at Edirne, however, had only one dome.

In the eleventh/seventeenth century, Turkish mosque followed the style of Shehrzādeh Mosque (950-955/1543-1548) which was also built by Sinān. It has a central dome supported and surrounded by four half domes. This style may be seen in Sultān Aḥmad's Mosque (1018-1025/1609-1616) and the Walīd Mosque.

Under the Ottomans, *madrassahs* and hospitals followed the traditional style but the mental hospital of Bāyazid 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 psychopathical 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 Sultāns are buried in Istanbul. One of the oldest mausoleums (868/1464) there is that of Maḥmūd Pāsha, the Grand Vizier of Muḥammad the Conqueror. It is octagonal in shape with its facade of geometrically patterned tiles inlaid in stones. The tomb of Sultān



Sulaimān the Magnificent (974/1556) is a masterpiece of ornamentation. The tombs of Salīm II (982/1574) and Murād III (1003/1595) are also the finest specimens of Turkish faience ornamentation. The marble tomb of Sultān Hamīd (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 fourteen domes. The famous market of 'Ali Pāsha at Edirne (977/1569) built by Sinān had in addition six gates. The markets built by Muḥammad the Conqueror and Sulaimān the Magnificent at Istanbul are most famous. The former has fifteen domes and two rows of four pillars and the latter has twenty 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 sq. metres and includes sixty-five streets, a square, 300 shops, 1,000 rooms, eighteen gates, eight fountains, a school, wells, and sixteen caravanserais. At the time of Sultān Muḥammad and Sulaimān it was mainly in 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 in 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, eighty-eight in all, each covered by a dome. It is a single-storeyed 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 Sultāns through the centuries. The famous Topkapi Palace remained the residence of the Ottoman Sultāns from the ninth/fifteenth century to the thirteenth/nineteenth 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 sq. metres of area, comprising five groups of apartments totalling 348 rooms, two groups of offices, eight servant quarters, ten mosques, fourteen paths, two hospitals, five schools, twelve libraries, twenty-two 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 ungeometrical sub-divisions and its terrace walls counteracting the steep slope of the ground, conforms admirably to present-day principles of town-planning.

It is not possible to give a full description of the palace. The third and fourth courts, however, contain most interesting buildings. The structure in which foreign envoys were received by the Sultān (*Arzodāsh*) is a marvel of the ninth/fifteenth-century architecture. The library of Sultān Aḥmad (1131/1719) is remarkable for its plan and marble facade. The Baghdād Pavilion (1048/1638) in the fourth court contains four *ivāns* 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 Muṣṭafa Pāsha (1116/1704) is in Rococo-Turkish style, made in wood, to serve summer requirements.

Unlike the Il-Khānid 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 Behcet Uncal, this horizontal effect gives an impression of comfort and repose. In religious buildings, solid parts predominate 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 the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent started in 94/712 when Muḥammad bin Qāsim 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 Muḥammad bin Qāsim. Similarly, no Muslim monument built before the middle of the sixth/twelfth century has so far been discovered although it is known that Multan had been an important centre of Muslim culture prior to Maḥmūd of Ghaznah's excursions. After Lahore was conquered by Maḥmūd in 393/1002 a permanent garrison of Afghān soldiers was established there.<sup>26</sup> Later on, Lahore became the capital of Maḥmūd'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/twelfth 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

<sup>26</sup> S. M. Latif, *Lahore*, Lahore, 1956, p. 10.

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 to the West Punjab (545-725/1150-1325), Bengal (597-957/1200-1550), Jaunpūr (762-885/1360-1480), Gujrāt (700-957/1300-1550), Māndu and Mālwah (808-977/1405-1569), the Deccan (748-1206/1347-1617), Bijāpūr and Khāndesh (828-1067/1425-1656), and Kashmīr (813-1112/1410-1700). One of these styles—the Multān 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 Shāh Yūsuf Gardezi at Multan, built in 547/1152.<sup>27</sup> 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 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-Dīn Aibak ordered the construction of the famous Quwwat al-Islām Mosque in 592/1196. This is the oldest mosque extant in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. It consists of rectangular courtyard (141 ft. × 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 produce the effect of loftiness and lightness as, following the contemporary north Iranian style, they are vertical in their composition.

Qutub al-Dīn Aibak laid the foundations of another most remarkable building the same year. It was the Qutub Minār. Although it was constructed at a time when Muslim rule 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 starshaped tower was certainly borrowed from Ghaznah as well as North Iran, where the ruins of similar towers still exist. But the Qutub Minār has surpassed all such towers. It lies outside the Quwwat al-Islām Mosque and was probably designed on the basis of Sāmarrā mosque or the mosque of ibn Ṭūlūn (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

<sup>27</sup> Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture*, Bombay, p. 34.



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 twenty-four 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 ft.

A notable contribution to Muslim architecture in India was made by Sultān Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish (608-634/1211-1236) 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 ft., more nearly approach the four-centred type invariably found in subsequent Muslim buildings. Each arch is surrounded by three lines of writing, the outer in 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/thirteenth century is the construction of a large number of tombs. Famous among these are the tombs built by Iltutmish for his son at Sultān Ghari (629/1231) and for himself (633/1235) and the tomb of Sultān Balban (679/1280), in Delhi. The shrines of Shāh Baha al-Haq (661/1262), Shāh Shams al-Dīn Tabriz (675/1276), and Shāh Rukn-i 'Ālam (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 ft. and the dome is 50 ft. wide inside. It is made in brick with bands of carved timbering sunk into the walls at intervals. The brick-work is elaborately chiselled and parts are inlaid with glazed tiles. The use of sloping walls, carved timbering sunk in them, and glazed tiles suggest the Arab-Iranian origin of Multan architecture.

The beginning of the eighth/fourteenth 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 'Alā'i Darwāzah (705/1305), one of the most exquisite pieces of architecture near the Qutub Minār. The 'Alā'i Darwāzah (the Gateway of 'Ala al-Dīn 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 Tughlaqābād. This was the first capital city founded by any Muslim monarch in India, although Sultān 'Ala al-Din Khalji, his predecessor, had also earlier planned a similar capital. Tughlaqābād, 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 invasions, 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 are 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, Muḥammad Tughlaq, who moved his capital to Daulatābād 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 Fīrūz Tughlaq 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 Fīrūz Tughlaq 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*, 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.

Fīrūz Shāh Tughlaq built four fortified cities in North India: Fīrūz Shāh Kotlah in Delhi, Jaunpūr, Ḥiṣṣār, and Fatehābād. Fīrūz Shāh'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 Jāmi' Mosque for the congregation of 10,000 persons, 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 Fīrūz Shāh.

Several mosques were built in Delhi by Fīrūz Tughlaq between 772/1370 and 777/1375, the most famous being the Khirki Mosque. It is built on a



*tekhānah* or sub-structure of arches. It is a unique construction as it is almost a covered mosque like Saljūq 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 eighty-one such domes. Each corner of the rectangle is supported by a tower and a tapering round bastion.

The invasion of Tīmūr 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 Jāmi' Mosque at Samarqand. Delhi lost its political supremacy. The rule of Sayyid and Lodhi monarchs was confined to the Gangetic basin only. And during the whole of the ninth/fifteenth century and the first quarter of the tenth/sixteenth 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 Sultān 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 till 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, situated only seventeen miles apart. The ruins of these monuments scattered along the entire river bank from Gaur to 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 which 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/thirteenth 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 Shāh (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. × 285 ft.). "To the spectator standing within the expansive 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.<sup>28</sup>

Around the courtyard is a screen of arches, eighty-eight 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 Rasūl. Another characteristic of Bengal monuments is their "drop" arches in which the span is greater than the radius.

*Jaunpūr*.—Jaunpūr was made a provincial capital by Firūz Tughlaq who built there a fort and laid the foundations of Atāla Mosque. Later on, the famous Sharqi monarchs of Jaunpūr adorned their city with mosques, tombs, palaces, and other buildings associated with an imperial capital. As a matter of fact, Jaunpūr became the cultural capital of Northern India under the Sharqi monarchs. It was called "Shirāz of the East." Sikandar Lodhi, the Sultān 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 Atāla Mosque and the Jāmi' 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 Jaunpūr were Abyssinians, these pylon-like portals might have been inspired by the pylons of Pharaohic temples in the Nile Valley.<sup>29</sup>

The Atāla Masjid is a very distinctive and majestic building. Although its general arrangements are conventional, its double-storeyed cloisters are very spacious, having 42 ft. across and five aisles deep.

Many of the elements found in Jaunpūr buildings were derived from the architecture of the Tughlaqs at Delhi, for instance the recessed arch with its fringe of ornamentation, the shape of the arch, and the sloping side of its

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>29</sup> John Terry, *The Charm of Indo-Islamic Architecture*, London, 1955, p. 12.

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/fourteenth century and the beginning of the next were brought to Jaunpūr. Jaunpūr mosques show a very pleasant innovation in providing specially constructed galleries for religious needs of women. These galleries were covered with beautiful open-work screens as seen in the Lāl Darwāzah Mosque (854/1450).

Although Jaunpūr mosques do not display much refinement, they are strong, sincere, and purposeful in their character. They are good examples of bold and forceful workmanship.

*Gujrāt* (700–957/1300–1500).—Gujrāt presents by far the most graceful provincial style in the annals of Indian architecture. The Gujrāt style of architecture, in the course of two hundred and fifty years of Muslim rule, passed through three marked stages: the formative and experimental stage well represented by the Jāmi' 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 Jāmi' Masjid at Ahmedabad; and the final stage when it reached its zenith in the later half of the ninth/fifteenth century under the patronage of Maḥmūd Begarha I (863–917/1458–1511), the typical example being that of the Jāmi' 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 Gujrāt.

The second phase owes its existence to Aḥmad Shāh, 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 Aḥmad Shāhi dynasty. Besides, many tombs and other structures, one can count more than fifty mosques of that period in Ahmedabad alone. Aḥmad Shāh's citadel with its palace is situated on the left bank of the river Sabarmati. It is a rectangular enclosure occupying a prominent position. Almost in the heart of the town was built the great Jāmi' Masjid connected with the citadel by a wide avenue. Astride this avenue was erected a stately triumphal gateway called the Tin Darwāzah as it possessed three arched entrances. The entire conception was a bold attempt at town-planning not usually found in provincial towns.

The Jāmi' 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 Shāh (846–855/1442–1451), son and successor of Ahmad Shāh. 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 Gujrāt architecture attained its third and final stage during the reign of Mahmūd 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 'Uthmān at Usmanpur, of Shaikh Ahmad Khātu at Sarkhel, of Shāh 'Ālam, and of Mubārak Sayyid near Mahmūdābād.

Most famous among the mosques of this period are the mosques of Miān Khān Chishti (861/1456), of Bibi Achūt Kūki (877/1472), of Mahfūz Khān (898/1492), and finally of 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 wonderful skill and aesthetic taste.

Sultān Mahmūd Begarha built a new capital also, at Champaner, 78 miles south-east of Ahmedabad. It was a walled citadel with palaces, a Jāmi' Mosque, and other usual constructions.

*The Deccan.*—The Muslim architecture of the Deccan was the product of the amalgamation of two separate trends introduced into South India from Delhi and Iran in the eighth/fourteenth 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 Sultān 'Ala al-Dīn Khalji. But the first independent Muslim ruler of South India was a Persian adventurer, 'Ala al-Dīn Hasan Bahman Shāh. He had served under Sultān Muhammad Tughlaq at Daulatābād. 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 extraordinary Jāmi' 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 sixty-three small domes. Light is admitted through the side walls which are pierced by great arches. It was built by Muhammad Rafī', a hereditary architect of Qazwin in northern Iran, who must have been trained in the Saljūq 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 in the entire history of Indian architecture is the Gulbargah market, 570 ft. long and 60 ft. wide, adorned with a range of sixty-one arches on either side supported by pillars and flanked with a block of buildings of a highly ornamental character.<sup>30</sup>

The Bahmani capital was moved from Gulbargah to Bidar by Ahmad Shāh (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 Khwājah Maḥmūd Gawān. It was a three-storeyed building with lofty 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 'Ādil Shāhi rulers of Bijāpūr far excel those in other capital cities of the Deccan. In number too they are second to none; there are more than fifty mosques, twenty tombs, and nearly the same number of palaces in Bijāpūr. These were constructed within one hundred years after 957/1550. Prominent among these buildings are the Jāmi' Masjid, the most powerfully simple mosque; the Raudah of Ibrāhīm, one of the most elaborate tombs; the Gol Gumbad, a grandiose structure; and the Mihtar Mahal, the most delicate and the most refined of them all. The Gol Gumbad, the mausoleum of Muḥammad 'Ādil Shāh, 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 intersecting arches. This method of constructing intersecting arches, perhaps of Turkish origin, was a favourite device with Bijāpūr 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 Jāmi' Masjid at Bijāpūr.

*Mālwah.*—The small independent State of Mālwah in Central India, lasted for about one and a half century (804–937/1401–1530). Its capital, Māndu, was situated on a plateau possessing a very picturesque view. It was adorned by Hoshang Shāh (807–839/1405–1435) and Maḥmūd Shāh I (940–974/1436–1469) with magnificent palaces, mosques, and other buildings, finest among which was the Jāmi' Masjid (858/1454). It was a multi-domed building with repeated arcades of arches forming the sanctuary.

Facing this mosque and situated on an elevated plain is the large structural complex called the Ashrafi Maḥal (Palace of the Gold Mohar). It was built by Maḥmūd Shāh I. This complex consists of a college, a mausoleum, and a tower of victory.

Two other notable buildings in Māndu are the Hindola Maḥal (swinging palace) and the Jahāz Maḥal (ship palace). The former was built by Hoshang

<sup>30</sup> James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, London, 1910, Vol. II, p. 266.

Shāh and is a combination of audience hall and Royal apartments. The latter was built by Mahmūd I and is a double-storeyed building extending for some 360 ft. along the water-front of two small lakes. It is a colourful structure suggesting gaiety and entertainment.

These and other palaces and mosques of Māndu are all built in red sandstone. For decorative purposes, the builders used marble and various semi-precious stones such as jasper, agate, and corucian 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 Māndu 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, Tīmūr, had embellished his capital city of Samarqand with exquisite palaces, mosques, mausoleums, and *madrāsahs*. Bābur, 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 Humāyūn's Queen in memory of her beloved consort. During Humāyūn's forced sojourn in Iran, she faithfully stood by him for twelve years. She must have acquired a taste for Persian architecture there. When she decided to build Humāyūn's tomb, she entrusted the task to an Iranian architect, Mīrak Mīrza Ghiyāth. 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 Humāyūn'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 *Ā'in-i Akbari*, "there were built upwards of 500 edifices of red stone in the fine styles of Bengal and Gujrāt" in the Agra fort alone.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Percy Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

The most complete of these buildings is the palace called the Jahāngīr Maḥal 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, twenty-six 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 Dīwān-i Khāṣ (private audience hall), the Jāmi' Masjid with its Buland Darwāzah (high gate) and palaces of Queen Jodha Bā'i, Maryam Sultānah, Rājah Birbal and Hawa Maḥal. The Dīwān-i Khāṣ 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 at Fatehpur Sikri is the Buland Darwāzah which was built in 979/1571 to commemorate the conquest of the Deccan. It is 134 ft. high with a further flight of steps, 42 ft. high. Across its front, the gate measures 130 ft. It serves as entrance to the Jāmi' Masjid containing the tomb of Shaikh Salim Chishti.

Emperor Akbar's son, Jahāngīr, 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 the 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'timād al-Daulah built at Agra in 1036/1626 and the tomb of Jahāngīr built at Lahore. Both were constructed under orders of Queen Nūr Jahān. Of these three, the tomb of I'timād 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 *pictora dura* style.

The reign of the Emperor Shāh Jahān (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 Shāh Jahān's buildings. The bulbous dome also got constricted at the neck and ornamental elements became curvilinear.

Shāh Jahān was almost possessed with a passion for buildings. He started



with the Agra Fort wherein he built the marble hall of *Dīwān-i 'Ām* as soon as he ascended the throne in 1037/1627. Ten years later, the *Dīwān-i Khāṣ*, 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 *Khāṣ Maḥal*, the *Shish Maḥal*, the *Muthamman Burj*, the *Moti Masjid*, and the *Nagīnah Masjid*, were added to the complex inside the citadel.

In 1048/1638, *Shāh Jahān* decided to transfer his capital to Delhi where he laid the foundations of *Shāh Jahānābād*, 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 *Shāh Jahān* himself.

This citadel, made of red stone and marble, consists of four groups of buildings arranged symmetrically. The large central quadrangle contains the *Dīwān-i 'Ām*, the two square courtyards in the form of ornamental gardens on either side, and the range of marble palaces along the riverside. These palaces include the *Rang Maḥal* and the *Dīwān-i Khāṣ*, two most lavishly ornate buildings considered to be the crowning jewels of *Shāh Jahān's* seraglio.

Since the citadel did not include any mosque, *Shāh Jahān* built the famous *Jāmi' 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 *Bādshāhi Masjid* of Lahore. Rectangular in shape, the *Jāmi' Masjid* has three entrances; the main and the most imposing entrance faces the east and much resembles *Akbar's Buland Darwāzah* 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 *Shāh Jahān* and his governor at *Thattah*, the then capital of the province of *Sind*. Among these are the *Jāmi' Masjid*, begun in 1057/1647, and a group of tombs built on the *Makli Hill* by *Mīrza 'Isa Khān* who governed *Sind* from 1037/1627 to 1054/1644. The *Jāmi' Masjid* is built of bricks decorated with glazed tiles of blue, white, and yellow colours. These tiles were cut in very small sizes, only half an inch wide; thus nearly one hundred 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 *Shāh Jahān* is the *Tāj Maḥal* (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 Tāj Mahal one of the great wonders of the world.

While Shāh Jahān 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 Wazīr Khān 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 Shālimār Gardens and the Nishāt Bāgh of Srinagar and the Shālimār Gardens of Lahore, all three of them built by Shāh Jahān. 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 Bādshāhi Masjid of Lahore, the present capital of West Pakistan. Built in red stone and marble, the Bādshāhi Masjid is one of the two biggest mosques in the 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 Mughul 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 twelfth/eighteenth-century Muslim structures are very rare.

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## Chapter LVI

### 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 the 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 therefore 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 time 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 and 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.<sup>1</sup>

Orientalists have always seen Muslim paintings through coloured spectacles. They enumerated the influences 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, aspirations, and conflicts. It was out of these dynamic forces that peculiar idioms and patterns of artistic expression were evolved. It is these 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 a taboo on pictorial representation of material things. Islam started its career as an iconoclastic missionary religion the main aim of which was to establish a social order based on reason. It propounded laws, made institutions, and fostered organizations so that the ideal could come down 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 subordinate 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,

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<sup>1</sup> "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 Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1958, p. 92.

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'ān. 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'ān 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 a 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 a 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 so sometimes far more effectively than the impressionistic painters of France and Holland. What they did 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 without the observer being there in the painting in one form or another. It is a new mode of perception: seeing nature as an interplay 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 Jahāngir 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 as it were and paint it in its full magnitude? One finds a similar spectacle in some of the illustrations of the *Shāh Nāmeḥ*. 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 why he does not understand this style of painting is that he is alien in spirit to 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 paintings 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 man, for he can wallow in darkness.<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>2</sup> 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 the predominance 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, such as the reckoning of time by nights, the selection of the night for battles, 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 with 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 predominance of the dead over the living and of sorrow over joy.”



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 *mandala*<sup>3</sup> 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 fa-yakūn*.<sup>4</sup> 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

<sup>3</sup> "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 a cross, or else they express the idea of wholeness through the circle or sphere."

<sup>4</sup> Louis Massignon, "Time in Islamic Thought." *Eranos Yearbook*, Rhein-Verlag, Zürich, 1951.

trying to fit its mode of expression in the preconceptions 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 it 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 an illustration of the Word of God. *Kun fa-yakūn* 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 interrelationship 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'ān 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 supernatural, 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 *ḥāfiẓ* (freely, the 'memorizer'; but, more literally, the 'apprehender') has in some sense appropriated this to 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 to him the body of Christ who in his case is the mundane expression of God; the supernatural-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 Godhead, Muslims have to incorporate the words of the Qur'ān 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 Muslim 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.<sup>5</sup>

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 Michaelangelo to paint 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-Rahmān Chughtā'i, won his reputation as a great artist by his illustration of *Dīwān-i Ghālib*. 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 having a brief 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

<sup>5</sup> In a footnote in his paper on Christianity and Islam, Dr. Cantwell Smith writes: "It is the Word (*Kalām*) 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 (*al-fāz*) and letters are eternal. . . . The [uncreated] Qur'ān, 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, howsoever 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'ān khalq-Allah*, that is, the Qur'ān 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 in memorizing, the written word is translated into the spoken word. Thus, it is the spoken word which is incorporated in the personality of the memorizer (*hāfiz*). After all the Qur'ān descended as the spoken word of God.



## Painting

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 Qaşair 'Amrah. This romantic palace was decorated by wall paintings representing allegories and various kinds of animals and plants.

The 'Abbāsids 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 discs. One finds a resplendent example of this tendency in the palace at Sāmarra built in the third/ninth century. Side by side with these paintings 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 'Abbāsids 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 multicoloured paintings depict human and diabolical figures, male and female, with and without haloes, heads, busts, and dresses. The plaster niches found at Nīshāpūr are made in 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 Fāṭimid 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/thirteenth century, the 'Abbāsids 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 Māni, the great Iranian painter. The 'Abbāsids 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-Faḍl. Similarly, other books dealing with animals and plants in a scientific manner had their themes illustrated by skilful 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 Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt*. Its illustrations were done by a powerful painter of the time, Yahya ibn Maḥmūd of Wāsiṭ, conveniently known as al-Wāsiṭi. This painter copied and illustrated the most important copy of the *Maqāmāt* 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, the line they imprint is fine and delicate.

In this period, *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah*, 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 shows 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 Saljūq Atabegs painting seems to have acquired considerable popularity. Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, the Urtuq Sultān of Diyār-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 MONGOL 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 for 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 the themes selected by the Chinese painters but also their method of impressionistic painting in black and white. Ibn Bakhtīshū's *Manāfi' al-Ḥayawān* 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 mirror. Rashid al-Din, the man who wrote, among other books, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, 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 paintings in all these books—especially those in *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*—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/fourteenth century.

Quite a few of the painters of this period copied and illustrated *Shāh Nāmeḥ* 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 TIMŪRID SCHOOL

Then came Timūr. He was the man who left a trail of blood behind whenever he ransacked a country. None the less 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 Baghdād, where under his patronage they copied and illustrated manuscripts. But true artistic greatness was achieved only under the inspiring benevolence of *Shāh Rukh* (Timūr's son), who made Herāt his home. *Shāh Rukh* was interested in books and he inspired many artists to calligraph and decorate the famous and important books of the time. *Khalīl*, a great painter, who was regarded second only to *Māni*, was the leading figure in art at *Shāh Rukh*'s Court. *Shāh Rukh*'s son, Baisunqur Mirza, founded an academy of book arts with a large staff. Among the important painters were Amīr *Shāhi* and *Ghiyāth al-Dīn*. *Shāh Nāmeḥ* 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 Nizāmī's *Khamseh* and Sa'dī's *Gulistān* and *Bustān*. The vivid and lyrical imagery of these paintings suggest that the painters modified and changed their style to suit the novel subjects they had discovered. At *Shīrāz*, 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 Herāt.

Another book, *Dīwān-i Jāmi*, was also a popular source of inspiration for the painters of that period. 'Abd al-Karīm of *Khwarizm* calligraphed and illustrated Maulāna Jāmi's *Dīwān* at the end of the ninth/fifteenth century. In Samarqand a book on astronomy was also illustrated for the library of Ulugh Beg.



G

THE GREAT BEHZĀD

The Iranian historian Khwāndāmīr wrote thus about Behzād in the middle of the tenth/sixteenth century: "He sets before us marvellous forms and rarities of his art; his draughtsmanship, which is like the brush of Māni, 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 under Sultān Husain Mirza at Herāt at the end of the ninth/fifteenth century. Later he came to Tabriz in early tenth/sixteenth century to work under Shah Ismā'il. It has been said that when a battle was raging against the Turks, Behzād and Shāh Maḥmūd al-Nīshāpūri were hidden by Shāh Nāsir in a cave. In 929/1522, Behzād was appointed Director of the Royal Library. The two well-known manuscripts that Behzād illustrated were Khamseh and Bustān. 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 Behzād had an astonishingly strong consciousness of the opposites: of dramatic action and immobility, of blending peace and unrest, of combining generality with individuality. Zafar Nāmeḥ, a biography of Tīmūr, was also illustrated by Behzād. Besides, he illustrated Maulāna Jāmi's Dīwān, and his illustrations show his experimental genius at its best.

The most outstanding pupil of Behzād was Qāsim 'Ali, who carried on the style and artistic tradition set by his inimitable master. Qāsim 'Ali, who acquired the experimental spirit of Behzād, became well known as a painter of faces.

One thing that strikes the modern connoisseur of painting is that Behzād, 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 Dīwān-i Jāmi, 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 Behzād 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 Behzād's paintings cast on the beholder can radiate only from a whole soul. It is not the work of a mere decorator.

## H

### THE ŞAFAWID SCHOOL

Herāt continued to throb with art even when Behzād shifted from there to Tabrīz. Behzād's influence was not passing or transitory; it stayed because it continued to move and stir the Muslim soul. Amir Khusrau Dihlawī's *Khamseh* was copied at Balkh and was illustrated by one of Behzād's pupils. It contained some very significant miniature paintings. The great calligrapher 'Ali al-Ḥusaini copied and illustrated 'Ārifī's *Go-i Chaugān* in 930/1523. Similarly, *Dīwān-i Ḥāfiẓ* was illustrated by Shaikhzādeh, a pupil of Behzād, and Sultān Muḥammad who had an individual style. Sultān Muḥammad also copied Nizāmī's *Khamseh* and produced some very outstanding and superb paintings. In his paintings he introduced new colour-schemes and new ways of perception.

Sultān Muḥammad was a Court painter *par excellence*. He was not only an intimate and close friend of Shāh Tehmāsp, but also taught him how to paint. He illustrated Nizāmī's *Khamseh* and Firdausī's *Shāh Nāmeḥ*. Along with his teacher Mirak, he created a new style of painting. His figures are more sophisticated and his background is richer in detail and ornament.

Sultān Muḥammad also painted some portraits of charming young men and lovely ladies. Some of his portraits are those of Shāh Tehmāsp himself.

The second half of the tenth/sixteenth century saw the rise to eminence of another painter, Ustād Muḥammadi, son and pupil of Sultān Muḥammad. 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 BUKHĀRA SCHOOL

In the early tenth/sixteenth century, Bukhāra became the centre of hectic creative activity. Maḥmūd Muḥahhib, a pupil of the famous calligrapher Mir 'Ali, excelled in painting love scenes. He also illustrated Nizāmī's *Makhzan al-Asrār*. Several other painters painted miniatures in this century and their work shows the influence of Behzād and his school. But they

did not blindly imitate Behzād; 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'dī's *Bustān* and another Muḥyi Lārī's *Futūḥ al-Ḥaramain*. One finds these paintings beautiful and decorative, but lacking in the spiritual fire which was characteristic of Behzād's work. They are bereft of the ardent longings which animate paintings of the Herāt 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 Iṣfahān, under the patronage of Shāh 'Abbās, illustrations were made but only of works of much lower calibre than *Shāh Nāmeḥ* or *Dīwān-i Ḥāfiẓ*. Paintings were made to portray scenes from books like *Chihal Sutūn* and *'Āla Kapi*. At this time Riḍā'-i 'Abbāsi was 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 Riḍā'-i 'Abbāsi nor anyone else did have the powerful vision of a Behzād or a Sultān Muḥammad. Consequently, in the eleventh/seventeenth and twelfth/eighteenth centuries, people imitated and admired Riḍā'-i 'Abbāsi, but no new movement came into being.

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## 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 Sultān Muḥammad II invited Gentile Bellini to his Court and commissioned him to paint his portrait. In the tenth/sixteenth century Shāh Quli and Wali Jān, the Iranian painters, came to Constantinople and became Court painters. These artists selected the houris of paradise as their subject-matter. Shāh Quli achieved excellence as a painter of curved leaves and Wali Jān became distinguished for the elegance of his lines. Some Iranian painters illustrated "History of the Ottoman Sultāns" and *Sulaimān Nāmeḥ*, 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

Bābur, 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 him the traditions of Behzād and the Bukhāra school. Bābur's son Humāyūn invited Khwājah 'Abd al-Ṣamad of Shirāz and Mir Sayyid 'Ali to his Court at Kabul and asked them to illustrate *Amīr Ḥamzah*. The paintings they made of this fantastic story were fourteen hundred in number. Akbar, Humāyūn'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 Behzād and the early Timūrid paintings. Nizāmi'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: Behzād School and the early Timūrid School. They show a local touch in so far as the content is concerned, but in the selection of colours and design they are markedly Iranian.

Hindu painters, working under the Mughul influence, illustrated manuscripts dealing with the lives and exploits of Timūr, Bābur, 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.

Jahāngīr (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 paintings of plants and animals were produced in abundance. On his travels he would take his Court painters with him and urge them to portray significant historical events in their paintings. Mansūr, Murād, and Manohar were distinguished painters of his time. These artists painted rare birds, animals, and flowers in an exquisitely realistic style. Jahāngīr and his nobles were also fond of getting their portraits made. The famous portrait painters of this time were Bishandās, Manohar, Muḥammad Nādir, and abu al-Ḥasan. Abu al-Ḥasan was Jahāngīr's favourite; he painted some beautiful miniatures and some very fine portraits of Jahāngīr. Mughul painters also painted pictures representing nobles and princes conversing with Hindu ascetics and hermits. Shāh Jahān, Jahāngīr'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. Muḥammad Fakhr Allah Khān and Mir Hāshim were two of the important painters of his time. Dāra Shikoh, Shāh Jahān's son, who never ruled, was a great admirer and patron of arts—but after him, that is, in the twelfth/eighteenth and thirteenth/nineteenth centuries, Mughul art suffered a complete decline.

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## Chapter LVII

### 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 may 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

#### 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*.

<sup>1</sup> *The Harmonics of Aristoxenus*, edited with translation . . . by Henry S. Macran, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1901.

<sup>2</sup> *The Dieomonophists*, English translation by J. E. King, Heinemann, London, 1937, vi, Bk. xiv.

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 Ikhwān al-Ṣafa of the fourth/tenth century of Baṣrah, the home of learning, who spoke of music as "an art compounded between the corporeal and the spiritual."<sup>3</sup> 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."<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, there have been many pious and honourable men among the legists (*fuqahā'*) who have considered music a useless pastime (*lahw*) which sometimes became an urge to commit actions which were unlawful (*ḥarām*) or abhorred (*makrūh*). 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-Malāhi*),<sup>6</sup> to Shihāb al-Dīn al-Haiṭhāmī (d. 973/1565) in his "Restraint of Impetuous Youth" (*Kaff al-Ra'ā'*).<sup>7</sup> Nobody can censure those opponents of music who sincerely believed that it was among the things prohibited (*muḥarramāt*), since even Christian Europe linked "wine, woman, and song" among the "idle pleasures" (*malāhi*). Yet, strictly speaking, the objections of the purists in religion to "listening to music" (*al-samā'*) 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,

<sup>3</sup> *Kitāb Ikhwān al-Ṣafa*, ed. Aḥmad ibn 'Abd Allah, Bombay, 1306-07/1888-89, i, p. 84.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, i, pp. 85-87.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Nuwairi, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, Cairo, 1925, v, pp. 113 *et seq.* Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il, *Safinat al-Mulk*, Cairo, 1892, p. 464.

<sup>6</sup> J. Robson, *Tracts on Listening to Music*, London, 1938.

<sup>7</sup> W. Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis der arabischen Handschriften der . . . Bibliothek zu Berlin*, 1887-99, No. 5517.



although it may accompany both, yet it cannot be categorized or submitted to predicament.

In spite of all our probings and searchings we still do not know the inner causes of emotion. Al-Fārābi (d. 339/950) denied that music inspired a passion or soul-state.<sup>8</sup> 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 (*ṣaut*) 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."<sup>9</sup> All that is manifest to the meanest observer, but no one has yet told us what those "qualities" are. Fakhr al-Din al-Rāzi (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, by 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."<sup>10</sup>

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)."<sup>11</sup> A Persian mystic, al-Hujwiri (fifth/eleventh 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 (*naghāmāt*), modes (*maqāmāt*), or rhythms (*īqa'āt*), but music *per se*, insisting that such audition "consists in hearing everything as it is in quality and predicament."<sup>12</sup> 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 *Ikhwān al-Ṣafa* had taught a thousand years earlier?

<sup>8</sup> R. d'Erlanger, *La Musique arabe*, Geuthner, Paris, 1930, i, p. 39.

<sup>9</sup> *Kitāb al-Kāfi fi al-Mūsīqi*, British Museum MS., Or. 2361, f. 220v.

<sup>10</sup> *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm*, British Museum MS., Or. 2972, f. 153.

<sup>11</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>12</sup> *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, tr. R. A. Nicholson, Brill, Leiden, 1911, p. 403.

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-samā'*), because there is no means of reaching the hearts except through the portals of the ears.<sup>13</sup> . . . 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."<sup>14</sup> That was also the dominating thought of abu Sulaimān al-Dārānī (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'ān and the Ḥadīth must know that they can be answered by proofs to the contrary from these identical and revered sources.<sup>15</sup> Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), the greatest of the philosopher-historians of Islam, did not touch directly on the question of *al-samā'* 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.<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup>

The Sufi and the *darwīsh* 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-Dīn al-Tūsi (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

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Cicero, who spoke of the eyes as "windows of the soul."

<sup>14</sup> Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, Cairo, 1326/1908, Vol. II, pp. 88, 182.

<sup>15</sup> H. G. Farmer, *History of Arabian Music*, Luzac, London, 1929, Chap. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, *Prolegomena, Notices et Extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, 1858, xvi, p. 155, xvii, pp. 42, 363.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, xvi, p. 365.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, xvii, p. 254.

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."<sup>19</sup> 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,"<sup>20</sup> particularly in the reading (*qir'ah*) of the Qur'ān and the chanting of the "call to prayer" (*adhān*). They give back musical impressions which not only delight the ear but thrill the soul, because that chanting harmonizes with the divine message.<sup>21</sup> 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 the fruitfulness of the mother earth.

"Get away 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 Hijāz, one must give prior consideration to these two important facets. In the "Days of

<sup>19</sup> J. Robson, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

<sup>20</sup> Ibn 'Abdi Rabbihi, *al-'Iqd al-Farid*, Cairo, 1305/1887, iii, p. 177, tr. H. G. Farmer, in *Music: The Priceless Jewel*, Bearsden, 1942, p. 6.

<sup>21</sup> Although some urge that one must discriminate between *takbir* (raising the voice) and *ghinā'* (singing), the fact remains that purely secular melodies were used. See "La Qir'ah bi al-Alhān" by M. Talbi, in *Arabica*, Leiden, 1958, v, pp. 183-90.



Ignorance" (*al-jāhiliyyah*) music was practised in the whole of Arabia by the matrons of the towns and tribes as well as by professional singing-girls (*qaināt*). These not only cheered many a home and encampment, but strengthened the resolve of those in the battle throng, as we read in the *Ḥamāsah*. Their singing (*ghinā'*) was based on a simple type of song called the *naṣb* which was but an improved form of camel-driver's chant (*ḥudā'*). They accompanied themselves on an instrument of strings (*muwattar*), although more generally it was a harp-like instrument (*mi'zafā*), a percussion wand (*qaḍīb*), or a tambourine (*mizhar*).<sup>22</sup> In default of the latter they could adapt the perforated skin sieve (*ghirbāl*) for that purpose: this received the approval of the Prophet later.<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup>

The wide conquests of the Arab armies, notably in Persia and Syria, had sent crowds of captives into the towns of the Hijāz. 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 Hijāz, 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."<sup>25</sup> As we march through the pages of the history of music we shall see how manifold artistic ingredients contributed to Islamic civilization. Al-Ḥīrah, the capital of the Arab Lakhmids, had already imbibed much of Persian culture including the lute (*'ūd*).<sup>26</sup> 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 *'ūd* (wood). The holy cities of the Hijāz resounded with the strains of music and song,<sup>27</sup> and the artistic career of the songstress 'Azzat al-Mailā' (d. c. 88/705) in the Hijāz 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 Ḥasan ibn Thābit, the first poetic extoller of Islam, sang her

<sup>22</sup> H. G. Farmer, *A History of Arabian Music*, London, 1929, Chap. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Al-Ghazālī, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 206.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī al-Kabīr*, Būlāq, 1285/1869, ii, pp. 170-76; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden, 1913-38, iv, p. 983.

<sup>25</sup> H. G. Farmer, in the *New Oxford History of Music*, Oxford University Press, London, 1956, i, p. 421.

<sup>26</sup> *Idem*, *Studies in Oriental Musical Instruments*, Reeves, London, 1931, i, pp. 91-99.

<sup>27</sup> *Idem*, *Music: The Priceless Jewel*, Bearsden, 1942, pp. 9-17.

praises.<sup>28</sup> Among the great musicians of the glorious days of the Orthodox Caliphs (*al-rāshidūn*) were Sā'ib Khāthir (d. c. 83/683), Ḥunain al-Ḥiri (d. c. 100/718), and Ahmad al-Nasibi, a kinsman of the poet A'sha Hamdām (d. 82/701).<sup>29</sup>

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."<sup>30</sup> 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 Suraij (d. c. 108/726), al-Gharid (d. c. 106/724), and Ma'bad (d. 127/743), usually dubbed as "the four great singers."<sup>31</sup> Such was Islam, the territories of which knew no racial boundaries, that 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.<sup>32</sup> 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. Throughout 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/fourteenth century.<sup>33</sup> Still, the Arabs borrowed the Persian *chang* (harp) which they confusedly called the *sanj* and *jank*. They also adopted the Persian tuning (*taswīyyah*) of the lute, and the frets (*dasātīn*) on the neck of the instrument.<sup>34</sup>

When the first of the 'Abbāsid Caliphs, al-Manṣūr (d. 158/775), built that wondrous city of Baghdād, it soon became not only the capital of the vast dominions of the Caliphate, but the cultural centre of Islam. The early 'Abbāsid period has well been styled "the Augustan Age of Arabian literature,"<sup>35</sup> 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" (*Kitāb al-Aghāni al-Kabīr*) as our authority. The first outstanding 'Abbāsid minstrel was Ḥakam al-Wādi (d. c. 180/796), a singer and performer who carried all before him.<sup>36</sup> Almost as exquisite were the vocal accomplishments of ibn Jāmi' (d. c. 189/804).<sup>37</sup> He had been taught by the doyen of the Court minstrels, Yaḥya al-Makki (d. c. 215/830), the fountain-head of the old music of the Hijāz. Indeed his "Book about the Songs" (*Kitāb fi al-Aghāni*) was a

<sup>28</sup> Al-Iṣfahāni, *op. cit.*, xvi, pp. 13-20.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, vii, pp. 188-90; ii, pp. 120-27; v, pp. 161-64.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Mas'ūdī, *Les prairies d'or* . . . , Paris, 1861-77, vi, p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> Al-Iṣfahāni, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 98, 151; ii, p. 127.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, i, pp. 19-29, 97-129, 150-52; ii, pp. 128-48.

<sup>33</sup> *Kanz al-Tuḥaf*, British Museum MS., Or. 2361, f. 247 v.

<sup>34</sup> A. U. Pope, *A Survey of Persian Art*, O.U.P., London, 1938, p. 2790.

<sup>35</sup> H. G. Farmer, *A History of Arabian Music*, London, 1929, p. 99.

<sup>36</sup> Al-Iṣfahāni, *op. cit.*, vi, pp. 64-68.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, vi, pp. 69-92.

repository of the classical art;<sup>38</sup> his son Aḥmad (d. 250/864) issued a revised edition of 3,000 songs.<sup>39</sup> Greater still was Ibrāhīm al-Mauṣili (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.<sup>40</sup> Fulaiḥ ibn abi al-'Aurā' was another favoured singer, being the only one allowed to appear—professionally—without the customary curtain (*sitār*) which screened the musicians from the Caliph. Fulaiḥ, with Ibrāhīm al-Mauṣili and ibn Jāmi', compiled a collection for Hārūn al-Raṣhīd known as "The Hundred Chosen Songs" (*al-Mi'at al-Ṣaut al-Mukhtārah*).<sup>41</sup> Prince Ibrāhīm ibn al-Mahdi (d. 224/839)<sup>42</sup> and his step-sister Princess 'Ulayyah (d. 210/825)<sup>43</sup> had both been carefully trained in music at the instance of Caliph Hārūn, at whose Court music received so munificent a patronage that it set the whole world in wonderment. Prince Ibrāhīm possessed a voice with a compass of three octaves, and was considered the "most proficient in mankind" in that art.<sup>44</sup> By that time the impingement of Persian and Khurāsānian novelties in music became quite pronounced. Singing-girls from Khurāsān were "the rage." They performed on a long-necked pandore (*ṭanbūr*) 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 Ibrāhīm 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 Ibrāhīm, and the "Classicists" headed by the chief Court minstrel Ishāq al-Mauṣili (d. 235/850), the most famous of the musicians of the Muslim world.<sup>45</sup> Against those neoteric fancies, Ishāq 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."<sup>46</sup>

After the mid-third/ninth century, the Baghdād 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 'Īsa 'Abd Allah, was an accomplished musician and a composer of some three hundred songs.<sup>47</sup> Al-Muntaṣir (d. 248/862) was both a poet and a musician; the words of his

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, xv, p. 63.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, v, pp. 2-48.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, i, pp. 2, 4-6.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, x, pp. 120-32.

<sup>43</sup> See Mas'ūd Hasan Shamsi, "'Ulayya, a Less Known 'Abbāsīd Princess'" *Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad, April 1937.

<sup>44</sup> Al-Iṣfahāni, *op. cit.*, ix, p. 49.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, v, pp. 52-131.

<sup>46</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, Leipzig, 1871-72, pp. 141-43.

<sup>47</sup> Al-Mas'ūdi, *op. cit.*, vi, p. 191; vii, p. 276; al-Iṣfahāni, *op. cit.*, ix, p. 104.



songs have been preserved by al-Iṣfahāni who devotes a chapter to him.<sup>48</sup> Another such devotee was al-Mu'tazz (d. 255/869), whose songs have also been saved for us.<sup>49</sup> His son, 'Abd Allah, was a highly gifted musician who penned a "Comprehensive Book on Singing" (*Kitāb al-Jāmi' fi al-Ghinā'*), the first of its kind, although Prince Ibrāhīm too had written a "Book on Singing."<sup>50</sup> Yet if the Court minstrels did not produce *virtuosi* of the same class as of old, that defect was overcome by their pens, notably by ibn Ṭāhir al-Khuzā'i (d. 300/913) who wrote a "Book about the Modes and the Reasons for the Songs" (*Kitāb fi al-Naḡham wa 'Ilal al-Aghāni*),<sup>51</sup> Quraiṣ al-Jarrāhi (d. 326/936) in his "Art of Singing and Stories of the Singers" (*Ṣinā'at al-Ghinā' wa Akhbār al-Muḡhannīyyīn*), Jaḥḡat al-Barmaki (d. c. 328/938) who published a "Book of the Pandorists" (*Kitāb al-Ṭanbūrīyyīn*), and the great al-Iṣfahāni who produced "The Propriety of Listening to Music" (*Adab al-Samā'*).<sup>52</sup>

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 *jarīyyāt*, were in great demand, and schools for their training had been established.<sup>53</sup> Yet those who came from the East were especially favoured, such as the famed lutanist 'Afzā' at the Court of 'Abd al-Raḡmān I (d. 172/788),<sup>54</sup> while al-Ḥakam I (d. 206/822) was specially proud of 'Ulūn and Zarqūn.<sup>55</sup> His chief male minstrels were 'Abbās ibn Nasā'i and Mansūr al-Yahūdi.<sup>56</sup> Concerts were the "order of the day."<sup>57</sup> At the palace of 'Abd al-Raḡmān II (d. 238/852), there arrived in the year 206/821 the world famous Ziriyāb, who was treated with unheard-of esteem, for he had been taught by Ibrāhīm and Ishāq al-Mausīli in Baghdād. He was credited with knowing ten thousand (one thousand ?) 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. Ziriyāb'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

<sup>48</sup> Al-Iṣfahāni, *op. cit.*, viii, pp. 175-78.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, viii, p. 178.

<sup>50</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

<sup>51</sup> Al-Iṣfahāni, *op. cit.*, viii, p. 43.

<sup>52</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

<sup>53</sup> J. Ribera, *La Música de las cántigas*, Madrid, 1922, pp. 53-74.

<sup>54</sup> Al-Iṣfahāni, *op. cit.*, xx, p. 149; al-Maqqari, *Analectes sur l'histoire et la littérature des Arabes d'Espagne*, Leiden, 1855-61, ii, pp. 97-98.

<sup>55</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, *op. cit.*, xvii, p. 361.

<sup>56</sup> Al-Maqqari, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 85.

<sup>57</sup> Al-Khushani, *Historia de la jueces de Cordoba*, Madrid, 1914, p. 88.

Kings," while traces of it could be found in North Africa in the eighth/fourteenth century.<sup>58</sup>

Under 'Abd al-Raḥmān III (d. 350/961) we have an anomalous situation of the Court outwardly condemning music—so as to placate the Māliki 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 (*ṭanbūr*) and guitar (*kaitūrah*),<sup>59</sup> whilst another, abu al-'Aṣḡagh, said that so long as Allah permitted birds to sing he would do likewise.<sup>60</sup> In the reign of al-Ḥakam II (d. 366/976) concerts became special events,<sup>61</sup> and under al-Mahdi (d. 400/1009) orchestras of a hundred lutes (*'ūdān*) and as many reed-pipes (*zumūr*) could be heard in the palace salons.<sup>62</sup> Those were the brilliant days of ibn 'Abdī Rabbihi (d. 328/940) who, in his *al-'Iqd al-Farīd*, 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.<sup>63</sup>

We know little of Persian music in those early days save what may be gleaned from the *Murūj al-Dhahab* of al-Mas'ūdi (d. c. 345/956), who quoted ibn Khurdādhbih (d. c. 300/912).<sup>64</sup> 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 Ibrāhim al-Mausili.<sup>65</sup> Certainly there were several brilliant writers on music in Baghdād who were of Persian origin, notably al-Sarakhsi (d. 286/899),<sup>66</sup> 'Ubaid Allan ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Ṭāhir (d. 300/913),<sup>67</sup> and Zakariya al-Rāzi (d. 313/925).<sup>68</sup> A famous singer of the Ṭāhirid period was Rātibah of Nishāpūr;<sup>69</sup> and so also was the renowned Rūdagi—patronized by the Sāmānid Naṣr II (d. c. 331/942)—a lutanist and harpist, as well as a singer and poet.<sup>70</sup> Most of the contemporary poets, such as al-Mi'māri of Jurjān and al-Daḡiqi of Ṭūs, sang in rapturous praise of music.<sup>71</sup> Persian music percolated everywhere; Turkomanian influence also made itself felt. The Caliph's praetorian guards at Baghdād and elsewhere were made up of men of Turkoman race, and they

<sup>58</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1913–38, Suppl. Vol., pp. 266–67.

<sup>59</sup> Al-Maqqari, *op. cit.*, ii p. 396.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, i, p. 250.

<sup>61</sup> Ibn Ḥazm, *Ṭauq al-Ḥamāmah*, Leiden, 1914, p. 29.

<sup>62</sup> R. Dozy, *Historia de los Musulmanes Espanoles*, Sevilla, 1877, iii, p. 348.

<sup>63</sup> Cairo edition, 1301; see H. G. Farmer, *Music: The Priceless Jewel*, London, 1942.

<sup>64</sup> Al-Mas'ūdi, *op. cit.*, viii, pp. 90–91.

<sup>65</sup> Al-Iṣfahāni, *op. cit.*, v, p. 3.

<sup>66</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Sources of Arabian Music*, Bearsden, 1940, p. 22.

<sup>67</sup> Al-Iṣfahāni, *op. cit.*, viii, p. 43.

<sup>68</sup> Ibn abi Uṣaibi'ah, *'Uyūn al-Anbā'*, Königsberg, 1882–84, i, p. 320.

<sup>69</sup> Minhaj Sirāj, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣiri*, tr. H. G. Raverty, London, 1881, i, p. 153.

<sup>70</sup> E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, University Press, Cambridge, i, p. 456.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, i, pp. 458–59.

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 *rūd* was favoured by them, and an arch-lute the *shāhrūd*, invented by **Khulais** ibn al-Aḥwas of Samarqand about 306/918, had already spread to Iraq, Syria, and Egypt.<sup>72</sup> In Egypt under the Ṭulūnid and Ikhshīdid rulers of third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries, Turkoman influence spread by leaps and bounds, and music was enjoyed by all. Ibn **Khallikān** praises the excellent voice of ibn Ṭulūn when chanting the Qur'ān, while his son **Khumārawaih** actually adorned his palace walls with pictures of his singing-girls.<sup>73</sup> The art rose to greater heights under the next rulers. Al-Mas'ūdi delineated a delightful scene at a palace by the Nile in 330/940 in which the "sounds of music and singing filled the air."<sup>74</sup> Kāfūr (d. 357/968) was devoted to music and was liberal-handed to its professors.

What was this music of Islam, enthralling sounds of which charmed all ears from Bukhāra 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.<sup>75</sup> Yet Arabic technical terminology seems to have had dominion everywhere, as one sees in the term *maqām*. Unmistakably, Baghdād was still the artistic and literary centre, for even abu Bakr al-Kātib, who served the Sāmānid Ismā'il ibn Aḥmad (d. 295/907), saw in Iraq "an ocean of learning and a mine of culture."<sup>76</sup> If one scans the *risbahs* of the great men of literature, science, art, and music who sought Baghdād to win fame and fortune, it becomes clear what a magnet the "City of Peace" had become to the world of Islam.<sup>77</sup> 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 (*qaṣīdah*). Within its folds a singer could decorate the melody of each verse with endless embellishments (*taḥāsīn*). Less classical, but far more popular, was the ballad (*qit'ah*). There were also folk-songs of the *mawāl* type, and we know that even the Caliphs enjoyed the simple songs of the people.<sup>78</sup> The accompanying instruments were generally the lute, pandore, flute (*qaṣṣābah*), 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

<sup>72</sup> R. d'Erlanger, *op. cit.*, i, p. 42.

<sup>73</sup> Al-Maqrizi, *al-Mawā'iz*, in *Mémoires de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*, Cairo, 1906, iii, pp. 217-18.

<sup>74</sup> Al-Mas'ūdi, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 364-65.

<sup>75</sup> See section C.

<sup>76</sup> E. G. Browne, *op. cit.*, i, p. 466.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>78</sup> Al-Iṣfahāni, *op. cit.*, xxi, p. 101.



combined the performance was termed a *naubah*.<sup>79</sup> Although we read occasionally of a hundred or so performers at Court functions, such events were for special display. The ideal in 'Abbāsīd days when listening to music was what Europe would term "Chamber music." Two other instruments, which had independent usage were the psaltery (*qānūn*) and the rebec (*rabāb*). 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 that much that passed for the immaculate and indefectible in Arabic poetry and song was heard in Iranian lands as late as the fourth/tenth century, notably under the Ṣaffārids and Sāmānids. The Persians, less intrigued by the lengthy Arabic ode (*qaṣīdah*), produced a pure love-song (*ghazal*) and the quatrain (*rubā'i*), one class of the latter, the *rubā'īyy tarānah*, 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 '*ushshāq*, *iṣfahān*, *salmaki*, etc., although most of them had scalar affinities with the Arabian finger modes (*aṣābi'*). Their most favoured instruments were the harp (*chang*), pandore (*tanbūr*), lute (*barbat*), double-chested lute (*rabāb*), spiked veil (*kamānchah*), flute (*nāy*), and tambourine (*dā'irah*).

The Baghdād 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.<sup>80</sup> 'Aḍud al-Daulah was more discreetly interested in the art.<sup>81</sup> However, the power of the Baghdād Caliphate—both politically and culturally—was gradually slipping away, and the centre of Islamic culture passed meanwhile to the Fāṭimids of Egypt. Here Amīr Tamīm, the son of al-Mu'izz (d. 365/975), was absolutely appassioned of music,<sup>82</sup> and no less could be said of al-Zāhir (d. 427/1036), who spent fabulous gold on minstrels.<sup>83</sup> The Persian traveller Nāṣir-i Khusrau wrote about the splendour of the Fāṭimid military bands a little later.<sup>84</sup> One of its famous men, al-Ṣadafi, better known as ibn Yūnus (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" (*Kitāb al-'Uqūd w-al-Su'ūd fi Auṣāf al-'ūd*).<sup>85</sup> Another, a great historian, al-Musabbihī (d. 420/1029), compiled a book of "Selected Songs and Their

<sup>79</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1913-39, iii, p. 885.

<sup>80</sup> J. Amendroz and D. S. Margoliouth, *The Eclipse of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate*, Oxford, 1920-21, ii, p. 234.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, pp. 41, 68.

<sup>82</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Biographical Dictionary*, Paris-London, 1843-71, iii, p. 494.

<sup>83</sup> Al-Maqrīzi, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

<sup>84</sup> *Safar Nāmah*, Paris, 1881, pp. 43, 46-47.

<sup>85</sup> W. Ahlwardt, *op. cit.*

Significance" (*Mukhtār al-Aghāni wa Ma'āniha*).<sup>86</sup> 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.<sup>87</sup>

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" (*mulūk al-tawā'if*) "made their Courts the homes of poets and minstrels," as al-Maqqari testifies. The last of the 'Abbāsid 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.<sup>88</sup> The song-poems of ibn Ḥamdis (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 "wives 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 Quzmān (d. 555/1160), the song-writer *par excellence*, who chided the puritans saying: "The *faqīh* cries 'Repent'; but how can one be contrite with the air so fragrant, the birds warbling, the flowers perfuming, and music (*ghinā'*) from a clever reed-piper (*zāmīr*) 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 Quzmān tells us, and songs spread like the wind in the matter of months as far afield as Baghdād, as ibn Sa'id al-Maghribi (d. 685/1286) avers.<sup>89</sup> Among the best known Andalusian composers were abu al-Husain al-Hamrah al-Qarnāṭi and Ishāq ibn Sim'ān al-Qarṭabi. The highest in the land were enchanted by the art. Ibn Bājjah (d. 533/1138), according to ibn Khāqān, "spent his life singing and playing," whilst a celebrated physician Yaḥya ibn 'Abd Allah al-Bahdabah, wrote *zajals* for the accompaniment of wind instruments.<sup>90</sup>

Returning to the hub of Islam, we find that the Saljūq Turks had irrupted into the land, Baghdād having been entered in 447/1055. Their rulers took charge of the Caliphs, and they and their later *atābēgs* controlled the world of Islam from the borders of Afghānistān to the frontiers of Greece. All of them were keen lovers of music, and the favoured minstrel of Sanjar (d.

<sup>86</sup> Hājjī Khalifah, *Kashf al-Zunūn*, Leipzig, 1835-58, i, p. 367.

<sup>87</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1913-39, i, p. 223.

<sup>88</sup> R. Dozy *Scriptorum Arabum de Abbasidis*, Leiden, 1846-63, i, p. 394; ii, p. 16.

<sup>89</sup> J. Ribera, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

552/1157) was Kamāl al-Zamān, whose cognomen indicates his renown.<sup>91</sup> Further east the Ghaznawids and Ghūrīds were patronizing minstrelsy at their Courts. Maḥmūd of Ghaznah (d. 421/1030) had the poet Farrukhī as his panegyrist, who was also a "skilful performer on the harp" (*chang*).<sup>92</sup> Among the Ghūrīds of Afghānistān and Hindustan, especially at the Court of Ghiyāth al-Dīn ibn Sām (d. 599/1200), music was encouraged bountifully.<sup>93</sup> Greater still was the favour shown to the art by 'Ala al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 617/1220), the Shāh of Khwārizm, who gave Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzi protection.<sup>94</sup> In Baghdād the chief minstrel of the Caliph al-Musta'ṣim (d. 656/1258) was Ṣafi al-Dīn 'Abd al-Mū'min (d. 693/1294). His greater fame is as an author, notably for his "Book on Prosody" (*Fi 'Ulūm al-'Arūd w-al-Qawāfi w-al-Badī'*), but greater still for his two books on the science of music which brought him world renown.<sup>95</sup> In the year 656/1258, the Mughul conqueror Hulāgu invaded the famous city of Baghdād, the centre of the world of Islam, and captured it. Ibn Khaldūn avers that 600,000 inhabitants were slaughtered, including the Caliph and his family, and although Ṣafi al-Dīn was spared because of his eminence as a musician, scholars and *littérateurs* 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, Ṣafi al-Dīn, passed into the service of the Mughul vizier Shams al-Dīn 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 Baṭṭūṭah (d. 778/1377) describes the royal galley at Baghdād, flanked by boats filled with musicians and singers.<sup>96</sup> 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 (*dūtār*) or a three-stringed (*sītār*) instrument.<sup>97</sup> It was Egypt alone that offered a stubborn resistance to the Mughuls, and its Mamlūk Sultāns, like their predecessors, the Ayyūbids, favoured music and song. Here the *muwashshah* had been popularized by ibn Sanā' al-Mulk (d. 608/1211) in his *Dār al-Ṭirāz*, and al-Sarūji (d. 693/1294) bettered the instruction as a song-writer, while ibn Mukarram (d. 711/1311)

<sup>91</sup> Minhāj Sirāj, *op. cit.*, i, p. 153.

<sup>92</sup> Niẓāmi-i 'Arūḍi, *Chahār Maqālah*, London, 1910, p. 38.

<sup>93</sup> Minhāj Sirāj, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 387-88, 404.

<sup>94</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Sources*, p. 45.

<sup>95</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Suppl. Vol., pp. 191-92.

<sup>96</sup> Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *Voyages*, Paris, 1853-58, ii, pp. 116-17.

<sup>97</sup> H. G. Farmer, "Persian Music," in *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, 1954, vi, pp. 676-82.



edited a collection of the older songs which had wide acceptance.<sup>98</sup> Al-Nuwaynī (d. 732/1332) also devoted much attention to the subject in his *Nihāyat al-Arab*.<sup>99</sup> It was the Sultān Qalā'ūn (d. 689/1290) who built the hospital (*mārifatān*) at Cairo, where "music soothed the wakeful hours of the sufferers."<sup>100</sup> An outstanding feature of the Bahri and Burji Mamlūk Sultāns was the military bands,<sup>101</sup> which opened the eyes of the Crusaders to the value, both tactically and musically, of martial music.<sup>102</sup>

Sind had been conquered by Muslim armies as far back as the year 92/71, but it was with the Ghūrīds of Afghānistān that modern Pakistan had its real foundation in 571/1175 at the hands of Muḥammad Ghūrī (d. 602/1206). Here, the powerful *fuqahā'* were able to enforce views in condemnation of music upon Iltutmish, the Sultān of Delhi (d. 633/1235), who, later, having been impressed by the *samā'* of the *Chishtī darwīsh* fraternity, soon abolished the ban against the art, when the plaintive chanting of its *qawwāls* became a distinctive feature throughout the land, as we know from the *Siyar al-Auliya'*. Secular music was openly encouraged by Firūz Shāh I (d. 634/1236), and the *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣiri* says that his bounty to musicians led him to be called "a second Ḥātim." Under Balban (d. 686/1287) one evening per week was devoted to audition of music. The succeeding Khalji Sultāns, the first of whom was Firūz Shāh II (d. 695/1295), were all music-lovers. At the Court of the latter were Ḥamid Rājah, Naṣir Khān, and Muḥammad Shāh Hutki, all noted musicians, although the greatest of them all was Amīr Khusrāu (d. 725/1325), who was "no less notable as a musician than a poet." He had served at the Courts of the two preceding Sultāns. In his *Qirān al-Sa'dain*, he has described the Court music of his time. In the *I'jāz Khusrāwi*, he tells of the rivalry between the Khurāsān and Hindustān minstrels at Court. It is said that a fusion between Persian and Indian music was brought about by him, and in the book called *Rāg Darpan* many novelties in music are attributed to him. Music was still to the fore with the Sayyid dynasty, and Mubārak Shāh II (d. 837/1433) was deeply attached to the art. On the elevation of the Lodhi Sultāns 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 (*qānūn*), pandore (*tanbūr*), and gourd-lute (*bīn*), only the last-named instrument being of indigenous origin. In the extreme north the kings of Kashmīr were ruling a famed "land of song" since 735/1334. Among the most cultured of them was Zain al-'Ābidīn (d. 872/1467), during whose reign music schools were established by Persian and Tūrānian teachers, which won

<sup>98</sup> *Idem*, "Egyptian Music," *ibid.*, ii, pp. 891-97.

<sup>99</sup> Cairo edition, 1344/1925, v, pp. 1-122.

<sup>100</sup> S. Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt in the Middle Ages*, London, 1901, p. 284.

<sup>101</sup> H. G. Farmer, "Ṭabl Khānah," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Suppl. Vol., pp. 217-22.

<sup>102</sup> *Idem*, "Oriental Influences on Occidental Military Music," *Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad, April 1941, pp. 235-38.

some celebrity. In the Deccan, one of the kings of Gulbargah named Tāj al-Dīn Firūz Shāh (d. 825/1422) had seven hundred damsels who were skilled musicians and dancers. His brother, however, was never absent from the *darwīsh* ceremonials, where the religious chant gave him contentment of a different kind. Both Ahmad Shāh I (d. 839/1435) and Ahmad Shāh 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 Muḥammad Shāh II (d. 887/1482) came from Georgia, Circassia, and Abyssinia. So indulgent was his successor Maḥmūd Shāh 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 Khurāsān. Truly, Muslim India was in the forefront in music among her sister nations.<sup>103</sup>

Persia had reawakened culturally under the beneficent Muḥaffarids. The renowned Shāh Shujā' of Shīrāz (d. 786/1384) patronized the minstrel Yūsuf Shāh and the music theorist al-Jurjāni (d. 816/1413). The art was particularly conserved by the Jalairid Sultāns of Iraq. Ḥusain (d. 784/1382) actually neglected his realm through his abiding love for music, whilst the greatest living musicians, Ridwān Shāh and 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Ghāibi (d. 840/1435), were the chief Court minstrels of Sultān Ahmad (d. 813/1410).<sup>104</sup> When Timūr (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 Timūrid Empire. During the reign of Shāh Rukh (d. 850/1447) the Court minstrelsy rose to perfection, and the *fêtes* have been eloquently described by 'Abd al-Razzāq.<sup>105</sup> Yūsuf-i Andakāni was his favoured minstrel for he "had no equal . . . in the seven climes."<sup>106</sup> Mirān Shāh (d. 810/1408), the brother of Shāh Rukh, was also infatuated with music as discoursed by al-Khatīb al-Mausili and Ardashīr-i Changi. Baisunghur (d. 836/1433), the son of Shāh Rukh, was devoted to Amīr Shāhi (d. 857/1453), possessed of three-fold talents as minstrel, poet, and painter. Under the guidance of the vizier Mir 'Ali Shīr (d. 907/1501) the rule of the last of the great Timūrid rulers Ḥusain Mirza Baiqara (d. 911/1506) became the byword of the cultured world of Islam, and the names of his minstrels—Qul-i Muḥammad, Shaikhi Nāyi, and Ḥusain 'Ūdi—became a part of history.<sup>107</sup>

In Muslim Spain, in spite of the increasing reconquests by the Spaniards in the seventh/thirteenth century, the Moors still held that part of the land known as Granada. Here they were hemmed in from all sides, and in 897/

<sup>103</sup> *Idem*, "Pakistani Music," *Urdu Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

<sup>104</sup> *Journal Asiatique*, Ser. iv, v. 1845, p. 448; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden, 1954, i, p. 66.

<sup>105</sup> *Notices et Extraits des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du Roi*, Paris, 1843, xiv, p. 137.

<sup>106</sup> Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat al-Shu'arā'*, London, 1901, p. 350.

<sup>107</sup> *Bābur Nāmah*, tr. A. S. Beveridge, London, 1921, pp. 272, 291-92.

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.<sup>108</sup> In the mid-tenth/sixteenth century, they were not only denied their national costume, language, and customs, but forbidden the *zumrah* and *lailah*, i.e., the musical gatherings.<sup>109</sup>

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 Amirs 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 Andalusī art to those immigrants. The Cordovan interpretation belongs to Algiers and Tlemcen, the Sevillan style is that of Tunis, while the Granadan and Valencian modes are to be found in Fez and Tetuan.<sup>110</sup>

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 *Shāh* of Persia, they took Kurdistān 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 the *ōzan* or bard of the Turkish tribes, with *chōgūr* or *qopūz* 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 *pāshāliks* of Cairo, Damascus, Mosul, and Baghdād. Instrumental music had ever delighted the Turks, and the overture (*pīshrau*) and the decorative “divisions” (*taqāsīm*), which had been constituent parts of the old

<sup>108</sup> J. Ribera, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

<sup>109</sup> H. G. Farmer, in *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, v, pp. 863–76.

<sup>110</sup> See “Maghribi Music,” *Urdu Encyclopaedia of Islam*.



Perso-Arabian *naubah*, were in great demand. The poets sang eloquently of the joy of instrumental music in the ninth/fifteenth century, notably Nizāmi of Qūniyah and Ahmad Pāsha; and Sultān Murād II (d. 855/1451) enticed the finest minstrels to his Court. Nor should we allow the influence of the *maulawīyyah* or Jalāliyyah dervish communities, founded by Jalāl al-Din Rūmi (d. 672/1273), to escape our notice, since their hymns (*ilāhīs*) had a great spiritual influence. In the next century, the poets Fighāni, Fusūli, and Rewāni still continued to rhapsodize on music's spell. The instruments praised were mostly of Arabian or Persian origin, although the Turkish *qopūz* had its share of appreciation.<sup>111</sup> New instruments came on view. Qūdūz Farhādi invented the *qaradūzan*, a lute of three strings, and a son of Ḥamdi Chelebi (d. 915/1509) introduced two new pandores called the *yōnqar* and *yaltmah*.<sup>112</sup> During the eleventh/seventeenth century music took a prominent part in the general cultural improvement, as we know from a manuscript of Cairo by Mulla Muḥammad ibn As'ad, of the time of Sultān Ahmad (d. 1026/1617), which contains the lives of the famous Turkish musicians.<sup>113</sup> Ewliya Chelebi was famed in those days. His teacher was 'Umar Gulshani, who was taught by Ibrāhīm Gulshani of Cairo (d. 940/1533). The description of the musical life of Constantinople is contained in the "Travels of Ewliya Efendi" (*Siyāhat Nāmeḥ*); much of it, based as it is on the *Auṣāf-i Qusṭantīniyyah* (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.<sup>114</sup> In that century there arose the poet-minstrels (*sāz ḥā'yrleri*) who were honoured not only in military but also in religious circles. One direct influence from outside came after the capture of Baghdād in 1048/1638 by Murād IV, who took back with him to Constantinople the Court minstrel of the Persian Shāh 'Abbās I, named Shāh Quli, whose performances on the *shashtār* had pleased him.<sup>115</sup> The late Ra'ūf Yekta thought that the advent of Shāh Quli "opened a new era in the history of Turkish music."<sup>116</sup>

In the Muslim east the 'Adil Shāhs of Bijāpūr, the first of whom was Yūsuf 'Adil Shāh (d. 916/1511), were revealing themselves as munificent patrons of musicians. Yūsuf 'Adil Shāh had a skill in music almost equal to that of a professional, and even essayed composition. Ismā'il (d. 941/1534) rather favoured Tūrānian and Persian music at his Court. *Per contra*, Ibrāhīm I (d. 965/1557) preferred the arts of the Deccan. Ibrāhīm II (d. 1035/1626) is claimed to have written a work on music called *Nauras* with an introduction penned

<sup>111</sup> E. J. W. Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry*, London, 1900-09.

<sup>112</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Turkish Instruments of Music in the 17th Century*, Glasgow, 1937, pp. 37-38.

<sup>113</sup> *Tārīkh Turki*, Vols. II & III, Dār al-Kutub, Cairo.

<sup>114</sup> *Narrative of Travels . . . in the Seventeenth Century* by Evliya Efendi, London, 1846-50, I, pp. 225-28, 233-40.

<sup>115</sup> D. Cantemir, *The History . . . of the Othman Empire*, London, 1734, pp. 248-49.

<sup>116</sup> *Encyclopédie de la Musique*, Paris, 1922, p. 2980.

by Zuhūri, the Persian poet (d. 1027/1618). The Qutbi Kings of Golkond were no less enthralled by minstrelsy. Sultān Quli (d. 940/1543) brought Persian customs to his Court—which lasted forty 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 Rājā Mān Singh (d. 932/1517), and the most famous of its pupils was Tān Sī who had been taught by Muḥammad Ghauth. Another of the same circle was Bakhshū, whose *dhurpads* became the repertory of the best minstrels. When Bābur (d. 936/1530) became the first of the Mughul Emperors of Hindustān (India), most of the preceding dynasties were absorbed. He had been reared in Courts where music prevailed.<sup>117</sup> From statements in the *Bābur Nāmeḥ* it would seem that the Emperor was even a composer, and it is believed that his compositions once existed.<sup>118</sup> His son Humāyūn (d. 963/1556) also encouraged music, and sincerely believed that the Sufi dance was the complete expression of the *ḥikmat-i ilāhi*. At Court, musicians had their special day for audition, and some of them—‘Abd Allah Qānūni, Muḥammad Surnā’i and the vocalists Ḥāfiẓ Dōst Muḥammad Khwāfi and Ustād Yūsuf Maudūd—are registered in the *Akbar Nāmeḥ*. The Court of the renowned Akbar (d. 1014/1605), as described in the *A’in-i Akbari* of abu al-Faḍl, shows how important music was both to the policy and the taste of the Emperor. The musicians were formed into seven groups, thirty-six of whom are named in abu al-Faḍl’s work. He was catholic in his choice, for not only were minstrels selected from famed Kashmīr and Gwalior, but the best of them came from Herāt and Khurāsān, and they were singers, chanters, and instrumentalists. More than half of these had Muslim names. The Emperor is said to have himself composed two hundred items of music. Among the art treasures of his day there is one depicting the arrival of Tān Sī at his Court. Abu al-Faḍl 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 *qaul* and *tarānah* of Delhi, the *kajri* or *zikri* of Gujrāt, the *bangula* of Bengal, and the *chutkalah* of Jaunpūr. Jahāngīr (d. 1037/1627) followed his father in his love of music, his favoured minstrel being Shauqi, who sang Hindi and Persian songs in a way that “cleared the rust from human hearts.” There is a portrait of him in Fox Strangway’s *Music of Hindustān*.<sup>119</sup> Many other musicians of Jahāngīr’s Court are mentioned in the *Tuzuk-i Jahāngīri* and the *Iqbāl Nāmeḥ*. In the first-named work is described the military band of this Emperor. Shāh Jahān (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 Bakhshū, 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

<sup>117</sup> *Urdu Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s. v. “Pakistani Music.”

<sup>118</sup> *Bābur Nāmeḥ*, tr. A. S. Beveridge, London, 1921, i, p. 422.

<sup>119</sup> *The Music of Hindustān*, Oxford, 1914, p. 83, where he is called “Nurna Khān.”



dismay of the people at large. Fortunately, Bahādur Shāh (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 eleventh/seventeenth century, we know but little save what the pictorial art reveals, although at the brilliant Court of 'Abbās I (d. 1038/1629) the older instrumental art still held its own.<sup>120</sup> Four European travellers—Raphael du Mans, Chardin, Poullet, and later Kaempfer—supply many important details. A picture of the Court minstrels of Šafi I (d. 1052/1642)—actually portraits—has been preserved.<sup>121</sup> Persia seems to have been less troubled by the objections of the legists to *al-samā'* than was the case elsewhere. Perhaps they still remembered Hāfiẓ who once said: "When the harp is sounding who cares about the objector?" Yet there were some Persians, for example, Muḥammad ibn Jalāl Riḍwi (d. 1028/1619) and 'Abd al-Jalīl ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān (d. 1061/1651), who replied at length to the legists.<sup>122</sup> Incidentally, Chardin shows that the Indian *vīna* was used in Persia as the *kingira*,<sup>123</sup> and even Mersanne (1046/1636) delineated it in Europe.<sup>124</sup> Strangely enough, it is mentioned by the Arabic writer al-Jāhiz (d. 255/869), who writes it—probably a scribal error—as *kinkila*, and it is also specified by al-Jurjāni (d. 816/1413).<sup>125</sup> By the twelfth/eighteenth century, when Nādir Shāh (d. 1160/1747) brought a brief resurgence to Persia's greatness, many of the older instruments of classical times—the harp, lute, and psaltery—had disappeared, although the dulcimer (*santīr*) found a place.

Iraq and Mesopotamia, now in the hands of the Turks, favoured only the Tūrānian art. Baghdād was the centre of this imported culture, and it spread to Hillah and Baṣrah. To the north, Kurdish tastes prevailed. The most artistic centres were those where the Mamlūk pāshās had control, and where Georgians and other Caucasians were given preferment, which meant that quite a new Oriental type of music gained ground.<sup>126</sup> Karsten Niebuhr, after visiting Baghdād in that century, gave a fair description of its music. He noted the use of what he called a *basse continue* by accompanying instruments, although he seems to have meant a *point d'orgue* or pedal point.<sup>127</sup> 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 in the twelfth/eighteenth century.<sup>128</sup> They aver that

<sup>120</sup> C. Hurt, in A. Lavignac, *Encyclopédie de la musique*, p. 3073.

<sup>121</sup> A. U. Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 2802.

<sup>122</sup> British Museum MS., Or. 2361, ff. 2 v., 15.

<sup>123</sup> *Voyages du Chevalier Chardin*, Amsterdam, 1735, iii, pp. 158-61.

<sup>124</sup> *Harmonie Universelle*, Paris, 1636-37, ii, Traite de instrumens, p. 228.

<sup>125</sup> British Museum MS., Or. 2361.

<sup>126</sup> *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, 1954, iv, pp. 528-33.

<sup>127</sup> *Voyage en Arabie*, Amsterdam, 1776-80, i, pp. 142-51.

<sup>128</sup> *The Natural History of Aleppo*, London 1756, pp. 93-96; edition 1794, i, pp. 150-57.



the Allepans were "fond of music," and in their performances the instruments generally were well in tune, and . . . kept excellent time."

## Chapter LVIII

### MUSIC (Continued)

#### C

### THE MUSIC THEORISTS

"There is one and the same principle which, if prevailing in the attempered particles of the elements, is equipoise of temperament; if produced in tones is pure and delightful interval; if apparent in gestures is grace; if observable in languages is rhetoric and eloquence; if created in the limbs is beauty; if in the mental faculties is equity."

Jalāl al-Dīn Dawwāni: *Akhlāq-i Jalāli*.

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 (*tāthīr*)" were handed down to Muslim peoples as methodical systems, although the history of the Semitic and Aryan races in pre-Islamic days teems with these beliefs. In fact, the Greeks derived their theses on those matters from the ancient Semites of Babylonia-Assyria, as shown elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> Iamblichus affirms that Pythagoras learnt those secrets from the *Chaldaei* of Babylon,<sup>2</sup> and books on music and arithmetic by Pythagoras were known in Arabic,<sup>3</sup> as were the works of his disciples Iamblichus, Porphyry, Proclus, and Nicomachus.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the first impact came through that pseudo-Aristotelian production known as the "Book of Government" (*Kitāb al-Siyāsah*), said to have been translated into Arabic, *via* Syriac, by Yūḥanna ibn Baṭriq (d. c. 200/815),<sup>5</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> H. G. Farmer, in the *New Oxford History of Music*, i, pp. 252-53.

<sup>2</sup> Iamblichus, *De vita Pythagorae*, iv.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn al-Qifṭī, p. 259.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, pp. 252-53.

<sup>5</sup> British Museum MS., Or. 3118, ff. 52v.-53.

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.<sup>6</sup>

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 a purely mental science. 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 Khurāsānians even improved on it. Islam having no racial boundaries, the special musical characteristics of the Persian, Arab, Syrian, and Turkomān 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 Misjāh (d. c. 97/715) who, having travelled in Syria and Persia and taken lessons from practitioners and theorists, conceived of 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.<sup>7</sup> Thus were the eight Arabian melodic modes (*aṣābi'*) classified in two groups of four each: the first in the course (*majra*) of the *binṣir*, i.e., using the major third (408 cents), and the second in the course of the *wusta*, i.e., using the minor third (294 cents).<sup>8</sup> At the same time eight rhythmic modes (*īqā'āt*) 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 Yūnus al-Kātib (d. c. 148/765) to al-Iṣfahāni (d. 356/967), specify the melodic and rhythmic modes of each song.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile some national singularities had crept into the Pythagorean scale. One was 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),<sup>10</sup> although a somewhat similar three-quarter tone had existed in the pre-Islamic measured pandore (*ṭanbūr mizāni*).<sup>11</sup> Another wayward interval was the Persian minor third (303 cents) which was sharper than the

<sup>6</sup> Roger Bacon, *Secretum Secretorum*, Oxford, 1920.

<sup>7</sup> Al-Iṣfahāni, iii, p. 84.

<sup>8</sup> H. G. Farmer, in the *New Oxford History of Music*, i, p. 448.

<sup>9</sup> *Idem*, "Song Captions in the Kitāb al-Aghāni," in *Transactions of the Glasgow University Oriental Society*, Glasgow, 1935, Vol. XV, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Suppl. Vol., pp. 265-66.

<sup>11</sup> Al-Khwārizmi, *Mafātih al-'Ulūm*, Leiden, 1895, p. 237.

Pythagorean interval (298 cents),<sup>12</sup> and it was these alien intervals which both al-Iṣfahāni and ibn 'Abdi Rabbihi blame for the decadence of the pure Arabian music in the third/ninth century. There were many earlier theorists of music, notably Yūnus al-Kātib (d. c. 148/765) who wrote a "Book of Melody" (*Kitāb al-Naḡm*). That was also the title of a book by al-Khalīl (d. 175/791), who also compiled a "Book on Rhythm" (*Kitāb al-Iqā'*). He was the "father of prosody."<sup>13</sup> A more important treatise appears to have been the "Book of Melody and Rhythm" by Ishāq al-Mausīli (d. 236/850), and that was accomplished, says al-Iṣfahāni, without the author's knowing an iota of the work of Euclid.<sup>14</sup> None of these works has come down to us, but we know precisely what al-Mausīli's theoretical principles were from the *Risālah* 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 '*ulūm riyāḍiyyah*, which included the theory of music. At the "House of Learning" (*Bait al-Hikmah*) in Baghdād were scholars who had translated the great Greek writers on music into Arabic, including Aristotle, Aristoxenus, Nicomachus, Euclid, Ptolemy, and probably Aristides Quintilianus.<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup> He not only appreciated music as a science for mathematicians and a 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.<sup>17</sup> Everything within the entire macrocosm was linked together. Each note on a lute was connected with melodic mode (*ṭarīqah*), 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-fold things" dominated all else. There were four strings, tunes in fourths, and four frets. The strings from the lowest to the highest were four-ply, three-ply, two-ply, and one-ply.<sup>18</sup> His disciples, the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafa* (fourth/tenth century), followed him in most things, but made the strings compounded

<sup>12</sup> R. d'Erlanger, *La Musique arabe*, Paris, 1930, i, pp. 170-73.

<sup>13</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, pp. 43, 141, 145.

<sup>14</sup> Al-Iṣfahāni, v, p. 52.

<sup>15</sup> H. G. Farmer, "Greek Theorists of Music in Arabic Translation," *Isis*, Bruges, 1930, xiii. Yūḥanna ibn al-Baṭriq (d. c. 200/815) had already translated Aristotle's *De Anima* into Arabic.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Kindi, *Risālah fi Khubr Tālīf al-Alḥān*, ed. R. Lachmann and M. al-Hifni, Leipzig, 1931; H. G. Farmer, *The Influence of Music: from Arabic Sources*, London, 1926.

<sup>17</sup> T. J. de Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, London, 1903, pp. 100-01.

<sup>18</sup> W. Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis . . .*, 5530, f. 25.



of 64, 48, 36, and 27 strands respectively.<sup>19</sup> They assigned to every melodic and rhythmic mode a specific influence (*tāthīr*), a doctrine which held sway in Islamic lands up to the fourteenth/twentieth century. His most illustrious pupil was al-Sarakhsī (d. 286/899), but his five books on music have not survived.<sup>20</sup> Thābit ibn Qurrah (d. 288/901) is credited with eight treatises on music, yet not a page has come down to us.<sup>21</sup> Other theorists were Mansūr ibn Ṭalḥah (d. c. 299/910), a follower of al-Kindi, ibn Ṭāhir al-Khuzā'i (d. 300/913), one of the most learned in the philosophy of music,<sup>22</sup> ibn al-Munajjim (d. 300/912) whose "Treatise on Music" (*Risālah fi al-Mūsīqi*) still exists,<sup>23</sup> Qusṭa ibn Lūqa (d. c. 300/912),<sup>24</sup> and abu Bakr al-Rāzi (d. 313/925) who penned a "Book of the Summings-up of Music" (*Kitāb fi Jumal al-Mūsīqi*).<sup>25</sup> 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 Alpharabius.

Al-Fārābi (Alpharabius) was a Turkomān, 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" (*Kitāb al-Mūsīqi al-Kabīr*) 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-Fārābi was an instrumental performer,<sup>26</sup> 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-naẓari*). Although indebted to the Greeks, he avoided their errors in that he did not agree that sound is heard in water in a less degree than in air, nor that wool when struck produces no sound, as Aristotle tells us.<sup>27</sup> Neither did al-Fārābi repeat the blunder of Nicomachus that Pythagoras discovered the consonances by comparing the weight of the hammers in the blacksmith's shop,<sup>28</sup> a legend repeated by Gaudentius and Boethius.<sup>29</sup> His treatment of the influence (*tāthīr*) of music leaves the Greeks and al-Kindi far behind, as one would readily expect from a naturalistic philosopher.

<sup>19</sup> Ikhwān al-Ṣafa, i, p. 98.

<sup>20</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, p. 262.

<sup>21</sup> Ibn al-Qifṭi, pp. 117-18, 120; ibn abi Uṣaibi'ah, i, p. 219.

<sup>22</sup> Al-Iṣfahāni, viii, p. 43.

<sup>23</sup> British Museum MS., Or. 2361, ff. 236v.

<sup>24</sup> M. Casiri, *Bibliotheca arabico-hispano Escorialensis...*, Madrid, 1760-70, i, p. 420.

<sup>25</sup> Ibn abi Uṣaibi'ah, i, p. 320.

<sup>26</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Biographical Dictionary*, iii, p. 309; Ikhwān al-Ṣafa, i, p. 85.

<sup>27</sup> *De Anima*, 419b.

<sup>28</sup> Meibom, *Antiquae musicae auctores septem*, Amsterdam, 1652, pp. 10-11.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14; Boethius, *De Institutione Musica*, Leipzig, 1867, lib. i, cap. 10.

Further east was Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Khwārizmi (d. c. 370/980) who was in the service of the vizier of the Sāmānid Prince, Nūḥ II. He compiled an encyclopedic "Keys to the Sciences" (*Mafātīḥ al-'Ulūm*), one key of which unlocked the door of music.<sup>30</sup> Another scientist, abu al-Wafā' (d. 388/998), penned a "Compendium on the Science of Rhythm" (*Mukhtaṣar fi Fann al-Īqā'*),<sup>31</sup> while in distant Muslim Spain a "Treatise on the Composition of Melodies" (*Risālah fi Tālīf al-Alḥān*) was produced by 'Ali ibn Sa'id al-Andalusi (fourth/tenth century).<sup>32</sup> The contemporary Ikhwān al-Ṣafa have 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.<sup>33</sup> Preece and Stroh questioned that definition saying that loudness does not result from amplitude of vibration only, but that it also depends upon the quantity of air in vibration.<sup>34</sup> The Ikhwān al-Ṣafa had proclaimed that view over eight hundred 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."<sup>34</sup> Those encyclopedic philosophers also recognized the spherical propagation of sound,<sup>35</sup> whilst the Aristotelian *De Audibilibus* (802a) had stated that "the direction of sound follows a straight line."<sup>36</sup> Meanwhile the tractates of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafa were being introduced into Muslim Spain by Maslamah al-Majrīṭi (d. 398/1007), and so widespread was their circulation that the name of al-Majrīṭi was attached to them in that land.<sup>37</sup>

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-Shifā'*) that a chapter (*fann*) was devoted to music. Like al-Fārābi, 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

<sup>30</sup> *Liber Mafātīḥ al-'Ulūm*, ed. Van Vloten, Leiden, 1895, pp. 235-46; section on music translated into English by H. G. Farmer, in *Transactions of the Glasgow University Oriental Society*, 1959, Vol. XVII.

<sup>31</sup> Al-Akfāni, *Durr al-Nazim*, in *Bibliotheca Indica*, 1949, p. 93.

<sup>32</sup> H. G. Farmer, *A History of Arabian Music*, p. 177.

<sup>33</sup> Helmholtz, *On the Sensations of Tone*, London, 1895, p. 10.

<sup>34</sup> *Proceedings of the Royal Society*, London, 1879, xxviii, p. 366.

<sup>35</sup> Ikhwān al-Ṣafa, i, p. 88.

<sup>36</sup> Incidentally, Aristotle (*De Anima*, 420a) said, "Not every object produces sound when struck. On the contrary, the object must be smooth," hence "bronze is resonant because it is smooth." The Ikhwān al-Ṣafa say: "Smooth objects give smooth sounds whilst rough objects give rough sounds."

<sup>37</sup> H. G. Farmer, *A History of Arabian Music*, pp. 216-17.



of the theory of music is different from that of al-Fārābi, possibly because what was practised in Bukhāra, Hamadān, and Iṣfahān was alien to that in Syria. The fretting of the lute was certainly dissimilar, the first semitonal fret (*mujannab*) being the diatonic interval (112 cents), whereas elsewhere the semitone was the *limma* (90 cents), whilst the Zalzalian neutral third was slightly flatter (343 cents).<sup>38</sup> He gives the notation of a few of the melodic modes, and from that one sees that the Persians were retaining their fanciful names for them, such as *Salmaki*, *Nawa*, etc. These Persian terms crept into Arabian music in the third/ninth century, at first where their scales agreed with those of the old Arab "Finger modes" (*aṣābi'*), but later indiscriminately. All the old Arabian instruments are mentioned together with a few strangers, viz., the 'anqā', evidently a long-necked instrument, the *salbāq*, probably the Greek *sambyke* (the Aramaic *sabbeka*), and the *ṣanj jīni* or *ṣīni*, seemingly the Chinese metalophone.<sup>39</sup> Ibn Sīna also introduced a chapter on music in a shorter work entitled "The Deliverer" (*al-Najāt*) which was translated into Persian—as the *Dānish Nāmeḥ-i 'Alā'i*—by his pupil abu 'Uбайд al-Juzajāni.<sup>40</sup> Another of his disciples was abu Mansūr ibn Zailah (d. 440/1048), whose "Book of Sufficiency on Music" (*Kitāb al-Kāfi fi al-Mūsīqi*) is even more valuable than the above treatises of ibn Sīna. 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.<sup>41</sup>

Strange to say, al-Kindi had written a work entitled "The Book on the Division of the Canon" (*Risālah fi Qismat al-Qārūn*), which might have been a commentary on Euclid's *Sectio Canonis* since we know that he was acquainted with that book.<sup>42</sup> 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" (*Sharḥ Qārūn Uqlaidis*), together with a "Discourse on the Commentary on the Harmonics" (*Maqālah fi Sharḥ al-[A]rmūnīqi*), the latter being probably the *Introductio Harmonica* of Cleonides.<sup>43</sup> A far more remarkable book was ibn al-Haitham's "Treatise on the Influence of Melodies on the Souls of Animals" (*Risālah fi Tāthīrāt al-Luḥūn al-Mūsīqīyah fi al-Nufūs al-Ḥayawānīyah*).<sup>44</sup> 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; that

<sup>38</sup> *Idem*, *Studies in Oriental Musical Instruments*, Glasgow, 1939, ii, pp. 45–57.

<sup>39</sup> R. d'Erlanger, *op. cit.*, Paris, 1935, ii, p. 105.

<sup>40</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Sources*, pp. 41–42; British Museum MS., Or. 2361, f. 273.

<sup>41</sup> British Museum MS., Or. 2361, ff. 220–36v. H. G. Farmer, *Sources*, pp. 42–43.

<sup>42</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, p. 256; ibn al-Qiftī, p. 379; ibn abi Uṣaibi'ah, i, p. 210.

<sup>43</sup> Ibn al-Qiftī, p. 168.

<sup>44</sup> Ibn abi Uṣaibi'ah, ii, p. 97.



reptiles could be charmed and stilled; and that birds could be lured by its potency.<sup>45</sup> Nor should we forget the Andalusian lexicographer ibn Sīdah (d. 458/1066) whose *Kitāb al-Mukhaṣṣaṣ* contains several sections on music and musical instruments.<sup>46</sup> There were 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-Ṣalt 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.<sup>47</sup> His "Treatise on Music" (*Risālah fi al-Mūsīqi*)<sup>48</sup> must have been an important work since it was translated into Hebrew<sup>49</sup>, and quoted by Profist Duran.<sup>50</sup> An outline of its contents has been given in English.<sup>51</sup> His compositions appear to have had some influence in North Africa.<sup>52</sup> The learned philosopher ibn Bājjah (d. 533/1138) compiled a "Book of Music" (*Kitāb al-Mūsīqi*)<sup>53</sup> which, says ibn Sa'id al-Maghribi, was as famed in Western Islamic lands as was al-Fārābī's book in Eastern Islamic lands.<sup>54</sup> He also contributed a "Book of the Soul" (*Kitāb 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 (*ṣaut*).<sup>55</sup> Another Andalusian savant was ibn al-Ḥaddād (d. 562/1165). He wrote a work, entitled by Casiri as *Musices Discipline*, without giving the Arabic equivalent.<sup>56</sup> Better known was ibn Rushd (d. 593/1198) famed in European books as a philosopher and commentator. In his "Commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima*" (*Sharḥ fi al-Nafs li Aristatālis*)<sup>57</sup> he naturally treats of the spherical propagation of sound, which was not touched upon by European writers until Michael Scot translated it 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-Ḥakam al-Bāhili (d. 550/1155) was highly esteemed as a mathematician and scientist at Baghdād and Damascus. His work on music was "well known."<sup>58</sup> More renowned was ibn al-Naqqāsh al-Baghdādi (d. 574/1178).<sup>59</sup> In *ilm al-mūsīqi* he was the tutor of Yahya

<sup>45</sup> Ikhwān al-Ṣafa, i, p. 87; ibn 'Abdi Rabbihi, iii, p. 177.

<sup>46</sup> *Op. cit.*, Cairo, 1320/1902, xiii, pp. 9-16.

<sup>47</sup> Ibn abi Uṣaibi'ah, ii, p. 62.

<sup>48</sup> W. Ahlwardt, *op. cit.*, 5536/5.

<sup>49</sup> Paris MS., *Fonds Heb.*, 1037.

<sup>50</sup> *Grammar*, Vienna, 1863, p. 37.

<sup>51</sup> *Musica Disciplina*, Rome, 1951, vi, pp. 27-32.

<sup>52</sup> Al-Maqqari, *Analectes* . . . , i, p. 520.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, p. 125.

<sup>54</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Sources*, p. 44.

<sup>55</sup> W. Ahlwardt, *op. cit.*, 5060, f. 161v.

<sup>56</sup> Casiri, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 73.

<sup>57</sup> N. Morata, *El compendio de Anima*, Granada, 1934.

<sup>58</sup> Al-Maqqari, *op. cit.*, i, p. 548.

<sup>59</sup> Ibn abi Uṣaibi'ah, ii, pp. 162, 181.

al-Bayāsi who was in the service of the Ayyūbid Sultān Ṣalāh al-Dīn (d. 591/1193).<sup>60</sup> Muḥammad ibn abi al-Ḥakam (d. 576/1180), a son of Bāhili, too "had knowledge of the science of music," in addition to being a good practitioner in it.<sup>61</sup> At the Nizāmiyyah College at Baghdād was Kamāl al-Dīn ibn Man'ah (d. 551/1156); he was "without a rival" in astronomy, conics, music, and mensuration.<sup>62</sup> Then there was 'Alam al-Dīn Qaiṣar (d. 649/1251), the "great master of the age in all the mathematical sciences," a pupil of Kamāl al-Dīn. Ḥasan ibn 'Umar says that 'Alam al-Dīn was particularly distinguished for his profound knowledge of music.<sup>63</sup> Further East there arose Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzi (d. 606/1209), whose "Assembling of the Sciences" (*Jāmi' al-'Ulūm*), an extremely useful encyclopedia, contains a chapter in nine sections on the theory of music. In some respects he was quite an original thinker.<sup>64</sup> There is also a small tract on music by Naṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsi (d. 672/1274) preserved at Paris, which, however, contains only the elements of the theory of music.<sup>65</sup> A really important work is one by al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Ali al-Kātib (fl. 626/1228) entitled "The Perfection of Knowledge in Music" (*Kamāl al-Adab al-Ghinā'*), the solitary manuscript copy of which is to be found in Constantinople. It contains forty sections (*abwāb*) and covers the entire field of music.<sup>66</sup> Finally came the famous Ṣafi al-Dīn 'Abd al-Mū'min al-Urmawi al-Baghdāḍi (d. 693/1294). He was the author of "The Book of Musical Modes" (*Kitāb al-Adwār*) and "The Sharafian Treatise on Musical Proportion" (*Risālah al-Sharafīyyah fī al-Nisab al-Tālīfīyyah*), which revolutionized the science of music in the Near and Middle East.<sup>67</sup> He took the scale of the old Khurāsānian pandore (*tanbūr Khurāsāni*) and used its intervallic progression of *limma, limma, 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,"<sup>68</sup> whilst the English musicologist Sir Hubert Parry considered the new scale to be "the most perfect ever devised."<sup>69</sup> Riemann, the music historian,<sup>70</sup> 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."<sup>71</sup> It spread far and wide, and was accepted by Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shirāzi (d. 710/1310), the author of the

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>62</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *op. cit.*, iii, pp. 467-68.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 471-73.

<sup>64</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Sources*, p. 45.

<sup>65</sup> Paris MS., *Arabe*, 2466.

<sup>66</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Sources*, p. 46.

<sup>67</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden, Suppl. Vol., pp. 191-92; *New Oxford History of Music*, i, pp. 462-63.

<sup>68</sup> R. G. Kiesewetter, *Die Musik der Araber*, Leipzig, 1842, p. 13.

<sup>69</sup> Sir H. Parry, *The Art of Music*, London, 1896, p. 29.

<sup>70</sup> Hugo Riemann, *Catechism of Musical History*, London, 1892, i, p. 65.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 283.

Persian encyclopedia known as "The Jewel of the Crown" (*Durrat al-Tāj*),<sup>72</sup> and Maḥmūd al-Āmuli of the same century, who compiled "The Precious Things of the Sciences" (*Nafā'is al-Funūn*), also in Persian.<sup>73</sup> The theories of Ṣafi al-Dīn 'Abd al-Mū'min are to be seen in the "Treasure-House of Rarities" (*Kanz al-Tuḥaf*) written in the mid-eighth/fourteenth century, although we read in the section on musical instruments in that book that some performers were using the older system, i.e., the earlier Perso-Arabian Pythagorean scale of al-Fārābī's days.<sup>74</sup> 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 Syria, Egypt, and Iraq; and in the domain of music theory we have many exponents: ibn al-'Alā'i al-Baghdādi (eighth/fourteenth century) in his "Reading of Time in the Art of Melodies" (*Qir'at al-Zamān fi 'Ilm al-Alḥān*),<sup>75</sup> al-Khaṭīb al-Irbili (fl. 731/1329) in "The Jewels of Arrangement in the Knowledge of the Notes" (*Jawāhir al-Nizām fi Ma'rifat al-Anghām*),<sup>76</sup> Muḥammad ibn 'Isa ibn Kara (d. 759/1358) in "The Goal of Inquiry in the Science of Melodies and Rhythm" (*Ghāyat al-Matlūn fi Fann al-Anghām w-al-Ḍurūb*),<sup>77</sup> 'Amr ibn Khaḍr al-Kurdi (d. 800/1397) in "The Treasury of the Desideratum in the Melodies and Rhythms" (*Kanz al-Matlūb fi 'Ilm al-Dawā'ir w-al-Ḍurūb*);<sup>78</sup> but more important still was ibn al-Taḥḥān (eighth/fourteenth century), whose "Collector of the Sciences" (*Hāwi al-Funūn*) is of extreme value, especially on the construction of instruments of music.<sup>79</sup>

The Persian renaissance had greatly influenced Turkey. This evocation was due chiefly to 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Ḡhaibi (d. 840/1435), a tremendous personality who had been the chief minstrel at many Courts from Baghdād to Samarqand, and was better known as the author of the "Collector of the Melodies" (*Jāmi' al-Alḥān*) and other works which, with those of Ṣafi al-Dīn 'Abd al-Mū'min, became the accepted text-books. The former were somewhat critical of a few axioms of the latter.<sup>80</sup> Indeed other authors, writing in Arabic, were just as contentious, including the author—probably al-Jurjāni (d. 816/1413)<sup>81</sup>—of the "Maulāna Mubārak Shāh Commentary" and the "Muḥammad ibn Murād Treatise" in the British Museum.<sup>82</sup> All this reflects the keen critical attitude of these Muslim theorists on music. Although the Persian renaissance

<sup>72</sup> British Museum MS., *Add.* 7694, f. 197.

<sup>73</sup> British Museum MS., *Add.* 16827, f. 429.

<sup>74</sup> King's College Library, Cambridge, MS. 211.

<sup>75</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Sources*, p. 54.

<sup>76</sup> *Al-Mashriq*, Beyrouth, 1913, pp. 895–901.

<sup>77</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Sources*, p. 55.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Cairo, MS., *Funūn Jamīlah*, 539.

<sup>80</sup> Bodleian MS., Oxford, *Marsh*, 282.

<sup>81</sup> British Museum MS., *Or.* 2361, f. 68v; see Preface by H. G. Farmer, to R. d Erlanger, *op. cit.*, iii.

<sup>82</sup> British Museum MS., *Or.* 2361, ff. 68v. and 168v



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" (*Adwār-i Mūsīqi*) for Sultān Murād II, in which he mentions al-Fārābi, 'Abd al-Mū'min, Ptolemy, Nicomachus and a certain 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Kirmāni as his authorities,<sup>83</sup> while another Turkish author, Aḥmad Oghlu Shakhr Allah compiled a book based on the Persian "Treasure-House of Rarities" (*Kanz al-Tuḥaf*) written in the previous century.<sup>84</sup> Al-Lādhīqi (d. 900/1494) dedicated his Arabic "Treatise of the Conquest on Music" (*Risālat al-Fātiḥīyyah fi al-Mūsīqi*) to the Turkish Sultān Bāyazīd II.<sup>85</sup> Meanwhile ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) had written in the famous "Introduction" (*Muqaddimah*) to his universal history the "Book of Examples" (*Kitāb al-'Ibar*)<sup>86</sup> with its chapter on music. More important, to the theory and practice of music, was a treatise by al-Māridīni (d. 809/1406) called the "Introduction to the Theory and Canons of Melodies" (*Muqaddimah fi 'Ilm Qāwānīn al-Anghām*). The same writer published a "Commentary in *Rajaz* verse on the Melodic Modes" (*Urjūzah fi Sharḥ al-Naghāmāt*).<sup>87</sup> 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" (*Fā'idah fi Tartīb al-Anghām 'ala al-Ayyām w-al-Burūj*), which reveals that the old conceit in the influence (*tāthīr*) of the heavenly spheres was still as strong as ever.<sup>88</sup> This is also most apparent from the "Treatise Concerning the Knowledge of the Melodies" (*Risālah fi 'Ilm al-Anghām*) by Shihāb al-Dīn al-'Ajami (ninth/fifteenth century).<sup>89</sup> On the purely instrumental side is a "Survey of the Concerns and Anxieties in the Explanation of the Instruments of Music" (*Kashf al-Humūm w-al-Kurūb fi Sharḥ Alāt al-Ṭarab*), a most important treatise on music and instruments in the ninth/fifteenth-century Egypt, quoting many unknown authorities—Taqī al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Fārābi (or Fāryābi), Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ayyūb al-Khwārīzmi, and others. The only MS. available of this book is in Constantinople.<sup>90</sup> The names quoted reveal men of Turkomān origin. Two others of that stirps who were music theorists were Sa'd al-Dīn Kammari (ninth/fifteenth century) who wrote a book on the harp (*chang*) in the form of a dialogue between master and pupil, and a Fakhr al-Dīn al-Khujandi (tenth/sixteenth century) who penned a clever criticism (*hāshiyah*) of Ṣafī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Mū'min.

<sup>83</sup> J. G. L. Kosegarten, *Alii Ispahanensis Liber Cantilenarum*, Griepsvoldise, 1840, p. 36.

<sup>84</sup> A. Lavignac, *Encyclopædie de la musique*, Paris, 1920, p. 3012.

<sup>85</sup> R. d'Erlanger, *op. cit.*, iv, p. 259.

<sup>86</sup> *Notices et Extraits des manuscrits . . .*, Paris, 1858, xvii, 352.

<sup>87</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Sources*, p. 56.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>89</sup> W. Ahlwardt, *op. cit.*, 5534.

<sup>90</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Sources*, p. 59.

With the dawn of the tenth/sixteenth century came the domination of the Ottoman Turks from Kurdistān 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 *Irshād al-Qāsid* of al-Akfāni (d. 749/1348), the *Maqālīd al-'Ulūm* of al-Jurjāni (d. 816/1413), the *Unmūzaj al-'Ulūm* of al-Fanāri (d. 839/1435), and the later *Miftāh al-Sa'ūdah* of Tāshkoprizāde (d. 968/1560) dealt with the subject, but in this last work most of it was borrowed from older compendiums.<sup>91</sup> A certain Shams al-Din al-Ṣaidāwi al-Dimashqi wrote a treatise called “The Book Concerning the Acquisition of the Melodies” (*Kitāb fi Ma'rifat al-Anghām*). Like several other such treatises of the period, it was in verse, but it revealed a notoric device for notation by means of a stave of eight or so lines.<sup>92</sup> Another tract in *rajaz* verse was by Nāṣir al-Dīn al-'Ajami.<sup>93</sup> Two others in rhymed prose have come down to us.<sup>94</sup> A really solid work of that century was “The Treatise of the Discoverer in the Science of the Melodies” (*Risālat al-Kāshif fi 'Ilm al-Anghām*) by Muẓaffar ibn al-Ḥusain ibn al-Muẓaffar al-Ḥaṣkafi,<sup>95</sup> while in Morocco, ibn al-Wanṣharisi (d. 956/1549) contributed a valuable work on “The Natures, Elements, and Modes” (*Ṭabā'i', Ṭubū', wa Uṣūl*).<sup>96</sup> In the eleventh/seventeenth century there lived a certain bu 'Iṣāmi (d. c. 1103/1690) who was the teacher of another music theorist Muḥammad ibn Ṭayyib al-'Alami (d. 1136/1722), the author of “The Companion of the Performer” (*al-Anīs al-Muṭrib*), also of Moroccan origin.<sup>97</sup> Then there was a “Book of the Combinations in the Science of Music and the Modes” (*Kitāb al-Jumū' fi 'Ilm al-Mūsīqi w-al-Ṭubū'*) by 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fāsi (d. 1098/1685).<sup>98</sup> 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 Persia the scale of the “Systematists” was used in the eleventh/seventeenth century, the chief authority being abu al-Wafā' ibn Sa'id.<sup>99</sup> 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'līm al-Naghāmāt*); another is the “Treatise on the Science of Music” (*Risālah 'Ulūm Mūsīqi*); a third named “Concerning the Science of Music” (*Dar 'Ilm-i Mūsīqi*);<sup>100</sup> and lastly “The Exquisite

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 56, 58, 61.

<sup>92</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Arabic Musical MSS. in the Bodleian Library*, London, 1925, p. 15.

<sup>93</sup> Cairo MS., *Funūn Jamīdah*, 509.

<sup>94</sup> Paris MS., *Arabe*, 2480.

<sup>95</sup> Paris MS., *Bloch*, 2137.

<sup>96</sup> H. G. Farmer, *An Old Moorish Lute Tutor*, Glasgow, 1933, p. 11.

<sup>97</sup> Fes, 1315/1897, pp. 174 et seq.

<sup>98</sup> H. G. Farmer, *An Old Moorish Lute Tutor*, p. 14.

<sup>99</sup> Sir J. Chardin, *Voyages du Chevalier Chardin*, Amsterdam, 1735, pp. 158-61.

<sup>100</sup> Vienna MS., 1516/1; British Museum MS., Or. 2980; John Rylands Library, Manchester, Persian MS., 346.

Pearl in the Art of Music" (*Durr al-Naqi fi Fann al-Mūsīqi*). 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-Mū'min al-Balkhi.<sup>101</sup> In Muslim India where Persian, Khurāsānian, and Turkomānian 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" (*Tuḥfat al-Adwār*) by 'Ināyat Allah ibn Mir Ḥajj al-Harawi, and the "Treatise on the Science of Music" (*Risālah dar 'Ilm al-Mūsīqi*) by Qāsim ibn Dost 'Ali al-Bukhāri.<sup>102</sup> An Amir at the Court of Aurangzib named Shāh Qubād ibn 'Abd al-Jalīl al-Ḥārithi, called Diyānat Khān, caused a collection to be made of Arabic and Persian treatises on music of such authors as al-Kindi, ibn al-Munajjim, al-Fārābi, ibn Sīna, ibn Zailah, Ṣafi al-Dīn 'Abd al-Mū'min, and also of many later writers,<sup>103</sup> whose works he himself had collated. Two Persian writers appear to have made translations of or adaptations from Sanskrit treatises. One was entitled *Rāg Darpan* issued by a certain Faqīr Allah in about the year 1073/1662. Another was *Kitāb Parjāt Sangīt* written by Mirza Rauzan Zamīr (d. c. 1080/1669), praised by Shīr Khān Lodhi. A third book was "The Excellent Thing of Hindustan" (*Tuḥfat al-Hind*) by Mirza Khān Muḥammad ibn Fakhr al-Dīn and was dated 1086/1675. 'Iwād Muḥammad Kāmil wrote about playing the *bīn* in his *Risālah dar 'Amal Bīn wa Ṭhāṭh-i Rāghā*'i, while abu al-Ḥasan Qaiṣar contributed a book called "The Knowledge of the Melodies" (*Ma'rifat al-Naghām*).<sup>104</sup>

## D

### INFLUENCE

"Thy neighbour is thy teacher."

*An Arabic Proverb.*

As mentioned elsewhere,<sup>105</sup> 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/fifteenth century in the Balkans. Culturally,

<sup>101</sup> British Museum MS., *Add.* 23494.

<sup>102</sup> British Museum MS., *Or.* 2361. f. 240v.

<sup>103</sup> British Museum MS., *Or.* 2361.

<sup>104</sup> See "Pakistani Music," *Urdu Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

<sup>105</sup> *The New Oxford History of Music*, O.U.P., London, 1957, i, pp. 250-54, 279-82.



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 that concerned art, literature, and science. It is not at 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 has been detailed at some length elsewhere in the present work.<sup>106</sup> Europe's indebtedness in music to Muslim Spain and Portugal has been the favourite theme of the present writer for many years.<sup>107</sup> 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 *Ikhwān al-Ṣafa* had thought.<sup>108</sup> 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,<sup>109</sup> but what Isidore tells us about music in his *Originum sive Etymologiarum* does not enlighten us on contemporary music, since almost everything that he has collected under that heading is derived from alien and earlier sources, as Migne has shown.<sup>110</sup> 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 in the year 188/804, Arabic was in official use in charters and canonical decrees.<sup>111</sup> That 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.<sup>112</sup> It is in iconography, perhaps, that the earliest Moorish influence in music may be espied as, for example, in the S. Médard *Evangeliarum* (second/eighth century), the *Psalterium Aureum* (third/ninth century),<sup>113</sup> and in the miniatures

<sup>106</sup> Cf. also, *The Legacy of Islam*, ed. Sir Thomas Arnold and Alfred Guillaume, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1931.

<sup>107</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Historical Facts for the Arabian Musical Influence*, W. Reeves, London, 1930.

<sup>108</sup> *Op. cit.*, i, pp. 85-87.

<sup>109</sup> C. Canal, *San Isidore, exposicion de sus . . . influencia en la civilizacion española*, Seville, 1897.

<sup>110</sup> *Patrologiae . . . Series Latina*, Garnier, Paris, 1874, Vol. 82, pp. 163-69.

<sup>111</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Historical Facts . . .*, p. 172.

<sup>112</sup> *España Sagrada*, 2da Edic., Madrid, 1775, xi, 274.

<sup>113</sup> K. Schlesinger, *The Precursors of the Violin Family*, London, 1910, pp. 371-74.

This writer states very definitely that these instruments were "derived from the Arabs, either by way of Spain or through Sicily or Southern Italy."

(fourth/tenth century) reproduced by M. Serrano Fatigati,<sup>114</sup> all of which show long-necked pandores and other instruments, including large and small rebecks.<sup>115</sup> Some of these necked instruments, such as the lute and pandore, had frets (*dasātīn*) 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-ṭanbūr*), laud (*al-ʿūd*), rabe (*rabūb*), canon (*qānūn*), axabela (*al-shabābah*), albogon (*al-būq*), annafil (*al-nafīr*), sonajas de azofar (*ṣunūj al-ṣufr*), and atambal (*al-ṭabl*). All of these instruments may be seen in the miniatures of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* of Alfonso el Sabio (d. 683, 1284),<sup>116</sup> whilst the *Libro de Buen Amor* of Juan Ruiz (d. c. 751/1350) makes distinction between Spanish and Moorish instruments such as in the *guitarra morisca* and the *guitarra latina*.<sup>117</sup> One is, therefore, not surprised to find Rafaël 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."<sup>118</sup>

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 "caña" (*ghanīyyah*), "huda" (Ar. *ḥudā'*), and "anaxir" (Ar. *nashīd*), since the 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 "algazara" or "alarido" in admiration. These words are but the Arabic *al-ghazārah* (copious) and *al-ʿarīd* (amplitude). One may still hear cries of "Olé, Olé" (Allah, Allah), punctuating the performance of a "cante hondo" in modern Spain, when an audience is carried away by the clever ornamentation (Ar. *taḥsīn*) or the melody by a singer or a player.<sup>119</sup> 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."<sup>120</sup> Among the dances the "mourisca" was much fancied by the Spaniards and the Portugese, and in the sports and pastimes of the latter the Moorish influence is quite patent.<sup>121</sup> Joy as well as thanksgiving was at its height during the great Muslim festivals, and

<sup>114</sup> *Miniaturas de codices españoles*, Madrid, 1910.

<sup>115</sup> A. Lavignac, *op. cit.*, p. 1928.

<sup>116</sup> J. Ribera, *La Música de las Cántigas*, Madrid, 1922; J. F. Riano, *Notes on Early Spanish Music*, Quaritch, London, 1887.

<sup>117</sup> *Op. cit.*, Toulouse, 1901, pp. 1251-57.

<sup>118</sup> A. Lavignac, *op. cit.*, p. 1920.

<sup>119</sup> J. B. Trend, *Manuel de Falla . . .*, New York, 1929, p. 20.

<sup>120</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 30. Cf. the same writer's *The Music of Spanish History*, Oxford, pp. 9-37.

<sup>121</sup> A. Lavignac, *op. cit.*, p. 2402.

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 *muwāsīm*, the name of the six Muslim festivals, as we know from ibn Battūṭah<sup>122</sup> and al-Maqqari.<sup>123</sup> On the other hand, Pedro de Alcalá (911, 1505)<sup>124</sup> gives a word *muwajjah* the plural of which is *muwajjahīn* (mascarade con caratula), which Dozy and Engelmann link up with "los matachines," a troop of four, six, or eight persons who performed a clownish dance.<sup>125</sup> This word is claimed to be derived from the Arabic *mutawajjahīn* (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 "moharrache," who was no other than the Moorish *muharraġ* (buffoon).<sup>126</sup> It was the arts of these people which captivated the Moors and the Iberians alike,<sup>127</sup> and their influence spread abroad at the hands of the wandering 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."<sup>128</sup> This latter would have far-reaching effect, as we shall see presently. Even the Arcipreste de Hita (eighth/fourteenth century) realized that it was not the bowed instruments which typified the exotic Moorish rhythms, but the plectrum-struck lute and pandore.<sup>129</sup> 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 Mudéjar art.<sup>130</sup> The Spanish Courts were well supplied with Muslim players and singers, as the official records testify; even their names have been registered.<sup>131</sup> 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,<sup>132</sup> 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

<sup>122</sup> *Voyages: Ibn Batoutah, texte arabe . . . traduction par C. Defrémery et B. R. Sanguinetti, Paris, 1853-59.*

<sup>123</sup> *Analectus sur l'histoire et la littérature des Arabes d'Espagne Publiés par Dozy, Dugat, Krehl et Wright, Leiden, 1855-61.*

<sup>124</sup> P. de Alcalá, *Vocabulista aravigo en letra castellana*. Granada, 1505 s. v.

<sup>125</sup> *Glossaire des mots espagnols et portugais dérivés de l'arabe*, Brill, Leiden, 1869, p. 309.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 304-09.

<sup>127</sup> R. Menéndez Pidal, *Poesía Juglaresca y Juglares*, Madrid, 1924, pp. 136-37.

<sup>128</sup> E. Naumann, *The History of Music*, London, 1886, i, p. 228.

<sup>129</sup> Juan Ruiz, *Libros de Buen Amor*, pp. 1516-17.

<sup>130</sup> J. B. Trend, *The Music of Spanish History*, New York, 1926, p. 30.

<sup>131</sup> R. Menéndez Pidal, *op. cit.*, pp. 457 et seq.

<sup>132</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Historical Facts . . .*, p. 158.



*kurraj* or hobby-horse of the Moors and its impedimenta of bells (*jalājil*) are mentioned as far back as Jarīr (d. c. 110/728) and have also been described by ibn Khaldūn. 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 *al-nīrashshah*. 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 *mākhūri* rhythm.<sup>133</sup> P. Donostia assures us that the "zortzico" "does not represent the musical basis of the Basque people."<sup>134</sup> 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-būq* and *al-ṭabl* 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 *zāmil al-zain* (gala limping horse), the English "hobby-horse."<sup>135</sup>

All of these neoteric devices soon spread over the Spanish and Portugese 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 Pyrénées françaises*, 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.<sup>136</sup> Among his numerous examples is the "mouchicou" of Bearn, which is the warlike Basque dance "mutchikoa." One of the Pyrenean song-dances is a kind of "branle" called the "ramelet," which had its origin in Toulouse in the sixth/twelfth 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 a Basque instrumental tune.<sup>137</sup> Its paternity is traceable to the Turkish *aqsaq*, a  $\frac{9}{8}$  movement.

In France, iconography supplies the clearest evidence of the Moorish and Saracenic influence in musical instruments,<sup>138</sup> whilst its literature clinches that

<sup>133</sup> *New Oxford History of Music*, i, p. 448.

<sup>134</sup> *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, 1954, iii, p. 194.

<sup>135</sup> *New Oxford History of Music*, i, p. 467.

<sup>136</sup> *Op. cit.*, Paris, 1923, pp. 32-33.

<sup>137</sup> *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, 1954, iii, p. 240.

<sup>138</sup> K. Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, ii, Chap. ix.

certainty.<sup>139</sup> The Moorish 'ūd, rabābah, qānūn and ṭanbūr, appear in the seventh/thirteenth century as the "leus" (luth), "rubebe," "micanon" and "mandore": the Spanish "guitarra morisca" of Juan Ruiz (eighth/fourteenth century), the "morache" of Guillaume de Mechaut (c. 743/1342) in France. With these came the Saracenic naqqārah, ṭabl, and ṭabl-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.<sup>140</sup> French minstrels were welcomed at the Spanish Courts,<sup>141</sup> 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 wore "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.<sup>142</sup> He calls the "matassins" by the name "les bouffons" (Ar. muharrajāt).

The troubadour problem, in relation to the Moorish influence, has been the arena of fierce conflict since the days of Huet's *Origine Fabularum Romanensium* (1105/1693), as the present writer has shown elsewhere.<sup>143</sup> The discovery by Lévi-Provençal 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 pure Arabic,<sup>144</sup> was a veritable bombshell to the sceptics. Whether the troubadours actually borrowed their form and material from the Moorish muṭrib (minstrel) or not, they certainly had the opportunity to do so.<sup>145</sup> Indeed it is not improbable that the Provençal word "trobador" was coined from the Arabic ṭarrāb (ṭaraba = "to rejoice": ṭarraba = "to sing").<sup>146</sup> 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 says<sup>147</sup> that the "trovador" who lived at the princely Courts was known as a "segrier," a name which was no more than the Moorish sakharah.<sup>148</sup> On the other hand, Menéndez Pidal believes that the "segrier" belonged to a class between the "trovador" and the "juglar."<sup>149</sup> In Pedro de Alcala (915/1509), the "trobador" equates with the Moorish shā'ir (poet), nadīm (boon

<sup>139</sup> R. Wright, *Dictionnaire des instruments de musique*, London, 1941, pp. 100, 104, 108, 149.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 112, 163, 171.

<sup>141</sup> Menéndez Pidal, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-34.

<sup>142</sup> *Orchésographie*, English translation, London, 1925, pp. 148-53.

<sup>143</sup> *New Oxford History of Music*, i, pp. 473-75.

<sup>144</sup> *Arabica*, Leiden, 1954, i, pp. 201-11.

<sup>145</sup> A. J. Denomy, "Concerning the Accessibility of Arabian Influence in the Earliest Provençal Troubadours," in *Mediaeval Studies*, Toronto, 1953, xv.

<sup>146</sup> T. A. Arnold and A. Guillaume, *op. cit.*, 1931, pp. 17, 373.

<sup>147</sup> J. Anglade, *La Troubadour Giraud Requier*, Paris, 1905, p. 147.

<sup>148</sup> See p. 1158.

<sup>149</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 25.

companion), and *adib* (scholar).<sup>150</sup> 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 troubadours sprang, as Ribera has claimed.<sup>151</sup> 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 be also 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/twelfth century), "can be explained only by *muwashshahah* and *zajal*," as Nykl insists, and he says of the later Marcabru that his two *estornel* (Ar. *zurzūr*) were, "in all likelihood, made upon an Andalusian-Arabic melody."<sup>152</sup> 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.<sup>153</sup>

Concerning the famous *Cantigas de Santa Maria* of Alphonso X (d. 683/1284), the miniatures of which present us with 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.<sup>154</sup> As his interpretation of the latter does not agree with the Arabian rhythms of the third/ninth to the fifth/eleventh-century examples known to us,<sup>155</sup> that part of his elucidation is suspect, whilst his transcription of the melodies has been disputed by many.<sup>156</sup> 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 Higiní Anglès that there is not the slightest trace of an Arabian (Moorish) influence in the melodies of the *Cantigas*.<sup>157</sup> Others of the anti-Moorish influence party are more guarded in their utterances, since they admit that because there is no 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,

<sup>150</sup> *Op. cit.*, s. v.

<sup>151</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 142-45.

<sup>152</sup> A. R. Nykl, *Hispano-Arabic Poetry and Its Relation with the Old Provençal Troubadours*, Baltimore, 1946, Chap. vii.

<sup>153</sup> *New Oxford History of Music*, i, p. 469.

<sup>154</sup> *Op. cit.*, Chap. xvi.

<sup>155</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Sa'adyah Gaon on the Influence of Music*, London, 1943, pp. 78-87.

<sup>156</sup> Notably Higiní Anglès.

<sup>157</sup> *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Kassel, 1952, ii, p. 777.



seeing that the pious Cardinal Ximenes, according to his biographer Robles, committed a million Arabic manuscripts to the flames,<sup>158</sup> 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."<sup>159</sup> 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,<sup>160</sup> 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. Falla makes a different approach. He acknowledges the Oriental strain in Spanish music, but he attributes that feature to the "gipsies."<sup>161</sup> In other words, a handful of uncouth gipsies, who entered Spain not earlier than 846/1442, are to be credited with having exerted a more predominant 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 Mozárabes, Mudéjares, 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,"<sup>162</sup> while Raoul Laparra states that the "very special *mentalité* of the 'flamenco' goes back, according to the hypothesis most justified, to the domination of the Moors."<sup>163</sup> Fortunately, there have been and are men of the stature of Menéndez Pelayo,<sup>164</sup> Mitjana Gordon,<sup>165</sup> Menéndez Pidal,<sup>166</sup> Ribera,<sup>167</sup> and Nykl<sup>168</sup> 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 "nacherera," as well as such terms as "maschera" and "mattaccino" reveal their ancestry.<sup>169</sup> 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

<sup>158</sup> E. de Robles, . . . *Vida y hazañas del Cardenal Ximenes*, Toledo, 1604, p. 104.

<sup>159</sup> *A Literary History of the Arabs*, London, 1914, p. 435.

<sup>160</sup> *Cancionero musical popular español*, Valls, 1919, i, pp. 69, 84.

<sup>161</sup> J. B. Trend, *Manuel de Falla*, New York, 1929, pp. 20-29.

<sup>162</sup> J. Sermet, *L'Espagne du Sud*, Paris, 1956, p. 57.

<sup>163</sup> A. Lavignac, *op. cit.*, p. 2394.

<sup>164</sup> *Antología de poetas liricos*, Madrid, 1903, ii, p. 68.

<sup>165</sup> A. Lavignac, *op. cit.*, pp. 1920-23.

<sup>166</sup> *Poesía juglaresca y juglares*, Madrid, 1924.

<sup>167</sup> *La Musica arabe mediaeval y su influencia en la Española*, Madrid, 1927.

<sup>168</sup> *Op. cit.*, Chap. vii.

<sup>169</sup> R. Dozy and W. H. Engelmann, *Glossaire des mots espagnols et portugais dérivés de l'arabe*, Leyde, 1869.

"Saracen" minstrels and dancing-girls.<sup>170</sup> A glance at medieval documents enables one to note the frequent appearance of Italian minstrels at Spanish Courts and *vice versa*,<sup>171</sup> all of which conduced towards the interchange of alien ideas in music, including that of the Moors, which was poles asunder from that of Europe proper. The Sicilian instruments of the period are displayed on woodwork screens of the sixth/twelfth century at Palermo, while those delineated by Fra Angelico, Bellini, and Montagna (ninth/fifteenth century) are quite revealing of the Oriental influence in their ornamentation as well as in their shape.<sup>172</sup> 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 *naqqārah*. Meanwhile the Crusaders had returned from Palestine with fresh ideas of martial music. Previously they only used trumpets (*tubae, litui*) and horns (*corni, bucinae*), whereas the Saracens were equipped not only with trumpets (*anfār, karnāt*) and horns (*būqāt*), but also with large (*kūsāt*), medium (*naqqārāt*), and small (*qaṣ'āt*) kettledrums, together with reed-pipes (*zumūr*), shawms (*surnāyāt*), cymbals (*ṣunūj*), and bells (*ajrās*), which were used not merely for signalling but to create fear and dismay among the Christian array.<sup>173</sup> It is generally believed that the cylindrical bore "trump" of Richard Coeur de Lion, first heard of in 587/1191, was borrowed from the Saracens.<sup>174</sup> With the latter the military band was a distinct unit known as the *ṭabl khānah* 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 *ṭabl khānah* 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.<sup>175</sup> Europe adopted all those customs, and up to the thirteenth/nineteenth century the various ranks of European generals could be determined by observing the musical honours bestowed on them.<sup>176</sup>

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

<sup>170</sup> A. F. von Schack, *Poesia y arte de los arabes en España y Sicilia*, Madrid, 1880, pp. 310-12.

<sup>171</sup> Menéndez Pidal, *op. cit.*, pp. 134, 363.

<sup>172</sup> *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, ii, pp. 379-87; G. Kinsky, *Geschichte der Musik in Bildern*, Leipzig, 1929, pp. 68/1, 69/3, 69/2.

<sup>173</sup> H. G. Farmer, "Crusading Martial Music," in *Music and Letters*, London, 1949, Vol. 30, pp. 243-49.

<sup>174</sup> F. W. Galpin, *Old English Instruments of Music*, London, 1910, p. 200.

<sup>175</sup> H. G. Farmer, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Suppl. Vol., pp. 217-22.

<sup>176</sup> C. James, *The Regimental Companion*, London, 1799, p. 197. It is possible that the term for a flourish of trumpets, "fanfare," is but a metathesis of the Arabic *anfār* (trumpets).

Moors. Here it was dubbed the "Morris Dance," but, as Brand points out, "the genuine *morisco* was very different from the European Morris."<sup>177</sup> East 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, does not miss the Moorish origin of the British "Morris Dance" by saying it "is not discredited"—by whom, we are not told.<sup>178</sup> 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 kettledrummers were mentioned a century later, the reason being obvious in both cases. With the general infiltration of Moorish instruments came the "lute," "rebeck" or "ribible,"<sup>179</sup> "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 them.<sup>180</sup>

In the East there came the Turkish eruption into Europe during the ninth and fifteenth 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."<sup>181</sup> Yet among those immeasurably small vestiges are many irregular Oriental rhythms from  $\frac{5}{16}$  through odd numbers up to  $\frac{13}{16}$ . 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.<sup>182</sup> In Yugoslavia the Oriental impress is deeper since many of their melodies are acknowledged to be of Turkish or Arabian origin.<sup>183</sup> The "tanburica" is common to the Yugoslavs together with its cousins the "saz" and "shargy." The Arabo-Turkish lute (*ūd*) 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

<sup>177</sup> J. Brand, *Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain*, London, 1853, i, p. 252.

<sup>178</sup> *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, ii, p. 233.

<sup>179</sup> For an explanation of these spellings against the Moorish *rabāb*, see *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, vii, pp. 69, 152.

<sup>180</sup> Menéndez Pidal, *op. cit.*, pp. 135; H. G. Farmer, *Historical Facts . . .*, p. 158, f. n.

<sup>181</sup> *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, iii, p. 202.

<sup>182</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Turkish Instruments of Music*, Glasgow, 1937.

<sup>183</sup> *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, 1954, iii, p. 414.



of their parentage. Albania used a host of Turkish instruments, including pandores of the "yonghar" and "paraduzen" class.<sup>184</sup>

Even Rumania and Russia were influenced by the Turkish *kopūz* in their "kobsa" and "cobsa," whilst the latter adopted the Arabian *al-tabl*, *naubah*, and *tab-li bāz* in the tenth/sixteenth-century "litavri," "nabat," and "tulumbaz" respectively for their military bands.<sup>185</sup>

Perhaps the greatest of all the "borrowings" from the Turks was made by European military bands. It began about 1138/1725 when the Turkish Sultān 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 predominant 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 (1756/1791) and Haydn (1732/1809) were scoring for such instruments in their immortal works, the former using them in his opera *II Seraglio*.<sup>186</sup> Indeed, the Orient became the scene for countless libretti: Beethoven's *Ruin of Athens*, Rossini's *Turks in Italy*, Weber's *Abu Hassan*, F. J. Field's *Caliph of Baghdād*, David's *Lālla 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 *Alāddin*, *Sindbād*, 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."<sup>187</sup> 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 "nagarit" is clearly the Arabic *naqqārāt*. 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 *qabbūs* 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 *al-ghaitah*, as well as the Turkish *borū* in the "tabulae" of Senegal and the "a-tabule" of the Gold Coast, the "algaita" of the Hausa, and the "buro" of the Gold Coast.<sup>188</sup> Returning to the east coast, it should be noted

<sup>184</sup> C. Sachs, *Reallexikon der Musikinstrumente*, Berlin, 1913, s. v.

<sup>185</sup> N. Bessaraboff, *Ancient European Musical Instruments*, Boston, U.S.A., 1941, pp. 32-37.

<sup>186</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Military Music*, Parrish, London, 1950, Chap. iv.

<sup>187</sup> H. E. Hause, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Suppl., 1948.

<sup>188</sup> H. G. Farmer, "The Arab Influence on Music in the Western Soudan," *The Musical Standard*, 15th Nov., 1924.

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*."<sup>189</sup> 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 the Muhammadan period" must surely be allowed, and among them are the *qaul*, *ghazal*, *tarānah*, and *firu dāsh*. One recalls that Amīr *Khusrau* (d. 725/1325) has been actually censured by the purists of the old Indian school of music for his *Islamic innovations*, and one presumes that the above were among them. The *naqsh*, an ornamental piece of music, was another feature in Amīr *Khusrau's* time, and that and the preceding items would seem to be those specifically Islamic features which Alain Daniélou believes that "no one can seriously speak of their having had any influence" on the development of Northern Indian music. One asks, would that include the *khiyāl*? 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 *ustād* (*virtuoso*). Fox Strangways said that the *khiyāl* received "its highest development" at the hands of the Muslims, having originated with a certain Maḥmūd *Sharqi* of Jaunpūr (d. 844/1440).<sup>190</sup> The names of such modes as '*ushshāq* and *nigār*, together with such technical terms as *basīṭ* and *sarpardah*, are quite alien to Sanskrit. One is prompted to inquire why Sanskrit or Hindi words are not used instead of the Arabic *midrāb* for the "plectrum," and *khāli* for a "rest" in a rhythmic pattern. Why call the drum "brace" the *diwāl* 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 Daniélou'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 *Sangīta Ratnākarā* (seventh/thirteenth century), one will not discover in their pages the *sītār*, *rabāb*, or *tanbūri*. Indeed, the *chargah-sītār* and *tarabdār sītār* bear an unmistakable

<sup>189</sup> A. Daniélou, *Northern India Music*, Johnson, London, 1949, p. 34.

<sup>190</sup> A. H. Fox Strangways, *The Music of Hindustan*, Oxford, 1914, p. 287; cf. Grosset, "Inde," in A. Lavignac, *op. cit.*, p. 266; H. G. Farmer, "The Music of Muslim India," *Urdu Encyclopaedia of Islam*.



Persian likeness. Even the *sharōd* or *sharōd* can be no other than the old Turko-mān *shahrūd* of the fourth/tenth century. All of these instruments as well as the *dūtārah* and *chārtārah* bear names which determine their origin. Grosset claims that the *qānūn* or psaltery was derived from the old Indian *kātyāyāna-vīṇā* or *svara-mandala*:<sup>191</sup> but since the latter is not mentioned in the Sanskrit treatises earlier than the *Sangīta Ratnākara*, which is of later date than the Arabic authorities, the claim for Indian priority is far from convincing. Among the bowed types the *kamānchah* is the most obvious of the borrowed Islamic instruments. The insistence of Grosset that the Sanskrit term *koṇa* stands for both "plectrum" and "bow" cannot be justified, although he claims the *Amara koṣha* (first/seventh century) as his authority for the use of the "bow." Yet Ananda K. Coomaraswamy declares that "no Indian *vīṇā*, whether ancient or modern, was ever played with a bow."<sup>192</sup> The antiquity of the *rāvaṇahasta* as claimed by Fétis, who was foolishly influenced by the mythical *ravanastron* of Sonnerat, was sheer imagination,<sup>193</sup> 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.<sup>194</sup> The Fétis design of a *rāvana* and his so-called *ravanastron* and *omerti* are actually of Chinese provenance, as was his Indian *ṭambourah*.<sup>195</sup> The fact is that the earliest account of the function of the bow is given by al-Fārābī.<sup>196</sup> Passing to wind instruments—the *surna*, *alghūzah*, *moshuk*, *naḥr*, and *karna*—their very names confirm their origin, as do those of the percussion group—the *ṭablah*, *ṭablik*, *naḥrārah*, *duffda*, and *dā'irah*, however much some of these names may have been altered.<sup>197</sup>

The music of the peoples of the Malay Archipelago was also influenced by India, especially Muslim India, on the instrumental side. The bowed *rabāb*, or spike-footed viol, which spread with the adoption of Islam, is known in the various islands as the "rebāb," "repōb," "erbābi," and "arabābu." The lute-like Arab *qabūs* or *qanbūs* and the Turkish *qōpūz* appear as the "gambus," "gabbus," and "kabōsi," whilst the *surnā* or *surnāy* becomes the "serunai," "sarune," "sruni," and "sralai."<sup>198</sup> Further north, when the Mughuls became masters of China (610-770/1213-1368), the instruments of Islamic peoples began to influence that land. Kublai Khān introduced an organ called the *hsing-lung-shēng* into China; it is being expressly mentioned as coming

<sup>191</sup> J. Grosset, *op. cit.*, pp. 344-48.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 341-42; A. K. Coomaraswamy, "The Parts of a Vīṇā," in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, New Haven, Vol. L, p. 248.

<sup>193</sup> F. Sonnerat, *Voyage aux Indes orientales et a la Chine*, Paris, 1782.

<sup>194</sup> F. J. Fétis, *Notice of Anthony Stradivari . . .*, tr. J. Bishop, London, 1864, p. 109.

<sup>195</sup> *Idem*, *Histoire générale de la musique*, Paris, 1869-76, ii, p. 291. See figs. 36, 46, 48.

<sup>196</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Studies in Oriental Musical Instruments*, London, 1931, i, p. 102.

<sup>197</sup> A. Lavignac, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 353-62.

<sup>198</sup> C. Sachs, *Die Musikinstrumente Indiens und Indonesiens*, Berlin, 1923, pp. 110-11, 139, 155-57.



from the "Muslim kingdoms" of the "lands of the West."<sup>199</sup> 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 *tanbūr*), "sai-t'o-erh" (*sītār*), "huo-pu-ssu" (*qōpūz*), "la-pa-pu" (*rabāb*), "ha-erh-cha-k'o" (*ghijjak*), "k'o-erh-nai" (*qānūn*), "su-erh-nai" (*surnāy*), "pa-la-man" (*balāban*), "na-ka-la" (*naghārah*), "ta-pu-la" (*tabl*), and "ta-pu" (*daf*).<sup>200</sup> 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,<sup>201</sup> 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.<sup>202</sup> 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 the Anonymus II (fourth/tenth century) to the 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-Fārābi up to those of ibn Sina and ibn Zailah (d. 440/1048).<sup>203</sup> 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.<sup>204</sup> The reason for that decay has been described by the Muslim historian al-Mas'ūdi (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

<sup>199</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Studies in Oriental Musical Instruments*, London, 1931, i, pp. 30-32; *The Organ of the Ancients*, London, 1931, pp. 75-76.

<sup>200</sup> *Idem*, *Studies in Oriental Musical Instruments*, ii, pp. 7-9.

<sup>201</sup> G. Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science*, Baltimore, Vols. i, ii, iii, s.v.

<sup>202</sup> *Cambridge Mediaeval History*, Cambridge, 1911-36, iv, pp. 152, 773.

<sup>203</sup> As already shown in section C.

<sup>204</sup> Even the productions of those who followed immediately, the Venerable Bede, Alcuin, and Hrabanus Maurus, are mere plagiarisms, forgeries, or patch-works. See H. G. Farmer, *Historical Facts . . .*, pp. 214-28.

music."<sup>205</sup> This is not a biased picture by a Muslim. The facts can be proved up to the hilt by Christian historians who had the *ipsissima verba* of the Fathers of the Church before their very eyes. Tertullian (d. c. 240 A.D.) decried Pagan literature,<sup>206</sup> 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."<sup>207</sup> Saint Jerome (d. 440 A.D.) was warned not to dabble in heathen literature,<sup>208</sup> although he actually lamented that so few knew of Plato and Aristotle.<sup>209</sup> Even Saint Augustine (d. 430 A.D.) pandered to his readers saying, "Heaven is for the ignorant."<sup>210</sup> Cassian (d. 480 A.D.) reveals that the decrees against Pagan literature were still being observed.<sup>211</sup> Even sixty years later Saint Benedict (d. c. 544 A.D.) recommends only the Bible and expositions thereon to be read by the Catholic Fathers.<sup>212</sup> It has been admitted that "at no time have the general mass of Benedictines been learned."<sup>213</sup>

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 Martianus Capella, Bōethius, Cassiodorus, and Isidore of Seville,<sup>214</sup> whereas the scholars at the "Home of Learning" (*Bait al-Hikmah*) at Baghdād had made Arabic translations of the works on music by Aristotle, Aristoxenus, Nicomachus, Euclid, Cleonides, and probably Ptolemy and Aristides Quintilianus by the third/ninth century.<sup>215</sup> We have seen how both Euclid's *Canon* and Aristotle's *De Anima* had been the subject of Arabic commentaries (*shurūḥ*), and all were part of collegiate studies in Islamic lands, since music (*'ilm al-mūsīqi*) was part of the course of mathematics (*riyāḍiyāt*), i.e., the *quadrivium* of medieval European studies.<sup>216</sup>

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

<sup>205</sup> Al-Mas'ūdi, *Les Prairies d'or*, Paris, 1861-77, ii, p. 320.

<sup>206</sup> *Patrologiae . . . Series Latina*, i, p. 673.

<sup>207</sup> *Constitutiones Anostolorum*, Leipzig, 1862, Book I, Chap. 6.

<sup>208</sup> *Patrologiae . . . Series Latina*, xxii, p. 406.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, xxvi, p. 428.

<sup>210</sup> "Indocti coelum rapiunt."

<sup>211</sup> *Patrologiae . . . Series Latina*, lxxi, p. 161.

<sup>212</sup> *Regula Sancta Benedicti*, c. 8. Waitzmann edit., 1843, p. 32.

<sup>213</sup> R. R. C. Butler, *Benedictine Monasticism*, London, 1919, p. 337.

<sup>214</sup> As already shown in section C.

<sup>215</sup> Incidentally, Nicomachus, Theon of Smyrna, and probably Aristides came from Syria or Asia Minor, whilst Euclid and Ptolemy belonged to Egypt.

<sup>216</sup> H. G. Farmer, "Greek Theorists of Music in Arabic Translation," *Isis*, xiii, 1930. Roger Bacon deplored that the scientific works of Aristotle and others were unknown in Latin, *Opus Ternium*, p. 55.

mono-rhyme in Arabic,<sup>217</sup> while the ignorance of his clergy was deplorable.<sup>218</sup> 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.<sup>219</sup> The Monk of Angoulême 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.<sup>220</sup> In Muslim Spain the cultural atmosphere was far different. Šā'id ibn Aḥmad al-Qarṭabi (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.”<sup>221</sup> Ibn al-Ḥijāri (d. 590/1194) testifies that under the Umayyad regime in al-Andalus (second-fifth/eighth–eleventh centuries) “students from all parts of the world flocked . . . to learn the sciences of which Cordova was the most noble repository, to derive knowledge from the mouths of the doctors and ‘ulamā’ who swarmed in it.”<sup>222</sup> What was taught specifically of the theory of music we do not know. The treatises of al-Fārābi, the Ikhwān al-Šafa, ibn Sīna, and the later abu al-Šalt Umayyah, ibn Bājjah, and ibn Rušhd were available to all, most of these authors being known by their Europeanized names as Alfarabius, Avicenna, Avempace, and Averröes. (See H. Abert, *Musikanschauung des Mittelalters*, Halle, 1905, pp. 143, 169.) In spite of the destruction of Arabic manuscripts by Cardinal Ximenes in 898/1492 *et seq.*, a few manuscripts on music theory have survived, notably that of al-Fārābi, the “Major Book on Music” (*Kitāb al-Mūsīqi al-Kabīr*), now preserved at Madrid, being a sixth/twelfth-century copy made for a pupil of ibn Bājjah (Avempace).<sup>223</sup> Al-Fārābi's treatment of the physical bases of sound, also dealt with by the Ikhwān al-Šafa, was a notable advance in that particular sphere.<sup>224</sup> 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 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,<sup>225</sup> although al-Kindi had dealt with the lute in that fashion a century earlier.<sup>226</sup> In a Persian treatise, the “Treasure-House of

<sup>217</sup> *España Sagrada*, as cited.

<sup>218</sup> C. Lafuente, *Historia general de España*, Madrid, 1850–62, iv, p. 342.

<sup>219</sup> C. Pfister, *Études sur la règne de Robert le Pieux*, Paris, 1885, p. 2.

<sup>220</sup> J. B. Mullinger, *The Schools of Charles the Great*, London, 1877, pp. 39, 69.

<sup>221</sup> Al-Maqqari, . . . *The Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain*, London, 1840–43, i, pp. 117–18.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, i, p. 30.

<sup>223</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Sources of Arabian Music*, Bearsden, 1940, p. 34.

<sup>224</sup> As already shown in section C.

<sup>225</sup> Al-Maqqari, . . . *The Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain*, i, pp. 43, 197, ii, p. 148.

<sup>226</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Studies in Oriental Musical Instruments*, Glasgow, 1939, ii, pp. 47–48, 90–92.



Rarities" (*Kanz al-Tuhaf*), dating from the eighth/fourteenth 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 facture, 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'īd 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 for 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 Mudéjars and Mozarabes, who were, respectively, the Muslims who remained in the reconquered Christian Spain, and the Spaniards and Portugese who lived under Muslim rule, much would have been passed on orally. One outstanding man in the former group was Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Riqūṭi, who, when the Christian armies took Murcia in 640/1242, was retained by the Christian king to teach in his schools, he himself being famed as a music theorist and mathematician.<sup>227</sup> 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 may 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 to abandon European schools and seek the fountain-head in Muslim Spain.<sup>228</sup> Two Arabic tractates on the sciences which contained a section on music were translated into Latin, viz., al-Fārābī's "Register of the Sciences" (*Iḥṣā' al-'Ulūm*) and an anonymous "On the Rise of the Sciences" (*De ortu scientiarum*), both of which became formal text-books in European schools. Neither was of much value *per se*, since each merely outlined the bases of study.<sup>229</sup> Yet they were quoted by Gundisalvus, Magister Lambert (Pseudo-Aristotle), Vincent de Beauvais, Roger Bacon, Jerome of Moravia, Walter of Oddington, and others.<sup>230</sup>

The Islamic impact on musical instruments has already been shown,

<sup>227</sup> M. Casiri, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 8-82.

<sup>228</sup> J. S. Brewer, *F. Roger Bacon: Opera quaedam hactenus inedita*, London, 1859, i, pp. lix-lxxxvii.

<sup>229</sup> L. Ellinwood, "Ars Musica," *Speculum*, Cambridge, U.S.A., 1945, Vol. xx, pp. 290 *et seq.*

<sup>230</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Al-Fārābī's Arabic-Latin Writings on Music*, Glasgow, 1934, pp. 31-34.

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, Dr. P. Patrocinio Garcia Barriuso, that the music of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunis is not "Arabian music."<sup>231</sup> 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, Ishāq al-Mausili, Ziryāb, ibn al-Munajjim, al-Kindi, and al-Fārābi, a "sisteme model diatonico 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 us about the Khurāsānian scale of Ṣafi al-Din with its seventeen intervals to the octave, of which Europe was *au fait* so early as Sir John Chardin (1123/1711) and about the quasi-Arabian quarter-tone system, really Turkish, which succeeded the preceding in the eleventh/seventeenth century, the latter being illustrated by Dr. Barriuso, who copies a diagram from a music treatise of Kāmil al-Khulā'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 Baghdād scholars had translated from Greek into Arabic the Muristus treatises on the organ and hydraulis. Such works enabled the Arabs to construct similar instruments which led to some interesting results. An organ or hydraulis was being used in the Caliph's palace at Baghdād in the time of Princess 'Ulayyah (d. 210/825),<sup>232</sup> and there is evidence that organ-constructors were known in Syria during the sixth/twelfth century.<sup>233</sup> 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.),<sup>234</sup> because the Greeks had adopted a weighted blast-bag instead of hydraulic pressure. Could the resurgence of the hydraulis in the third/ninth century have been due to the Arabic translations of Muristus?<sup>235</sup> Amédée Gastoué says that "the makers of the first large organs in the Occident in the third/ninth century were, without doubt, either Greeks or Syrians";

<sup>231</sup> *La musica hispano-musulmana en Marruecos*, Madrid, 1950, pp. 9-14.

<sup>232</sup> Al-Iṣfahāni, *Kitāb al-Aghāni* (Sāsi edit.), Cairo, 1905-06, ix, p. 90.

<sup>233</sup> Ibn abi Uṣaibi'ah, *Uyūn al-Anbā'*, Königsberg, 1882-84, ii, pp. 155, 163.

<sup>234</sup> H. G. Farmer, *The Organ of the Ancients*, London, 1931, pp. 146-57.

<sup>235</sup> *Idem*, "Muristus," *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, v, p. 1008.

and since he shows that the hydraulis had died out by that time among the Greeks, the greater probability rests with the Syrians as the revivers.<sup>236</sup>

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 on those frets as we see in the "Treatise on Music" (*Risālah fi al-Mūsīqi*) of ibn al-Munajjim (d. 300/912),<sup>237</sup> which the author specifically stated was based on the system of Ishāq al-Mausili (d. 235/850) who was the teacher of Ziryāb (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.<sup>238</sup> No wonder that the latter has been attributed even to the Arabs,<sup>239</sup> or to the Semitic Orient.<sup>240</sup> 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-Hucbald.<sup>241</sup> Later, the Arabic influence on an alphabetic tablature for stringed instruments is openly admitted in a Latin manuscript entitled *Ars de pulsatione lambuti*<sup>242</sup> 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."<sup>243</sup> 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."<sup>244</sup> 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" (*nār*).<sup>245</sup> This terminology belongs to the doctrine of the ethos (*tāthīr*) as related to music, firmly believed in by Islamic peoples up to the present day.<sup>246</sup> The general influence of Islamic culture on Gerbert of Aurillac (d. 394/1003) and Constantine the African (d. 480/1087) is not

<sup>236</sup> A. Gastoué, in Lavignac, *op. cit.*, pp. 546, 571-72; H. G. Farmer, "Hydraulis," *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, iv, p. 425.

<sup>237</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Studies in Oriental Musical Instruments*, ii, p. 47.

<sup>238</sup> M. Gerbert, *Scriptores*, St. Blasien, 1784, i, p. 118. See H. G. Farmer, *Historical Facts . . .*, pp. 318-19.

<sup>239</sup> J. F. Rowbotham, *History of Music*, London, 1885-87, iii, p. 547.

<sup>240</sup> J. Jeanin, *Mémoires liturgiques syriennes et chaldéennes*, p. 107.

<sup>241</sup> M. Gerbert, *op. cit.*, i, p. 213.

<sup>242</sup> Probably *sambuca* (a lute).

<sup>243</sup> J. Villanueva, *Viage literario a las Iglesias de Espana*, Valencia, 1921, xi.

<sup>244</sup> Morphy, *Les Luthistes espagnols du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Leipzig, 1902, pp. xi, xvii.

<sup>245</sup> M. Gerbert, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 249-50.

<sup>246</sup> H. G. Farmer, *The Influence of Music from Arabic Sources*, Reeves, London, 1926, iii, p. 49.



unworthy of notice. The former studied the mathematical sciences (*matheses*) at Barcelona, and that included music,<sup>247</sup> which had been neglected in France.<sup>248</sup> Indeed, he had been dubbed "Gerbert the Musician."<sup>249</sup> Constantine was born at Tunis (Carthage), then held by the Muslim Zairids. He spent thirty-nine years in the East among the Chaldaeans, Arabs, Persians, and Egyptians, and studied their sciences, including music. Because of his settling in Sicily and at Monte Cassino in Italy, his writings had considerable influence on European culture.<sup>250</sup> One theorist who used him was Aegidius Zamorensis (seventh/thirteenth century), a *protégé* of the Arabophile Alphonso X el-Sabio,<sup>251</sup> 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 learnt "chiefly from Iraquian (Chaldaean) and Egyptian books."<sup>252</sup>

The music practised 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 (*taḥsīn*) was the art in which the Moorish *virtuoso* excelled. His "excesses" (*zawā'id*)—as those *melismata* were called—were usually vocalized on such words as *ai* or *laila*, which were introduced even into Spanish songs. (See E. L. Chavarri, *Musica Popular Espanola*, Barcelona, 1927, p. 36.) All sorts of tricks prevailed—the *mabtūrah* (staccato), *istirāḥah* (repose), *shadhharah* (short, soft note), and the *nabrah* (a glottal catch like the *coup de glotte*).<sup>253</sup> This last may possibly be the device hinted at by Magister Lambert, which Merchettus of Padua calls a "feigned voice."<sup>254</sup> On the other hand, it may have been the "embellishment" known to the Arabs and Moors as the *shahājah* (a whining sound), which was accomplished by the singers making a swift *glissando* from a low note to its fourth, fifth, or octave.<sup>255</sup> This latter was in partial accord with the instrumental device known as the *tarkīb* (to organize), a term which equates with the Latin *organum*. We see this *tarkīb* illustrated by al-Kindi under the name of *jass*, which meant plucking two lute strings with the thumb and forefinger.<sup>256</sup> Ibn Sina gave the name *tarkīb* only to the simultaneously struck fourth or fifth, whilst striking with the octave was called the *taḍ'īf*.<sup>257</sup> In

<sup>247</sup> Richer and His Times, Paris, 1845.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, p. 42.

<sup>249</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Historical Facts . . .*, 1930, pp. 177–85.

<sup>250</sup> A. L. M. Jourdain, *Recherches critiques sur . . . Aristote*, Paris, 1819, p. 502; H. G. Farmer, *Historical Facts . . .*, pp. 36–37.

<sup>251</sup> M. Gerbert, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 369.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, p. 370.

<sup>253</sup> R. d'Erlanger, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 86–94.

<sup>254</sup> C. E. H. de Coussemaker, *Scriptorum de musica*, Paris, 1864–76, i, p. 273; M. Gerbert, *op. cit.*, iii, p. 181.

<sup>255</sup> R. d'Erlanger, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 91.

<sup>256</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Historical Facts . . .*, p. 104; al-Khwārizmi, *op. cit.*, Leiden, 1895, p. 239.

<sup>257</sup> R. d'Erlanger, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 230–31; H. G. Farmer, *Historical Facts . . .*, p. 103.

other words, he recognized the distinction between "organizing" and "magazining." It was that Arabian and Moorish *tarkīb* which, most likely, prompted the European "organum," although with the Muslims the *tarkīb* was, at that time, simply an "embellishment." Today, the music of the Turkomān 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 (*īqā'āt*) in music, six in number, had existed since the first/seventh century; two more were added later.<sup>258</sup> Up to the third/ninth century the singer and instrumental accompanist observed the same rhythm, but Ibrāhīm ibn al-Mahdi (d. 224/839) and his Romantic school introduced schemes whereby a singer and the accompanist used different rhythms.<sup>259</sup> When to that contrariety there was added a further diversity in the prosody (*'arūd*) of the verse, a performance became more than intriguing, and H. G. Farmer has given an illustration of that in an article on *īqā'āt* in the *Urdu Encyclopaedia of Islam* and in *Grove's Dictionary of Music* (1374/1954).<sup>260</sup> 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 (*muwāfiqah*) in the variegated rhythmical and prosodical structure of song and in the tonal differences of the rhythmic beats (*ḍurūb*). 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 *muṭrib* in their rhythms. In the very nature of things the beats of the plectrum (*midrāb*) on the lute or pandore strings, or the taps on the tambourine or drum, often left intermediate silences (*sukūn*), which were the very antitheses of the sustained notes of the melody. It was because of that circumstance that Europe—after it had adopted mensural music—called the Moorish *īqā'* by the name of *cantus abscisus*: hence Simon of Tunstede's chapter called *De truncationibus sive hocketis*.<sup>261</sup> The latter word, "hocket," "hoquet," or "ochetto," is simply a phonetic reproduction of the Arabic *īqā'āt*, a fact which European scholars only very tardily acknowledge,<sup>262</sup> although H. G. Farmer had claimed that derivation as far back as 1344/1925.<sup>263</sup> Most of them still adhere to the nonsensical—when it is not actually laughable—derivation from the English

<sup>258</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Sa'adyah Gaon on the Influence of Music*, London, 1943, Chap. 9; G. Reese, *Music in the Middle Ages*, 1941, p. 274.

<sup>259</sup> Al-Iṣfahāni, *op. cit.*, v, p. 53.

<sup>260</sup> *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, v, p. 874.

<sup>261</sup> E. de Coussemaker, *Scriptores . . .*, Paris, 1864-76, iv, p. 296.

<sup>262</sup> G. Reese, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

<sup>263</sup> H. G. Farmer, *The Arabian Influence on Musical Theory*, London, 1925, p. 17.

"hiccough" or "hickup."<sup>264</sup> We see the same intrusion of the "h" in "hocket" as in Latin translation of Avicenna's "Canon" (*Qānūn*) where 'ishq becomes "hash." Of course, not all of the Moorish rhythms were borrowed by Europe. Such an outlandish design as the *mākhūri* of al-Kindi or the *khafīf 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/twelfth century,"<sup>265</sup> 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 "notation" for the latter, save a cumbersome tablature and onomatopoeia,<sup>266</sup> up till the seventh/thirteenth century, when an alphabetic (*abjadi*) and numeric (*'adadi*) notation or tablature was introduced.<sup>267</sup> Concerning the *hoquetus vulgaris*, it is worth recalling what Jerome of Moravia (seventh/thirteenth century) quotes on the authority of Franco of Cologne (fifth-sixth/eleventh-twelfth 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 *iqā'āt*, 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 *iqā'āt* 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 some novel outlook from Arabian or Mozarabian sources, as H. G. Farmer pointed out in 1344/1925.<sup>268</sup> 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

<sup>264</sup> *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, 1954, iv, p. 309, in spite of H. G. Farmer's statement in v, p. 874.

<sup>265</sup> *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, 1904, vi, p. 116.

<sup>266</sup> H. G. Farmer, *Sa'adyah Gaon . . .*, 1943, pp. 73-76.

<sup>267</sup> *Idem*, in *New Oxford History of Music*, 1957, i, pp. 453-55.

<sup>268</sup> *Idem*, *The Arabian Influence on Musical Theory*, pp. 17-18.



symbols.<sup>269</sup> The words are Arabic, although only the first of them appears in the fifth/eleventh-century *Glossarium Latino-Arabicum*, under the term *al-ma'rūjah* which equates with "nota."<sup>270</sup> It may be identified with the form *al-ma'riyah* (cognition).<sup>271</sup> It is explained in "Anonymous IV" as having "a stroke on the left side in descending, just as the English depict it."<sup>272</sup> As for "elmuahym," that word looks suspiciously like *al-mubhim* (shutting) or rather *al-mubham* (locked, closed).<sup>273</sup> In the Latin translation of the Arabic of Euclid's *Elements* the word "elmuahym" 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 or/and 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.<sup>274</sup>

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/twelfth century) and Perotin, his successor (seventh/thirteenth century). Gustave Reese sees in the "currentes" of Leonin a synonymy with the "elmuahym" and "elmuarifa,"<sup>275</sup> i.e., that it "may owe something to Arabian sources, by way of the troubadour influence,"<sup>276</sup> whilst in Perotin, "the quick-moving upper parts would seem to suggest some troubadour and folk influence."<sup>277</sup> One of the last tributes to the music of Islamic peoples by A. H. Fox Strangways, the author of *The Music of Hindustān*, 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."<sup>278</sup> Yet whatever the "pros" and "cons" in the subject may be, both East and West agree fully in their praise of music, and Walter de Odington (eighth/fourteenth century) quotes Avicenna (ibn Sīna) side by side with

<sup>269</sup> E. de Coussemaker, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 339-41.

<sup>270</sup> Ed. C. F. Seybold, Berlin, 1900, p. 337.

<sup>271</sup> In grammar it stood for "a determinate noun."

<sup>272</sup> E. de Coussemaker, *op. cit.*, i, p. 339.

<sup>273</sup> In grammar it stood for "a noun of indication," i.e., a demonstrative pronoun.

<sup>274</sup> E. de Coussemaker, *op. cit.*, i, p. 340.

<sup>275</sup> *Music in the Middle Ages*, London, 1941, p. 298.

<sup>276</sup> *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, 1954, v, p. 138.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, vi, p. 675.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, v, p. 897.

St. Gregory, St. Bernard, and the Psalmist, saying: "Inter omnia exercitia sanitatis cantare melius est."<sup>279</sup>

<sup>279</sup> E. de Coussemaker, *op. cit.*, i, p. 193.

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## Chapter LIX

### 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 relationship 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 'Abbāsids, and the Fāṭimids, therefore, artists flocked to Damascus, Baghdād, and Cairo which alternately became centres 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 centre 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, perhaps, 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 centre of activity, the artists deserted it and proceeded to other centres 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 deprived 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 moulded 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 practised 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 phenomenon related to artistic activity in Muslim countries.

It is generally believed that the fall of the 'Abbāsids 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 'Abbāsids 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 inherited, as it were, the cultural and the artistic legacy of the 'Abbāsid Caliphate, resulted after a century or so in the creation of conditions which were favourable 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 Šafawids 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 Kūfic, deriving its name from Kūfah 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'ān which has come down to us is in Kūfic characters. This style of calligraphy with angular letters remained popular for many centuries amongst the Islamic peoples.

After the fifth/eleventh century the Kūfic script gave place everywhere almost invariably to *naskh* with rounded letters in sharp contrast to the angularities of the Kūfic 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 Saljūqs, however, generally emphasized in their calligraphy the vertical as distinguished from the horizontal. The type of illumination and calligraphy found under the Saljūqs is varied, rich, and extremely beautiful since the Iranian genius could fall back upon the tradition of Māni. Māni (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 Māni'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'ān of this period was prepared by abu al-Qāsim 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'līq*: the characters in this type of writing tend to slope downward from right to left. *Ta'līq* flourished but *naskh* also remained in use especially in religious texts.

It is the irony of fate that the descendants of Hulāgu, who was responsible for massacring millions of Muslims and killing the last 'Abbāsid Caliph, became the patrons of calligraphy when they embraced Islam.

These convert kings known as Ī-Khāns 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 Ī-Khāns (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 favourite colours being gold and blue. It may be remembered that the use of gold-dust was a peculiar feature of the book-illuminations produced by Māni's followers. There is no doubt that the Iranian artists never forgot their national heritage and used the background colours—mainly gold and blue—in sharp contrast to other colours in the foreground with great dexterity and sensibility.

It was during the rule of Timūrids in Iran that calligraphy really came into its own. The princes of the House of Timūr were polished diplomats, skilful 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 developed type of writing combining the elegance, vigour, 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 Timūr, namely, Sultān Husain, is justly celebrated for being one of the greatest patrons of arts and learning. Sultān 'Ali Meshedi, the famous calligraphist, was a protégé of his. Other celebrated calligraphers of the period were Ja'far of Tabriz, 'Abd al-Karim, and Sultān Ibrāhīm (son of *Shāh Rukh*). The story goes that Sultān Ibrāhīm was capable of writing in six different styles. A copy of the Qur'ān written by him in 828/1424 is preserved in the shrine of Imām Ridā' (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 Sāssānian tradition—however, remained a constant feature.

Calligraphy and illumination as developed under the patronage of the Timūrids continued to flourish also under the Ṣafawids, who were contemporaries of the Great Mughuls and who gave to India the gift of miniature painting. One of the most famous calligraphers of the Ṣafawid period was Mīr 'Ali of Herāt who prepared a manuscript of one of Jāmi's famous *Mathnawīs*.

The art of the book—calligraphy and illumination—found its most worthy and celebrated exponent in Mīr 'Imād Kātib 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 *Shāh 'Abbās* many manuscripts revealing superb skill and unique craftsmanship. His rival 'Ali Ridā' 'Abbāsi—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 Ṣafawids and reached the culminating point of the development of the Sāssānian tradition. Maḥmūd, a celebrated painter and calligraphist of Bukhāra, appended to his signature the cognomen *Mudhahhib*. Sikandar Munshi, the celebrated historian of the Ṣafawid princes, opines that "Ḥasan Baghdādi was unmatched, unsurpassed, 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 practised by Ṣafawid artists may here be named: stencilling 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 coloured 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 important 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 *warrāq* 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 Tīmūrīds. The artists of the Herāt 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 Ṣafawīds 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 Ṣafawīds 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 water-colour painting. Again, the water-colour was given several layers of lacquer so that climatic changes may not prove damaging to a fine work of art.

Ustād Muḥammad 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 centre 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 Sāssānians (226–641 A. D.) who were justly celebrated for the grandeur of their architecture and the splendour 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 Sāssānian 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 because when pottery came into its own in the third/ninth century it was in Mesopotamia that it found its most skilful exponents and designers. Pottery fragments found in Sāmarra show signs of great skill and craftsmanship. Not only the variety of the different specimens of the potter's art found at Sāmarra is interesting and significant but it so appears, that there were certain secrets pertaining to the manufacture of lustre 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 Fāṭimid Sultāns. By a curious anomaly of fate the descendants of these immigrant artists again came to Persia after the collapse of the Fāṭimids and brought to this country a skill which had been vastly improved in the congenial atmosphere of Egypt under the Fāṭimids from 359–567/969–1171.

The conquest of the Near East by the Arabs was responsible for the evolution 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 'Abbāsids, 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 colour, 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. Nishāpūr was a great centre of this branch of art and excavations made reveal that even before the advent of the Saljūqs, the potter's art had achieved maturity if not that consummate elegance which was to characterize the products of the Saljūq period.

The greatest contribution of the Muslim potters is the lustre technique. It would appear that the Muslim potters were infatuated with the patterns created by light—"light mysteriously refracted by their lustre 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.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Lane, *Early Islamic Pottery*, Faber and Faber, London, n.d.

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."<sup>2</sup>

After Nishāpūr it was Kāshān which became the centre of the activity of the potters of the Saljūq period. It was here that the potters gradually learnt the art of manufacturing wall-tiles painted in lustre. The origin of lustre-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 Kāshān 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 Fustāt (it was at the same time a city of some importance under the Fāṭimid rulers) with Iranian pottery and glazed tiles, we arrive at the conclusion that the Iranian artists showed greater skill in execution and maturer sense of colour.

The glazed tiles of Persia, especially of Kāshān, 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 Kāshān lustre-ware is justifiably praised for technical perfection. 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 *mihrābs* in the sanctuary of Imām Riḍā' at Meshed are perhaps the most elegant examples of the Iranian artists' skill so far as glazed tiles are concerned. These were made by Muḥammad abi Ṭāhir.

During the Mongol period lustred 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., the *faience* mosaic, which became very popular.

The technique of the Mongol era was followed by the artists of the Timūrid 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 Ṣafawid period Iranian artists continued to imitate the Chinese ware and the imitation was sometimes so skilful 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 Shāh 'Abbās the Great the art of lustre-painting, however, was revived by the potters of Iṣfahān. Typically Iranian decoration came into

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



vogue. Iranian landscape with birds, animals, and foliage came into its own. The products of these Iṣfahāni 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 'Abbāsids, Ṭūlūnids, and the Fāṭimids 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 skilful technicians and weavers, were pressed into the service of the Arab Caliphs and noblemen. They taught and practised the weaver's art in royal factories, known technically as Ṭirāz factories. It is necessary to point out, at this juncture that the term "Ṭirāz" 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 "Ṭirāz" is kept in view, one is liable to get confused.

The importance of the Ṭirāz 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 Ṭirāz factories, having been established in Egypt and working under the skilful 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 colours for saddle cloth and for covering the litters for the Caliphs. Every year the 'Abbāsīd Caliphs sent a covering for the Ka'bah at Mecca known technically as *Kiswah* manufactured by the craftsmen of the Royal factories established in Tuna. Another city famous for its silks was Dabīqi; the term "Dabīqi" is mentioned very often in Persian lyrics and Arabic odes. Fustāṭ or old Cairo was also a celebrated centre of the weaver's art.

During the regime of the Fāṭimids, the Egyptian craftsmen surpassed their Coptic masters. The linens and silks of the Fāṭimid period became so elegant and fine that they were exported to all parts of the civilized world. Generally-speaking, the Fāṭimid artists followed the artists of the 'Abbāsīd regime in the sense that they used either geometrical patterns or figures of animals for decorative purposes, although the Kūfic writing was also observed flanking the decorated pattern. When *naskh* replaced the Kūfic 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 skilfully manufactured. These inscriptions were occasionally in liquid gold, again reminding us that the Sāssānian traditions were very strong even under the Fāṭimids. The technique of stamping and printing decorations on fabrics was developed to such an extent by the Fāṭimid 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 Ayyūbid and Mamlūk 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 Fāṭimid embroideries in polychrome silk or gold thread.

Stamping and printing were also practised 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 Mamlūk Sultāns of Egypt especially favoured the Chinese style of decoration.

(c) *Iranian Textiles.*—When Ṭirāz 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 Sāssānian craftsmen very soon adapted themselves to the new conditions and began to produce incomparable works of art. During the earlier period Merv and Nishāpūr housed famous Ṭirāz factories.

The Iranian artists of these cities produced silk textiles which appear to have been influenced by the fusion of many artistic traditions—the Sāssānian, the Coptic, and the Egyptian. The use of the gold thread is certainly reminiscent of the Sāssānian 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 Sāmān became a great centre of intellectual activity, learning, and cultural movements.

Under the Great Saljūqs, the Iranian artists proceeded from strength to strength. There was a revival of almost all crafts and minor arts, and Rayy during this period became the most celebrated weaving centre. The Sāssānian 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 Baghdād also was a famous centre of the weaver's art during this period, since Marco Polo (seventh/thirteenth century) praises the silks, linens, and gold brocades of Baghdād 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 Saljūqs: 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 Qūniyah.

It is an admitted fact that the Mongol invaders of Persia patronized the craftsmen and the artisans and massacred the learned and the erudite, considering 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 Timūrid 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 Timūrids; 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 splendour under the Ṣafawids who had become infatuated with craftsmanship of all types except that of words since poetry excluding the elegy was looked at askance by them. Ṣafawid 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 Ṣafawid 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 *Shāhnāmeḥ*. Nizāmi seems to have been one of the most favourite authors; incidents 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 colours.

Under Shāh 'Abbās the Great who was a generous patron of all Fine Arts, artists manufactured textiles of great beauty in Yazd and Kāshān. Some of these fabrics have come down to us and we know also the names of some artists, for example, Ghiyāth 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 Ṣafawids, especially during the reign of Shāh 'Abbās, constituted the most glorious fabrics ever produced in any part of the world.

Under the Ṣafawids the Iranian artists also developed the art of embroidering and printing cottons. Many specimens of block-printed cotton hangings known



technically as *qalamkār* have come down to us and it appears that they were made most probably in Iṣfahān, Hamadān, 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 skilful 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 Mughuls, both Iranian and Hindu motifs became clearly discernible in fabrics manufactured in India. During the period of Shāh Jahān very fine velvet was produced. The decoration consisted primarily of floral scrolls.

Silk brocades were the speciality of the Indian artists under the Mughuls. We know on undisputable authority of abu al-Faḍl and others that Lahore, Aurangabad, Benares, and Ahmedabad were great weaving centres. Silk brocades were very skilfully designed with vivid colours and abundant use of gold. The elegant *sārīs* and head-dresses and sashes (*shāsh*) manufactured during the Mughul 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 Kashmīr shawls, some of them embroidered and others woven.

The art of block-printing and resist-dyeing reached its zenith under the Mughuls. 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 Fustāt 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 Saljūqs 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 Saljūq Turks, barbarian by origin, were responsible for reviving many major and minor arts throughout their territorial possessions. The Saljūq rugs have simple decorative patterns—interlacing arabesque, geometrical figures, and medallions.

As is the case with textiles, very few rugs of the Timūrid 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 Timūrids. As a matter of fact, spring with all its beauty, colours, 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 Şafawids. Tabrīz was the centre of Iranian arts and crafts and it was here that the weavers of Kāshān, Hamadān and Herāt would learn the craft of rug-making and go back to their homes to spread this artistic activity throughout the possessions of the Şafawids.

The most celebrated types of rugs manufactured under the Şafawids may be grouped as follows: (i) medallion and animal rugs with arabesque and floral designs, (ii) woollen 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 Mughuls rug-making or carpet-making in India became very favourite with kings and princes and abu al-Fadl, eulogizing Akbar, writes that "all kinds of carpet weavers have settled here and drive a flourishing trade. These are found in every town, especially in Agra, Fatehpur, and Lahore."

Some of the Mughul rugs have been preserved, particularly those in the collection of the Mahārājah of Jaipūr. Dimand is of opinion that "in technical perfection the Indian weavers of the time of Shāh Jehān 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 Sulaimān (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 Şafawid 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 Sāssānian influence.

The most celebrated specimen of wood-carving produced during the early 'Abbāsid regime is the prayer pulpit in the mosque of Qairawān situated in North Africa which, it would appear, was brought from Baghdād during the third/ninth century along with some lusted 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 Baghdād School and was most probably executed under the patronage of Hārūn, the 'Abbāsid 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 'Abbāsid period.

Gradually, the 'Abbāsid artists developed a style of their own and freed themselves from the fetters imposed upon them by the Sāssānian and Hellenistic conventions. The 'Abbāsid style of decoration was imitated by the Egyptian artists under the Tūlūnids (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 'Abbāsid 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 labour.

Some of the panels of wood made during the Fāṭimid regime are magnificently 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 Ayyūbid period the Fāṭimid tradition continued to influence wood-carving with the difference that arabesque scrolls became more delicate, fine, and complicated, and *naskh* replaced Kūfic 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 Maḥmūd 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 Saljūq 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 favourably 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 Ṣafawids but in the eleventh/seventeenth and the twelfth/eighteenth centuries signs of decline were noticeable: 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 Fāṭimid, Ayyūbid, and Mamlūk 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 sombre 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 Sāssānian 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 Sāssānian era. However, it is easy enough to distinguish earlier Islamic metal-work from the Sāssānian because vessels which are decorated with Kūfic inscriptions, birds, interlaced arabesque, 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 Sāmānids who were responsible 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 Saljūq 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 Saljūq 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 centres 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 Fāṭimid period consists mainly of jewelry and is relatively very rare. Some specimens are to be found in the Harari Collection mentioned above.

It is interesting to note that some of the metal-work under the Ayyūbid Sultāns 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 Ṣafawids, 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 Ṣafawid 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 skilfully executed glass-ware. The Muslim artists learnt the various techniques of decorating glass from the local artists.

Excavations made at Susa, Rayy, and Sāva have given to us specimens of glass-work which prove that the Iranian artists continued to walk in the footsteps of their Sāssānian masters and even copied the Sāssānian 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 undecorated 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 Fāṭimids the glass industry reached its zenith. Excavations at Fustāt 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 Fāṭimid period was the decoration of glass with lustre-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 Kūfic inscriptions, sometimes painted in brown lustre and sometimes in silver, reveal great skill.

The cut decoration was also perfected by the Fātimid artists.

There were signs of deterioration of this art under the Mongols and the Tīmūrids and it was under Shāh 'Abbās 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 Shirāz and Isfahān were the greatest centres of the glass-maker's art. After the Şafawids, industrialized Europe gave the quietus to this branch of artistic activity in the East.

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## Part 3. Social Studies

### Chapter LX

#### 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 works,<sup>1</sup> which in itself is a fair indication of the importance attached by Muslim scholarship to history. A comparison between the output 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 with 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 endeavour to exaggerate the achievement of Islam by belittling pre-Islamic Arab effort; even the silence of Muslim writers was suspected. 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."<sup>2</sup> 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 *akhbār* 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, *akhbār* 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 *tārīkh*, 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.<sup>3</sup> This significance of the word has not yet been lost; indeed, the word *tārīkh* is used more often in the meaning of a date than of history. It is obvious that without 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

<sup>1</sup> C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, 2 Vols., Weimar, 1898; Berlin, 1902; *ibid.*, *Supplementbände*, 3 Vols., Leiden, 1937-42; C. A. Storey, *Persian Literature, A Bibliographical Survey*, London, 1935-59; F. Babinger, *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre 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.

<sup>2</sup> Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, Leiden, 1952, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> A. Jaussen and R. Savignac, *Mission Archeologique en Arabie*, Vol. II, Paris, 1909-14, Minaon Inscription No. 32.



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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup>

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

<sup>4</sup> Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 66, n. 5.

<sup>5</sup> The main argument in favour 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.

<sup>6</sup> The work that has come down through an Arabic translation is *Khwātainamak*, 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 *Shah Nāmeḥ* 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.



missions of the prophets who had come before Muhammad.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> 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 a 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 prophets<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup> 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 a 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

<sup>7</sup> This is inherent in the Muslim belief, based upon the Qur'an, v, 48; vii, 30, etc.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, v, 68ff., etc.

<sup>9</sup> *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."

<sup>10</sup> Qur'an, e.g., vi, 6; x, 70ff.; xi, 25ff.; xix, 74; xxix, 20ff.; xxx, 9, 42-47; xxxv, 44, 45, etc., etc.

human race, the second plan for the entire humanity. The very pattern of religious progress changes after Muḥammad, 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, 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'ān enjoined that there should be a body among the Muslims dedicated to the task of preaching the truth;<sup>11</sup> indeed, the Muslims themselves were to form a nation to invite others to accept the truth and to set an example for the world.<sup>12</sup> Muḥammad 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 Muḥammad or through him? And what was the truth that had come before? How far did it conform to the message of the Qur'ān? How much of the truth claimed by the previous religions was interpolation,

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, 104.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, 110.

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'ān 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'ān.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> 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'ān, 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'ān 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 Muḥammad as one of the prophets and the last of them, it found confirmation in the insistence of the Qur'ān 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'ān does not take into consideration the individual. It is the sum total of communal activity which cannot be right if it produces disasters.<sup>15</sup> 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

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, xi, 100.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, vi, 25; viii, 31; xvi, 24, etc., etc.

The Qur'ān uses the word "*asāṭir*" 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 substance 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 *ṣatar* (to write); hence *asāṭir* should mean a record. They certainly do not seem to imply that the Prophet was reciting to them merely fables.

<sup>15</sup> This is obvious from the references to communities like 'Ād, Thamūd, etc., vide note 10; also Qur'ān, xiii, 30; xiv, 36.



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'ān 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'ān. 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.<sup>16</sup>

There was yet another aspect of religion that directly led to the cultivation of history. Muḥammad is a historical figure; he lived in the limelight of history. His biography has always been considered to be a cornerstone of Muslim theology,<sup>17</sup> 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'ān, 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 *aḥādīth*, and after some time when the original narrators had died and there had intervened several generations so that for every *ḥadīth* 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 soundness.<sup>18</sup> Modern scholarship can find fault with some of the traditions that have been judged to be

<sup>16</sup> Many religious thinkers in Islam refer to the Jewish legends adopted by some *mufasssirin* as *Isrā'īliyyāt* and disapprove of their use.

<sup>17</sup> Muḥammad bin 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwi, *al-I'lān bi al-Taubīkh li man Ḍamma Ahl al-Tārīkh*, translated into English by Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, pp. 246, 47, 263.

<sup>18</sup> Muḥammad bin Sulaimān al-Kafiyāji, *al-Mukhtaṣar fi 'Ilm al-Tārīkh*, selected passages translated into English by Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, pp. 189, 190; al-Sakhāwi, *op. cit.*, pp. 205 ff.

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'ān. 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'ān shall be preserved.<sup>19</sup> 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'ān, which they were to cherish and preserve in the original form. They believe in the verbal sanctity of the Qur'ān. 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'ān 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 development.<sup>20</sup> It was necessary, therefore,

<sup>19</sup> Qur'ān, vi, 116; the corruption of previous Scriptures finds mention also at other places, e.g., v, 13.

<sup>20</sup> Al-Sakhāwi, *op. cit.*, pp. 259, 261.

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.<sup>21</sup> Indeed in the beginning he was doubtful whether he was justified in expressing an adverse opinion about anyone.<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup>

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 development 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-Faḍl wrote the *Akbarnāmeḥ* with the blatantly clear object of extolling his patron, Akbar.<sup>25</sup> Mulla 'Abd al-Qādir Badāyūni, on the other hand, wrote his *Muntakhab al-Tawārīkh*, it seems, to prove to the world that Akbar had strayed away from the right path. Shorn of the propaganda against Akbar, Badāyūni's book is merely an avowed redaction

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 299.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264.

<sup>23</sup> Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādi, *Kifāyah*, Hyderabad, 1357/1938, pp. 39ff.; also, al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, iv, 121, 126, 142 (Krehl).

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Diyā' al-Din Barani, *Tārīkh-i Ftrūzshāhi*, Calcutta, 1860-62, pp. 16, 17.



of Nizām al-Dīn Ahmad's *Ṭabaqāt-i Akbari*. Badāyūni 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 Badāyūni 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 fact that is obviously not correct, he prefaces it by a vague remark like "is reported that. . . ." Sometimes he writes sentences that can be translated in more than one way.<sup>25</sup> 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 Badāyūni's book was kept secret during Akbar's reign.<sup>26</sup> It was Badāyūni'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. Badāyūni left the path of historical rectitude only in heightening an effect that he considered to be true. Abu al-Faḍl, 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-Faḍl, 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. Nizām al-Dīn 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

<sup>25</sup> Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Akbar (1556-1605), third in the line of succession among the Mughul Emperors of India.

<sup>26</sup> His subtle insinuations have, through faulty translation, caused grave misunderstandings among European writers like Vincent Smith.

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.<sup>27</sup> 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 travellers to India with the sober histories of the period to see how distorted the reports of events did become once they had left the precincts 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 historians 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

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<sup>27</sup> 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."

but he was not employed as a historian. Bādāyuni, while attached to Akbar's Court, wrote against him. Nizām al-Dīn Aḥmad 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-Faḍl can be called a Court historian in spite of his great partiality for Akbar, because his official assignments were of an administrative or military nature. The famous Aḥmad bin Yaḥya al-Balādhuri was a *nadīm* of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil; 'Aṭa bin Muḥammad al-Juwaini was a *wazīr*; other government officials who were also historians of some eminence include Muḥammad Yaḥya al-Ṣūli, Sinān bin Thābit, abu 'Alī Aḥmad bin Muḥammad Miskawaih, and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl bin Aibak al-Ṣafadi, to name only a few. The great ibn Khaldūn was a Qādi, but this was not considered so much of a government office as a religious obligation to be discharged by those qualified for it if they were called upon by the monarch to assume the responsibility. There were some princes and rulers who took an interest in history and wrote works of considerable merit. An outstanding example is Ismā'il bin 'Alī abu al-Fidā' who, in the midst of the busy life of a statesman and soldier, found time to write authoritative history. The 'Abbāsīd prince abu Hāshim Yūsuf bin Muḥammad al-Zāhir wrote a history of the reign of his brother, al-Mustansir bi-Allah. Some of the rulers of the Yaman, like Jaiyās bin Najāḥ (d. 501/1107), al-Afḍal al-'Abbās bin 'Alī (d. 779/1377), and al-Ashraf Ismā'il bin 'Abbās (d. 805/1402) were responsible for historical works.<sup>28</sup> 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-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur, 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 Timūr'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 without 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, Nūr-al-Dīn Muḥammad Jahāngīr, also wrote his memoirs. Jahāngīr had known no adversity; his tale could not be so thrilling as that of Bābur; besides, he wrote not as an ambitious adventurer, albeit crowned and of imperial descent, as Bābur did, but as an established ruler of a great

<sup>28</sup> O. Lofgren, *Arabische Texte zur Kenntnis der Stadt Aden im Mittelalter*, Uppsala, 1936, II, pp. 20, 43-47.



empire. And yet, Jahāngīr'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 Ḍiyā' al-Dīn 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. . . ." <sup>29</sup> 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 warfare 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

<sup>29</sup> Barani, *op. cit.*, pp. 16, 17.

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 Bakkār*, *Nasab-u Quraish* was the exaltation of the Quraish; this was feasible because the ruling dynasties of the Umayyads and the 'Abbāsids were alike Quraish. Balādhuri's *Kitāb al-Ansāb* 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 Hāshimites, 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.<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup> 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

<sup>30</sup> "Exodus," xiv, 30; "Samuel," I, xvii.

<sup>31</sup> Some scholars are of the opinion that no written prose literature existed in pre-Islamic Arabia, e.g., William Marcais, "Les Origines de la prose littéraire arabe," *Revue Africaine*, LXVIII, 1929, pp. 15-18.

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 *akhbār*. In its singular form, *khābar*, 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 narration 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 *khābar* gave place gradually to *akhbār*, a collection of several or many *khābars*. 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 *khābar* 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 *khābar* was told like a vivid short story, hence it tended to sacrifice clarity and factualism 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 *khābar* 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.<sup>32</sup> Its most developed form was the monograph on some single historical event. A well-known historian in this style was 'Alī bin al-Madā'īni (752-830/1351-1417), known only through quotations from his works in other histories. A list of the books written by him is preserved in *al-Fihrist*. In the sub-continent of India and Pakistan, perhaps Amīr Khusrāu's *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ* furnishes the best example. His *Tughluq-nāmah*, though written in verse, which is not usual with *khābar* histories, has many of their characteristics.

<sup>32</sup> A good example is Sultān 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī's conversation with Qāḍī Muḡthī, reported by Barani, *op. cit.*, pp. 293-97.



It would, however, be a mistake to think of all books written on single reigns as falling into the category of the *khābar* 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 *hadīth* were a by-product. The biographies of religious and political persons followed naturally. Some biographies were written for sectarian 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. Thābit bin Qurrah wrote a biography of al-Mu'tadid, which was completed by his son Sinān; this was supervised by the patron himself. Shams-i Sirāj 'Afif's *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhi* is a typical biography of a monarch; the *Sīrat-i Fīrūzshāhi* partakes of memoirs because it was supervised 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 *Nawādir al-Sultānīyyah w-al-Mahāsīn al-Yūsufīyyah*, being the biography of Sultān Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn by ibn Shaddād. It achieves a high standard in depicting the character of the great monarch. Abu al-Faḍl's *Akbarnāmeḥ* can be looked upon as a highly successful biography of a remarkable man in spite of the author's obvious endeavour to paint the monarch in as favourable 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 substance 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 subject, 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, however, 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 *Tārīkh al-Ghāzāni* by Faḍl Allāh Rashīd al-Dīn (d. 718/1318) being a history of Chingiz Khān and his family<sup>33</sup> 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

<sup>33</sup> 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.

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 tradition of teaching religious truths through the biographies of learned and pious personages.<sup>34</sup> 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.<sup>35</sup> These would include the lives of theologians, Sufis, physicians, poets, and nobles. The disciples of famous Sufis sometimes collected their sayings into *malfūzāt*; these consisted of the more significant utterances of the *shaiikh* with a record of the circumstances in which they were made.<sup>36</sup> In a way this may be considered to be a form of the *khavar* 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 supernatural powers. The writers of the *tadhkirahs* were seldom guilty of deliberately 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 *khavar* 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 *tārīkh*. It has been mentioned above that the word *tārīkh* 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.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, apart from the narration pure and simple, which was *khavar*, *tārīkh* was properly the assigning of a date to an event and, conversely, the fixing of

<sup>34</sup> E.g., Sheftah's *Gulshan-i Be-khār*, Āzād's *Āb-i Hayāt*, and Shibli's *Shi'r al-'Ajam*.

<sup>35</sup> E.g., Badāyūni in his *Muntakhab al-Tawārīkh*, abu al-Faḍl in his *Ā'in-i Akbari*, etc.

<sup>36</sup> E.g., Hasan 'Ali Sajzī's *Fawā'id al-Fuwād*.

<sup>37</sup> Al-Sakhāwi, *op. cit.*, p. 310; al-Kafiyāji, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

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 *tārīkh* to history. The greatest name in this form of history is the well-known abu Ja'far al-Ṭabari, 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. Ṭabari'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 'Umārah bin Wathīmah 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.<sup>38</sup> It is, however, reasonable to believe that Ṭabari 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 Yūsuf al-Qiftī has mentioned a succession of trustworthy authors beginning with Ṭabari and ending with the year 616/1219.<sup>39</sup> The best example in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent is the *Tārīkh-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 subsequent arrangement of information in decades, generations (*qarūn*), 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 *g nre* of *ṭabaqāt*. A *ṭabaqah* means a layer; it generally refers to a generation. The word *qarn* meaning a generation preceded the word *ṭabaqah*, but later *ṭabaqah* came to be used more often

<sup>38</sup> 'Abd al-Rahmān bin 'Ali al-Jauzi, *Muntazam*, Hyderabad, 1357-58/1938-39, p. 37.

<sup>39</sup> 'Ali bin Yūsuf al-Qiftī, *Tārīkh al-Hukamā'*, ed. A. M ller and J. Lippert, Leipzig, 1903, pp. 110ff.



until works were called by the names of *ṭabaqāt*. The term was originally applied to different generations of the narrators of Ḥadīth; 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 *ṭabaqāt* 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 *ṭabaqāt* work could limit itself to a single reign. Some of these are more like *tadhkirahs*, as, for example, ibn abi Uṣaibi'ah's history of physicians or abu Ishāq al-Shirāzī's history of the jurists. *Tadhkirahs* and *ṭabaqāt* 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.<sup>40</sup> They appended in many places their authority for a statement.<sup>41</sup> 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.<sup>42</sup> 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. Muḥammad 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.

<sup>40</sup> *Ā'in-i Akbari* abounds in such tables; Barani gives tables of the names of officers in each reign, etc.

<sup>41</sup> This was derived from the way *aḥādīth* were narrated: "A heard from B who heard from C who heard from D that the Prophet said . . ."

<sup>42</sup> Some examples are: Baihaqi in *Tārīkh-i Baihaqi* has preserved the oath of allegiance taken by Mas'ūd of Ghaznīn to the Caliph; Badāyūni has preserved the text of the *maḥḍar* recognizing Akbar's authority to choose an interpretation where the doctors of law disagreed; abu al-Faḍl has preserved the letter Akbar wrote to 'Abd Allah Khān Uzbek of Transoxiana, etc.

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 practised curious frauds upon Muslim rulers and Muslim scholars.<sup>43</sup> 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. Yāqūt bin 'Abd Allah al-Ḥamawī's geographical dictionary, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, seldom fails to incorporate biographical material of the people of note belonging to a locality. 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusain al-Mas'ūdi 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 'Abbāsids 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'ānic 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 'Abbāsid 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 Athīr's *Kāmil fi al-Tārīkh*. 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 Athīr himself complains, "A man sitting in Moṣul cannot but miss some events happening

<sup>43</sup> When Asoka's pillar was brought by Firūz Shāh 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 Firūz Shāh as a ruler; also cf. Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 111.



in the remote corners of the East and the West."<sup>44</sup> 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 Mughul 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 Minhāj al-Dīn 'Uthmān bin Sirāj al-Dīn al-Juzjānī's *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣiri* 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.<sup>45</sup> 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. Diyā' al-Dīn Baranī's *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhi*; Shams-i Sirāj 'Afif's *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhi*, the *Sīrat-i Fīrūzshāhi*, and the *Futūhāt-i Fīrūzshāhi*, 'Abd al-Qādir Badāyūnī's *Muntakhabat al-Tawārīkh*; 'Abd al-Ḥamid Lāhorī's *Padishāhnāmeḥ*; 'Ali Muḥammad Khān's *Mir'āt-i Aḥmadi*, to name but a few, are replete with this kind of information. The most outstanding work, however, is abu al-Faḍl's *Akbarnāmeḥ*, of which the *Ā'in-i Akbari* is intended to be an appendix. But what an appendix it is! It is a virtual gazette of the Mughul 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

<sup>44</sup> Ibn Athir, *Kāmil fi al-Tārīkh*, Cairo, 1301/1883, I, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> This was the reason why historical studies formed an essential part of a prince's education, e.g., Sinān bin Thābit bin Qurrah quoted by ibn al-'Adīm, *Bughyāt al-Talab*, Cairo, MS. *Tārīkh*, 1566, I, p. 137; ibn Ḥamdūn, *Tadhkirah*. Bodleian MS. (Ar.) Marsh 316 part 3, 80b, etc., etc.



included. Compared to al-Bīrūnī's *Kitāb 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.<sup>46</sup> The histories quite often incorporate large sections of the biographies of men noted in some fields of culture. Abu al-Faḍl's data are mainly based upon al-Bīrūnī 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-Bīrūnī had said, especially when the Emperor himself was taking so great an interest in Hinduism and abu al-Faḍl was his constant consultant. The fact that abu al-Faḍl had so little reason to differ shows how well al-Bīrūnī had dealt with the subject.

The fact that history had a deep relationship with statecraft was recognized by the monarchs themselves.<sup>47</sup> The Caliph Mu'āwiyah 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.<sup>48</sup> These examples can be multiplied *ad infinitum*. Hārūn al-Rashīd, the Mughul 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. Saḍīd al-Dīn Muḥammad al-'Aufī's *Jawāmi' al-Hikāyāt wa Jawāmi' al-Riwāyāt* 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

<sup>46</sup> The reason has been given by al-Tha'libī, *Ghurur*, 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 worship their kings." The author has explained earlier that historical data regarding India are difficult to obtain.

<sup>47</sup> Ibn Ḥamdūn, *op. cit.*, says, "Genealogy, history, and elements of jurisprudence are royal sciences." Compare Yāqūt, *Irshād*, Cairo, I, p. 27, who says, "the knowledge of genealogy and history belong to the sciences of kings . . ." *Shāh Jahān* made a habit of listening to history every evening ('Abd al-Ḥamīd Lāhori, *Pādīshāh-nāmeḥ*, Bib. Indica, Calcutta, I, p. 153).

<sup>48</sup> Al-Mas'ūdi, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, Cairo, 1346/1927, II, p. 72.

administrative experience like 'Unşur al-Ma'āli Kaikā'ūs bin Sikandar bin Qābūs' *Qābūs-nāmeḥ* or Nizām al-Mulk Ṭūsī's *Siyāsat-nāmeḥ*; others were written by professional historians like Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Baranī—*Fatāwa-i Jahān-dūri*; 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 *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk* by Sayyid 'Ali bin Shihāb Hamadāni. The great Ghazālī also has a treatise of this nature in his *Naṣā'ih al-Mulūk*. Some were written by obscure writers and to give importance to their works, they ascribed them to well-known historical characters, as the *Tauqī'āt-i Kisra* is ascribed to Nushīrwān and the *Waṣāya-i Nizām al-Mulk* to the statesman whose name it bears.

History today is related to sociology and endeavours to find the relationship 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 Khaldūn'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 (*Kitāb 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."<sup>49</sup> "Ibn Khaldūn 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."<sup>50</sup> "Ibn Khaldūn (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."<sup>51</sup> So far as ibn Khaldūn'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

<sup>49</sup> Charles Issawi, *An Arab Philosophy of History*, London, 1950, p. x, quoting Arnold J. Toynbee.

<sup>50</sup> *Idem.*, pp. x, xi, quoting George Sarton.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xi, quoting Robert Flint.

is true that ibn Khaldūn 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.<sup>52</sup> The writers on revenue in particular brought in economics and sound finance within the scope of their work.<sup>53</sup> Of these perhaps Qudāmah bin Ja'far deserves special mention, who in one of his chapters presents a systematic discussion of political and social sciences.<sup>54</sup> 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-Faḍl among others has brought in questions of economics and social organization while commenting upon administrative measures. The most outstanding example is Shāh Wali Allah, who based his philosophy on economic and social foundations.<sup>55</sup> 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 favourite 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

<sup>52</sup> M. Plessner, *Der οὐκονομικός des Neupythagoreers "Bryson" und sein Einfluss auf die islamische Wissenschaft*, Heidelberg, 1928, Orient und Antike, Vol. V.

<sup>53</sup> The various books on Kharāj and the Ā'in-i Akbari of abu al-Faḍl are good examples.

<sup>54</sup> Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, pp. 462-63, gives a table of contents.

<sup>55</sup> Such material is found in several of his books, especially Hujjat Allah al-Bālighah; an Urdu translation is available, Lahore, 1953.



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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## Chapter LXI

### 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 behaviour 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 behaviour of individuals which is infinitely varied, for if it did, it would lead to chaos and conflicts rather than uniformity in behaviour.

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'ān, which is

taken as the uncreated Word of God; there is the Ḥadīth 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 specialists (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-Ghazālī,<sup>1</sup> this principle of good and evil (*ḥusn wa qubḥ*) 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‘ān has laid on the rational side of life. To persuade men to abide by the precepts of Islam, the Qur‘ān again and again appeals to reason (*tadabbarūn, tatafakkarūn, ta‘qilūn, etc.*), and repeatedly refers to *ma‘rūf* and *munkar*<sup>2</sup> as the bases of Muslim Law.

Now, *ma‘rūf* 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‘ān 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‘ānic order or injunction. That is the domain of the specialists of the philosophy of Law. An anecdote will explain the point. Abu Ḥanīfah, one of the early jurists, had a penetrating mind, and was also endowed with a sense of humour. 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 Ḥanīfah replied: “I never promulgate rules on my personal opinion; on the other hand, I always deduce laws from the sacred texts of the Qur‘ān and the Ḥadīth. 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 Ḥanīfah succeeded in silencing and even calming the apprehensions of his well-meaning critic. The answer was humorous, because abu Ḥanīfah did not refer to the reasons for not washing

<sup>1</sup> *Al-Mustaṣfa*, I, 55–56 (ed. Būlāq, 1322 A.H.).

<sup>2</sup> Al-Qur‘ān, iii, 104, 110, 114; vii, 157; ix, 67, 71, 112, etc.



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 philosopher 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'ānic statement, "Do what is *ma'rūf* (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 *exposé* is all that we can take up here in dealing with a subject which fills scores of pages in works on *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* (the Principles 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 (*wājib*); what is unmixed evil will be declared as an obligatory prohibition (*ḥarām*); in complex cases, predominance will decide the preference: a matter of predominant good will be recommended (*mustaḥab*), and one of predominant evil discouraged (*makrūh*), 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 (*farḍ 'ain*) or obligatory on at least a few in the group (*farḍ kifāyah*); the good with less sure absoluteness will be legal order (*wājib*), 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 (*mandūb* or *mustaḥab*) and the one on the deadline will be supererogatory (*nafl*). Similarly, the evil may be prohibited (*ḥarām*), tending to be prohibited (*makrūh taḥrīmi*), better to shun (*makrūh tanzīhi*) 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 Ḥanīfah would say that to eat prawns is

forbidden, but al-Shāfi'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 (*ḥarām istinbā'i*) as distinct from legal prohibition (*ḥarām 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 Ḥanīfah and al-Shāfi'i are doubtless two of the leaders (*imāms*) of Muslim Law, completely independent of each other in legal judgment. According to al-Shāfi'i, the *qunūt* prayer at dawn (*fajr*) is obligatory, whereas abu Ḥanīfah suppresses it completely. The story goes that once al-Shāfi'i went to Baghdād (where abu Ḥanīfah lies buried), and during his stay there he renounced his own view on the *qunūt* prayer. When questioned, he said: "I continue as firmly to cling to my opinion as before, yet in the presence of the great abu Ḥanīfah 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 (*imām*) 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 *Fiqh*, 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 jurisconsult 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 favour 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,"<sup>3</sup> 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

<sup>3</sup> Abu Dāwūd, *Aqḍīyyah*, 6.

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 (*zakāt*)," pronouncing prayer and tax in the same breath. Even a beginner in the study of Muslim Law knows that *zakāt* has always been included in the section of liturgical rites (*'ibādāt*) in the manuals of *Fiqh*. With a word of explanation of the meaning of the term *zakāt*, even the most uninitiated may realize the significance of this seemingly curious combination of prayer and tax.

*Zakāt* 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 *zakāt* which covered the entire fiscal system. *Zakāt al-arḍ* was the land revenue; *zakāt al-tijārah* was tax on commercial capital as well as on import customs; *zakāt al-māshīyyah* was imposed on herds of domesticated animals (ovine and bovine animals and camels) living on public pastures; *zakāt al-ma'ādin* on the sub-soil products; *zakāt 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 *zakāt*; this may be corroborated from the sayings of the Prophet on the subject of *zakāt* (as also more or less the equivalent and synonymous term *ṣadaqāt*).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> 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



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 (*'ibādāt*) should not astonish us. It is in fact deliberate. In Islam one must do everything for the sake of God. As al-Ghazālī 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 thinking that it is the performance of a divinely ordained duty, then these mundane enjoyments constitute real acts of the worship of God (*'ibādah*). 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 *zakāt* 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 (*farḍ*, *wājib*, *mustahab*, *sunnah*, *mubāḥ*, etc.). Many a question of politics and administration too falls under the subject-matter of the legal science, although some latitude obtains in such matters.

a profound change when "charity" became a State duty; the Qur'ān and the *Hadīth* 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 *zakāt* was the best kind of charity. The Caliphs retained the same terms.

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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 *Siyāṣah Sharī'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 *Siyāṣah Sharī'ah*. But the nature of relation between *Fiqh* and *Siyāṣah Sharī'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'ān<sup>5</sup> 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 Tālūt as king.<sup>6</sup> 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

<sup>5</sup> Al-Qur'ān, vi, 90.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 246ff.

in Islam the Qur'ān 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'ān has condemned those who neglect any of these two, and approves of those who aspire simultaneously after welfare in both.<sup>7</sup>

## 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 (*matlūww*); (b) non-recited (*ghair matlūww*), 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'ān, which the Muslims believe to be the Word of God, a collection of divine messages revealed from time to time to the Prophet Muḥammad, 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 (*Ḥadīth*), 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, *Ḥadīth* 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'ān

<sup>7</sup> "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'ān, 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).



itself has enjoined that the practice of the Prophet should be treated as the best model to imitate and follow.<sup>8</sup>

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 *Ḥadīth* and *Sunnah* to writing in the very lifetime of the Prophet. One such compilation, the *Ṣaḥīfah Ṣādiqah* of 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ, is reputed to contain one thousand reports.<sup>9</sup> 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 (*majallāt*) 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 he 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-Bukhārī's collection of the *Ḥadīth* 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 Ḥanbal, who from 'Abd al-Razzāq, who from Ma'mar, who from Hammām, who from abu Hurairah, who from the Prophet heard . . .," it would be perfectly legitimate for an objective and impartial student to be sceptical and to start fresh investigation by assuming that al-Bukhārī has forged the chain of the sources and invented the narration. But we possess also his source, the *Musnad* of ibn Ḥanbal, 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-Bukhārī is acquitted honourably, but perhaps ibn Ḥanbal had forged. But no, we possess fortunately also the *Muṣannaḥ* of 'Abd al-Razzāq (now in press in Hyderabad-Deccan, having been edited by Dr. Yūsuf al-Dīn), and there the remaining chain of sources is given and the *ḥadīth* is recorded in the same words without the least difference. Now say, perhaps 'Abd al-Razzāq was the falsificator. But we possess his source also, for in the *Jāmi'* of Ma'mar now being edited by Dr. Fu'ād Sezgin of the University of Istanbul, the same *ḥadīth* 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 *Ṣaḥīfah* of Hammām 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

<sup>8</sup> Al-Qur'ān, xxxiii, 21; lix, 7, etc.

<sup>9</sup> As to the references and details of this and the following statements of the paragraph, see Ḥamidullah, *Ṣaḥīfah Hammām Ibn Munabbih* (both Arabic and Urdu editions), Introduction.

**Hadith.** Even in the absence of these books other chains of transmission narrate the same *hadith* 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 *riwāyah* (uninterrupted chain of transmission by reporters known for the integrity of their character) and of *dirāyah* (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" (*Ṣiḥāḥ Sittah*). If, however, 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 *taqrīr* 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'ān according to which all that is not expressly forbidden is lawful.<sup>10</sup> The same notion is stressed in two interesting sayings of the Prophet, namely:

- (i) "The virtues of the days of ignorance (*jāhiliyyah*) will be acted upon in Islam" (Ibn Ḥanbal, III, 425).
- (ii) "A wise counsel is the lost property of the Faithful (*mū'min*); wherever he discovers it, he takes hold of it" (al-Tirmidhi, chapter "ʿIlm," 19; ibn Mājah, 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'ān and the *Hadith*.

(c) *Previous Revelations.*—With regard to the earlier prophets the Qur'ān has said: "They are those who received God's guidance; follow the guidance they received."<sup>11</sup> 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'ān. Some prophets seem never to have transcribed the divine messages they received. The accusation made by the Qur'ān of the corruption of the previous Scriptures<sup>12</sup> considerably reduces the importance of this source.

<sup>10</sup> Al-Qur'ān, iv, 24.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, vi, 90.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 75, 79; iv 46; v, 13, 41.

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'ān and the Ḥadīth have approved this source, and even encouraged it. Individual opinions are termed *qiyās*, and the collective ones *ijmā'* (consensus). But the opinions of savants and researchers are not infallible; hence these same savants have approved that a *qiyās* by one could be rejected by another and a better one suggested. Similarly, an earlier collective opinion can be superseded by a later one.<sup>13</sup>

It goes without saying that a right given by the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth 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."<sup>14</sup> 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 (*istiṣlāḥ*) 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 *ijtihād* 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-aḥkām al-sultānīyyah*. 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'ūdi, who says that after the conquest of Iraq and Iran, the Caliph 'Umar retained the Sassānian 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.<sup>15</sup> The basic source of this attitude was the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth. 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

<sup>13</sup> Al-Bukhārī, *Kaṣḥf al-Asrār 'ala Uṣūl al-Bazdawī*, III, 262.

<sup>14</sup> *Idem*, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Chap. "Imān," section 44.

<sup>15</sup> Consult the very interesting book *Poll Tax in Islam* by Dorman.



frontier town Manbij (Hierapolis) asked the Caliph 'Umar what tarrif 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."<sup>16</sup>

(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.<sup>17</sup>

(f) Even new customs may gradually take root and add to the body of Muslim Law. To express slight nuances they are called '*urf*', '*ādah*', '*ta'āmul*'. 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" (*'umūm al-balwa*), which may abrogate even an existing law. Apparently, the theory of the *ijmā'* (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 (*'aqā'id*), (ii) acts of worship (*'ibādāt*), (iii) morals (*akhlāq*), and (iv) social affairs (*mu'āmalāt*). 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 (*'ibādāt*) 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 *zakāt* 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

<sup>16</sup> Abu Yūsuf, *Kharāj* (Būlāq edition), p. 78.

<sup>17</sup> See for references and discussion on this point, Ḥamidullah, *Muslim Conduct of State*, Lahore, 1953, pp. 17-38.

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 (*'ibādāt*), (ii) social affairs (*mū'āmalāt*), and (iii) crimes (*'uqūbāt*). Under the head "acts of worship" fall prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and *zakāt* (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 ourselves with discussing some select topics and these too very briefly.

### 1. 'Ibādāt

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'rāj*), i.e., a journeying unto the Almighty. In the words of *Shāh 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."<sup>18</sup> 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'rāj*:

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

<sup>18</sup> *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*, Vol. I, Chap. "Asrār al-Ṣalāh," cited in *Introduction to Islam*, Centre Culturel Islamique, Paris.

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 believers, and with that he terminates his service.

## 2. Mu'āmalāt

(i) *Polity*.—Islam has not only united prayer and politics in a greater whole by assigning them both to the same Imām, but it has also dispensed with all prejudices of colour, 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-'Ālamīn*). Nationality as based on race, colour, 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 colour. The common code of Law (the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth), the common focal point for prayer and *hajj* (Ka'bah), and the unity of the Faithful under a common Caliph are some of the means employed for the removal of all class and colour distinctions. In politics, sovereignty belongs to God, and man is the lieutenant and vicegerent of God. This notion works powerfully on man. Islam imposes no particular form of government; the Qur'ān 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 Shī'ites 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: cultural (propagation of Islam), administrative-executive, judicial, and legislative. But legislation by government is the least important of its duties. In Islam, legislation 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'ān and the Ḥadīth.

(ii) *Fiscality*.—As already pointed out *zakāt* 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'ān 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 *zakāt* are mentioned only in the *Ḥadīth*. 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 Ḥazm 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 *nawā'ib* (passing exigencies) enhanced or new taxes.

The expenditure of *zakāt* is much more important. The Prophet of Islam ordained that the income of *zakāt* is religiously forbidden (*ḥarām*) 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'ān has ordered that taxes (*ṣadaqāt*) 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.<sup>19</sup> According to such a high authority as the Caliph 'Umar, *fuqarā'* (the poor) are those who belong to the Muslim community, and *masākīn* (the needy) are from the non-Muslims. It is to be noted that the *ṣadaqāt* 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, 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-Farrā' 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."<sup>20</sup>

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.

<sup>19</sup> Al-Qur'ān, ix, 60.

<sup>20</sup> *Al-Aḥkām al-Sultāniyyah*, Chap. "Zakāt." (The author was a contemporary of al-Māwardi, and both composed their books with the same title.)

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 defence 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.

(iii) *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'ān puts it.<sup>21</sup> This great principle, common to all systems of law, is a means to mitigating the rigour 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 labour. The give-and-take of labour entails division of labour 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 progress, 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 commodities. 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 mischief.) 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.

<sup>21</sup> Al-Qur'ān, iv, 29.

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.<sup>22</sup> 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 (*maṣlahat 'āmmah*) has led legislators 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.

(iv) *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 favourable to the wife, who is, therefore, considered entitled to a compensation in the form of a monetary gift settled upon her before marriage (*mahr*), dowry, and maintenance by the husband. The *mahr*, which is a *sine qua non* of Muslim marriage, is the exclusive property 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'ān, 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, Melanchthon, 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 practised in early Christianity, and as late as the time of Charlemagne (third/ninth century); even priests could be polygamous.<sup>23</sup> The reference here is not to the

<sup>22</sup> Based on a saying of the Prophet: "Muslims abide by the conditions they have contracted, except the condition which permits a *ḥarām* (forbidden thing)"; cf. al-Tirmidhi, Chap. "Aḥkām," 17, etc.

<sup>23</sup> Edward Westermarck, *History of Human Marriage*, French tr. Gennep, Paris, 1943, Vol. V, pp. 54-56; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Polygamy."



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 monogamy. Marriage being one of the ordinary contracts, conditions can be stipulated 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 Śāstra*. 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 polygamy 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?<sup>24</sup>

(v) *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;"<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup> 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-ghurum*). 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 *zakāt*. The same could also be done on the basis of mutuality.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Al-Qur'ān, ii, 279.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 275.

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 share-holders 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'ūqil*, 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-Mabsūṭ* 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 practised 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.

(vi) *Administration of Justice*.—As explained above, the administration of justice is a necessary concomitant of contractual relations in a society. Inexpensive, 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'ān<sup>27</sup> 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 favour of their kinsmen. In almost all cases, no less than two witnesses were required.

One more peculiarity of administration of justice was the autonomy conceded to non-Muslim inhabitants, the principle being, for instance, Jewish parties, Jewish Law, Jewish courts, and Jewish judges. In case parties belonged 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-honour, and affirmed their sacrosanct character once for all.

Let us refer to two verses of the Qur'ān regarding punishment:

(a) "Whoever transgresses against you, so transgress against him with the like of his transgression against you . . ." (ii, 194).

(b) "The compensation of an evil is an evil like thereof . . ." (xl, 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-honoured 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 (*ḥudūd*), and those which allow a certain latitude to the judges. The crimes of *ḥudūd* refer to person, property, and honour. According to the classical jurists, they are eight in number: (a) apostasy, (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.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 282.



(a) *Apostasy*.—In all old and most new legal systems treason is awarded capital punishment. We have seen that Islam has rejected colour, 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,<sup>28</sup> 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) and (d) *Sexual Transgression and False Accusations Affecting the Honour 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 rigour the Prophet of Islam has been more indulgent than Jesus Christ (as described by the Gospel according to St. John, 8:3 ff.). The Qur'ān 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.<sup>29</sup>

(e) *Alcoholic Drinks*.—Though the Qur'ān 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 honour of women, I shall henceforth give eighty strokes." (This is the Qur'ānic punishment for speaking against the honour of women.) Non-Muslims including the non-Muslim wives of Muslims are, however, exempt from this

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 256.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, xxiv, 4.

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 contemporary history. Who does not know the pillaging of the pilgrims, during the time of Sharif Husain? When ibn Sa'ūd got power in the Hijāz, 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'ūdian 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."<sup>30</sup>

(h) *Infliction of Injuries (Mazālim)*.—Under this category fall the crimes other than those determined by the *hudūd*. 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.

<sup>30</sup> Hasan ibn 'Abd Allah, *Āthār al-Uwal fi Tartib al-Duwal*, compiled in 708 H., p. 167.

Law did indeed exist in Rome, Greece, China, India, Mesopotamia, Egypt, pre-Columbian America, and elsewhere, yet it was Imām Shāfi'i (b. 150/767) who first thought of the science of law or jurisprudence as case-law. His book *al-Risālah fi Uṣūl al-Fiqh* speaks of the origins and sources of Law, as also of the methods of legislation, interpretation and application of law and many allied topics. Al-Shāfi'i gave this science the expressive name *uṣūl al-Fiqh* (the roots of Law) in contradistinction to the general laws of a land, which were named as "branches" (*furū'*) shooting out from these *roots*. Some generations afterwards, the Muslim jurists created a new science, called *khilāfiyyāt*, 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.<sup>31</sup>

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 (*inna-ma al-a'māl bi al-niyyāt*)," quoted by al-Bukhāri, 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'ān.

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 geographical 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 Śāstra* 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 Ḥanīfab. The works of the pupils of this master, abu Yūsuf and Muḥammad al-Shai-bāni, have come down to us and have partly been printed.<sup>32</sup>

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 preserved *in toto*, and comprises fifty-two articles, dealing with such questions

<sup>31</sup> See Hamidullah, "Uṣul al-fiqh'in tarihi," in the *Islam Tetkikleri Enstitüsü Dergisi*, of Istanbul University, II, 1956-57, pp. 1-18. Also the French tr., *Annales of the Faculty of Law* of the same University, 1959.

<sup>32</sup> 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.



as independence *vis-à-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.<sup>33</sup>

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 development of Muslim Law as deduced from the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth 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, Shī'ite, and Khārijite 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 Origines du droit international*, which has also an Urdu translation published by the Osmania University) shows the great influence 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.<sup>34</sup> No early Muslim jurists, except al-Auzā'i

<sup>33</sup> 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 und 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 Nizām-i Hukmrāni*. A more recent and detailed discussion and analysis is given in *Le Prophète de l'Islam, sa vie et son œuvre*, Paris, 1959. For the Arabic text, see *al-Wathā'iq al-Siyāsiyyah*.

<sup>34</sup> There is now considerable literature in favour of this thesis. For instance, Nallino's Italian article (English tr. "Impossibility of the Influence of Roman Law on Muslim Law" in the *Voice of Islam*, Karachi, Vol. I); Bousquet, "Le Mystère de la formation et des origines du Fiqh," published in *Reveu Algerienne*, Alger, July-September 1947, Urdu translation in *Ma'ārif*, Azamgarh; see also Hamidullah,

hailed from an ex-Byzantine territory. All of them were either the Hijāzian Arabs or belonged to Persian families which had lived as Muslims for at least two generations. Even al-Auzā'i was not of Syrian origin for his father was among the captives brought from Sind.<sup>35</sup> 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 *Chirāgh-i Rāh*. Muslims should not remain content with their past, however glorious that past. The *raison d'être* 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'rūf*), interdicting the evil (*munkar*), and believing in God.<sup>36</sup>

"Influence of Roman Law on Muslim Law," *Hyderabad Academy Journal*, Vol. VI, 1943, and *Imām Abu Hanīfah ki Tadwīn-i Qānūn-i Islāmi* (Urdu), Karachi.

<sup>35</sup> Al-Dhahabi, *Tabaqāt al-Huffāz*, s. v. "Auzā'i."

<sup>36</sup> Al-Qur'an, iii, 110.

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Part 4. The Sciences

Chapter LXII

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 philosophy 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 fructification 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 brilliant. Later on, Alexander's campaigns were of the nature of geographical exploration under arms. In the course of time the centre of scientific activity shifted to Alexandria. Science and geography continued to flourish in the Graeco-Roman age, though under somewhat different cultural atmosphere. In fact, the Graeco-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 co-ordinating 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 Ḥadramaut, 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.<sup>1</sup>

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 breakdown. 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, unmourned, unsung. Rome was sacked by Goths in 410 A.D. By

<sup>1</sup> Baker, *A History of Geographical Discovery and Exploration*, p. 26.



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 centre 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."<sup>2</sup> A sailor turned monk took a hand at geographical writing and produced the most cranky 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 favourite 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 centres. 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 epochmaking 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

<sup>2</sup> Thomson, *History of Ancient Geography*, p. 360

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 ethnographical 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 centres 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-Shāpūr as a scientific centre in the Muslim Empire. Scientists from this centre in Persia were welcomed at Damascus, the capital of the Umayyad Caliphate. These men were mostly Christians and Jews.<sup>3</sup> Further, the Arabs were traders, travellers, 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 geography of the Arabian Peninsula and its midway position between the East and the West and the littoral situation of all its fertile lands in Yamāmah, Oman, Bahrain, the Yemen, etc. Even the Ḥijāz, 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'ān itself abounds in navigational terminology and descriptions of conditions of the sea and ships and boats used. There was a close relationship 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 geographical matters was a deep one. It needed various stimuli such as extension of territorial influence, expanded trading opportunities, greater cultural contacts, and a vigorous religious zeal to widen the frontiers of geographic knowledge.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Max Meyerhof, "Science and Medicine," *The Legacy of Islam*, p. 314.

<sup>4</sup> Sulaimān Nadawī, *'Arbōn ki Jahāzrāni* (Urdu), p. 165.

Within a century of the advent of Islam, the Arab victories brought them a rich reward in the conquest of prosperous lands and cultured communities, 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 Siddhānta*. 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 'Abbāside Caliphate in 132/750 A.D. ushered in an age of glory, power, pomp, splendour, culture, and prosperity for the peoples under Muslim rule. Scientific activity took its birth and in this process the inauguration of translation activity in Baghdād, 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-Māmūm 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 spiritual, 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.<sup>5</sup> Both scholars and religious leaders considered geography a laudable pursuit, as is borne out by the remark of Yāqūt that as a science geography was pleasing in the eyes of God. Even the orthodox al-Ghazālī 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 travellers, the specialist studies of the topographers, and the critical works of the socio-geographers lend an immense variety and colour to Muslim geography. Therefore, 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.

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<sup>5</sup> C. Schoy, "The Geography of the Muslims of the Middle Ages," *The Geographical Review*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, 1924, p. 258, (quoting Mas'ūdi).

- (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 favourite 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 knowledge. 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-Mālik ibn Quraib al-Aṣma'i and Hishām ibn Muḥammad al-Kalbi. Al-Aṣma'i of Baṣrah (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 *Kitāb al-Nawādir*<sup>6</sup> contained observations on many geographical topics. Similarly, one of the early treatises on agriculture was ibn Waḥshiyyah's (c. 288/900) book on Nabataean agriculture. Abu Yūsuf Ya'qūb al-Kindi (c. 260/873-874), though primarily a philosopher and physicist, wrote a geographical work called *Rasm al-Ma'mūr min al-Ard* (Description of the Inhabited Part of the Earth). But the work of Muḥammad ibn Mūsa al-Khwārizmi (d. 236/850) laid the foundation of Arab geographical science. By writing *Kitāb Sūrat 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-Māmūn. He improved Ptolemy's geography, 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 Arrām ibn al-Asbaj al-Sulami (c. 231/845) who wrote *Kitāb Asmā' Jibāl Tihāmah wa Makāniha* dealing with the mountains of Tihāmah in Arabia. This work was mentioned by al-Sīrāfi, and another book by the same author bearing the title *Jazīrat al-'Arab* was mentioned by Yāqūt in his "Dictionary of Learned Men" (*Mu'jam al-Udabā'*).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Sulaimān Nadawi, *Ard al-Qur'ān* (Urdu), Vol. I, p. 16.  
 Nafis Ahmad, *Muslim Contribution to Geography*, p. 19.

## 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-Masālik w-al-Mamālik*). 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 Khurdādhbih (c. 300/912) blazed a new trail with his famous *Kitāb al-Masālik wa-al-Mamālik* (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-Nadīm and Ya'qūb Sarakhsi (d. 286/899), who was a pupil of al-Kindi, gave the same title to his geographical work and abu al-Faraj al-Baghdādi (d. 310/922) compiled *Kitāb al-Kharāj* (Revenue Book) dealing with land tax and postal services in the context of the geography of the Arab Empire. Al-Jaihāni (fl. c. 280–295/893–907), the learned minister at the Sāmānid Court, wrote another revenue book replete with geographical explanations, and it is surmised<sup>8</sup> that it was one of the source materials for al-Idrīsī. 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, *Kitāb al-Ashkāl* or *Ṣuwar al-Aqālīm* (Figures of the Climates). Al-Iṣṭakhri (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 Ḥauqal revised and rewrote Iṣṭakhri's book with considerable additional information in 367/977. These three geographers form an important group who combined their writings of descriptive geography with cartographic 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 invariably developed into geographical treatises. They were generally concrete, accurate, and detailed.<sup>9</sup> 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

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>9</sup> Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science*, Vol. I, p. 587.



tracts and a notable Arab geographer and historian was al-Ya'qūbi who wrote *Kitāb al-Buldān* (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 Kūfah, Baghdād, Sāmarrāh, and Baṣrah 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'qūb an outstanding historical work with many geographical observations had been written by al-Balādhuri (in 256/869) under the title *Futūḥ al-Buldān* (Conquests of Countries). This work typifies Muslim interest in the history and geography of the newly acquired territories. Al-Hamadānī's "Book of Countries" written in 290/902 was utilized by notable geographers like Mas'ūdī and Yāqūt; unfortunately, it is lost. A contemporary of al-Hamadānī was ibn Rustah (fl. c. 291/903); his encyclopedia *al-A'lūq al-Nafīṣah* 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 *Khurāsān* road remains outstanding for its clear details and geographic implications. A few years later ibn al-Hā'ik (d. 334/945) presented his regional geography of Arabia in *Kitāb Jazīrat al-'Arab* dealing with physical features, minerals, races, tribes, and settlements. He also contributed a semi-geographical work *al-Iklīl* 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 Yāqūt's main source for the geography of the Sudan.

An interesting geographical work of the fourth/tenth century written in Persian was entitled *Hudūd al-'Ālam* (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.<sup>10</sup>

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-Ṭāriqi (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, *Kitāb al-Jaḡhrāfiya* (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-Māmūn. Al-Munajjim (d. 456/1068)

<sup>10</sup> Minorsky (Ed.), *Hudūd al-'Ālam*, Preface, p. vii.

was the compiler of a geographical dictionary which both al-Idrisi and ibn Khaldūn 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'qūb Ḥamawī. 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-Buldān* 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-Udabā'*, dealing with lives of learned men, is also replete with geographical information. Yāqūt utilized a variety of sources including many of those which are now extinct. His dictionary contains a treatise dealing with geography 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 Faḍlān 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 traveller-geographers. His *Risālah* 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 Yāqūt.<sup>11</sup> Another experienced early traveller was abu Dulaf who hailed from Yanbū' near Medina. He combined poetic talents with a wander-lust. After a stay at the Sāmānid Court at Bukhāra, he went to South India across Tibet with a returning Indian embassy and the journey back was made *via* Kashmir, Afghānistān, and Sijistān (c. 331/942). His narrative of journeys was entitled '*Ajā'ib al-Buldān* (Marvels of Countries). Abu Dulaf's geographical impressions of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent and the adjoining areas were utilized by Yāqūt and Qazwīnī. Among early Muslim travellers, al-Idrisi mentioned Sallām 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-Wāthiq.<sup>12</sup>

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, Sirāf, and Baṣrah. Their commerce and overseas relations were mainly with East Africa, Indian coasts, South-East Asia, and China. Sirāf 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 Sulaimān the Merchant by an anonymous author (237/851) with the additional comments on it by abu Zaid al-Sirāfi. 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. Sulaimān'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

<sup>11</sup> Brockelmann, *Gesch. arab. Litt.*, Vol. I, p. 227.

<sup>12</sup> Ziauddin Alvi and Ali Muzaffer, "Arab Geography in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries A. D.," *The Indian Geographical Journal*, Vol. XXII, No. 3, p. 144.



sailors and travellers wrote on many topics which encompass geography. Abu Zaid al-Ḥasan of Sirāf edited accounts of Muslim travellers and sailors in c. 308/920 in order to supplement Sulaimān'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 *Akhbār al-Sīn 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 Baṭṭūṭah. 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 *Alf 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 Shahryār who compiled the interesting book '*Ajā'ib al-Hind*'<sup>13</sup> (Wonders of India) in about 342/953-954.

The famous "sea lions" (expert writers on nautical instructions), mentioned by Aḥmad ibn Mājid in the second half of the ninth/fifteenth century, were not mere expert navigators, but also writers on sea voyages and route books. Muḥammad ibn Shādhān and Sahl ibn Abān belonged to the fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth centuries. Perhaps there were many more such writers; at any rate, later on, their successors were Aḥmad ibn Mājid (895/1489), Sulaimān 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,<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup>

Before mention is made of the well-known traveller-geographers in the western lands of Islam, those in the east deserve attention. Among these intelligent globe-trotters and geographers, al-Mas'ūdi (d. 346/957) deserves pride of place. He was born in Baghdād towards the end of the third/ninth century. Mas'ūdi 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

<sup>13</sup> Nafis Aḥmad, "The Arab's Knowledge of Ceylon," *Islamic Culture*, July 1945, pp. 227-29; also '*Ajā'ib al-Hind*', pp. 156-57 and pp. 265 et seq.

<sup>14</sup> Kramers, "Geography and Commerce," *The Legacy of Islam*, pp. 97-103.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 104-05.

men possessing practical knowledge and scholars of repute. Mas'ūdī's accounts and observations and views depicting a keen geographical sense are contained in his famous book, *Murūj al-Dhahab wa Ma'ādin al-Jawāhir* (Meadows of Gold and Mines of Precious Stones), a historico-geographical encyclopedia written in about 336/947 and revised ten years later. It seems to be an age of great travellers, 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-Iṣṭakhri was significant, as at the latter's request he re-wrote his geography and revised the accompanying maps. Ibn Hauqal called this improved version, *Kitāb al-Masālik w-al-Mamālīk* (Book of Roads and Provinces), and added maps of each country to this remarkable treatise.

Yet another outstanding geographer and traveller was al-Maqdisi or al-Muqaddisi, a native of Jerusalem. He travelled through many Islamic lands except perhaps Spain, Sijistān, 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 *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm fi Ma'rifat al-Aqālīm* (Best of Divisions as Regards Climates) at Shirāz 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 *Khurdādhbih*, *Jaihāni*, *Balkhi*, *Hamadāni*, and *Jābiz*. 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-Bīrūni was Nāṣir *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 Hijāz, Palestine, Syria, and Iran. Earlier, he had travelled in India<sup>16</sup> and lived at the Court of Sultān Maḥmūd. His travel diary, the famous *Safar-Nāmeḥ*, 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 traveller-geographers who also made journeys to the east to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca. Al-Māzini al-Andalusi (d. 565/1169) was an intrepid traveller who came from Granada and journeyed through Spain, North Africa, Egypt, Iraq, *Khurāsān*, 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.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Nafis Ahmad, *Muslim Contribution to Geography*, p. 36.

<sup>17</sup> Sarton, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, Part I, p. 300.



He was the writer of at least four important geographical works.<sup>18</sup> 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 *Rihlah* (Travel Account) remains one of the best works of its kind in Arabic literature.<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> Al-Mausili wrote *'Uyun al-Akhhār* (a book of travels) at Ceuta after his travels through Syria, Palestine, 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-Mushtāq fi Ikhtirāq al-Āfāq* (known as *al-Kitāb al-Rujāri*), written shortly before 549/1154 is the most elaborate description of the world of medieval times. According to Sarton,<sup>21</sup> 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 *Kitāb al-Rujāri* but unfortunately it has been entirely lost.

Abu al-'Abbās al-Nabāti of Seville and his pupil ibn al-Baitār 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 Sa'id al-Maghribi was another indefatigable traveller, profoundly interested in geography. He was born near Granada in 611/1214 and died in Damascus in 674/1275. His *Kitāb al-Jaghṛāfiya* 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 Sa'id visited Armenia also and was at the Court of Hulāgu from 654/1256 to 664/1265.

<sup>18</sup> Nafis Ahmad, *Muslim Contribution to Geography*, p. 37.

<sup>19</sup> Wright, *Travels of Ibn Jubair*, p. 14.

<sup>20</sup> Cheneb, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. I, p. 67.

<sup>21</sup> Sarton, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. Part I, p. 410.



Half a century later, in 704/1304, was born ibn Baṭṭūṭah, one of the outstanding travellers of all times. Starting from his home town, Tangier, 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 miles<sup>22</sup> without allowing for deviations, a figure which surpasses Marco Polo's travels. In Baṭṭūṭah's dictated accounts of his experience to ibn Juzaiy at the Court of Sulṭān abu 'Inān at Fez constitute his *Riḥlah* (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 Baṭṭūṭah 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 Khaldūn who was born in Tunis in 733/1332 and died in 809/1406. Much of his well-known writings as a geographer, historian, and sociologist was based on his travels in Spain and North Africa. The scientific significance of his "Introduction to Universal History" (*Kitāb 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 Ḥāfiẓ Abru, 'Abd al-Razzāq Samarqandi, abu al-Faḍl 'Allāmi, and Amin Aḥmad Rāzi of Rayy. Ḥāfiẓ Abru wrote his regional geography in Persian, entitled *Zubdat al-Tawārīkh*, which was modelled on the earlier Arabic classical style. Barthold<sup>23</sup> has a high opinion of the material in it relating to the author's time. 'Abd al-Razzāq was born in Herāt 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 *Maṭla' al-Sa'dain wa Majma' al-Baḥrain* 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-Faḍl, born at Agra in 958/1551, was a leading light at the Court of Akbar the Great. His *Ā'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.<sup>24</sup> Amin Aḥmad Rāzi of Rayy visited India in Akbar's time and later in 1002/1593 produced his *Haft Iqlīm* (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 *Manāẓir al-'Ālam* (Description of the World).

<sup>22</sup> Gibb, *Ibn Baṭṭuta*, Introduction, p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. II, p. 213.

<sup>24</sup> *Ā'in-i Akbari*, tr. Jarret, Preface, p. 1.

## 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" (*Mafātīḥ al-'Ulūm*) of al-Khwārizmi, the "Encyclopedia" (*Fihrist*) of ibn al-Nadīm and the "Tracts of the Brethren of Purity" (*Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafa*) 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'ūdi,<sup>25</sup> for example, is well known for such criticism as sprang from his universal outlook, and al-Birūni, Maqdisi, abu al-Fidā', 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-Iṣṭakhri, al-Balkhi, Maqdisi, and several others found this method unsatisfactory and somewhat confusing and felt that these divisions in geometrical 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-Iṣṭakhri initiated a regional approach to his descriptive geography by selecting either geographical units or political divisions closely corresponding them. His own words explain his technique:<sup>26</sup> "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 confusion; so I have resorted to the study of the earth countrywise." 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

<sup>25</sup> Sulaimān Nadawī, *'Arbōn ki Jahāzrāni*, p. 121.

<sup>26</sup> *Kitāb al-Masālik w-al-Mamālik*, ed. de Goeje, Leiden, p. 2.

matters led to rather deterministic generalizations, reflecting on peoples' 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-Iṣṭakhri, ibn Ḥauqat, al-Maqdisi, al-Mas'ūdi, and others was later adopted by al-Qazwīni, abu al-Fidā', and ibn Khaldūn, 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 Ikhwān al-Ṣafa (Brethren of Purity) had considerable geographical information and views. Theirs was a rationalist approach to many problems. Their secret association was founded at Baṣrah 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 conceptions 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 atmosphere.<sup>27</sup> 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.<sup>28</sup>

The influence of physical environment on human activity and animal behaviour and their relationship with health and material well-being were subjected to somewhat critical analysis by several fourth/tenth-century writers on geography. Al-Jāhiz (d. 254/868) of Baṣrah had a real interest in the natural and anthropological sciences. In his "Book of Animals" (*Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*), 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 *Ṣuwar al-Aqālīm* (Figures of Climates) was a critical study based on maps. A few years later Mas'ūdi (d. 345/956) used his vast experience and critical abilities remarkably well in dealing with geographical matters. Mas'ūdi has often been designated<sup>29</sup> as the Muslim Pliny, but he displayed far greater critical ability and scientific curiosity<sup>30</sup> than Pliny in his description of earthquakes, waters of the Dead Sea, geological phenomena, navigational problems, and ebb and flow of tides. He also made the first mention of wind power and windmills in Sijistān. Another work of al-Mas'ūdi's, *Kitāb al-Tanbīh w-al-Ishrāf* (Book of Indication and Revision), sets forth his views on evolution. *Akhbār al-Zamān* contains discussion on the origin of seas,

<sup>27</sup> Levy, *The Sociology of Islam*, Vol. II, pp. 370-94.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 291-96.

<sup>29</sup> Sarton, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 620.

<sup>30</sup> *Murūj*, tr. Sprenger pp 270-78



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 predecessors<sup>31</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup> 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-Madīnat al-Fādīlah*) of al-Fārābi (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 Sinā's *al-Urjuzat al-Šinā'īyyah* (Cantica) displayed an excellent understanding of human and environmental factors. But ibn Sinā's contemporary abu Raihān al-Bīrūni (363-440/973-1048) who has his place among world scientists of all times was a traveller, philosopher, mathematician, astronomer, geographer, and encyclopedist. Sarton rightly remarks<sup>33</sup> 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 Khwārizm, the town of his birth, and largely in Ghazni and India where he spent the rest of his life. Through the patronage of Sultān Maḥmūd and his two successors Mas'ūd and Maudūd he was able to visit India, learn Sanskrit, and acquire knowledge of Indian sciences. His *Kitāb 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.<sup>34</sup> Among his many other writings the "Chronology of Ancient Nations" (*al-Āthār al-Bāqiyah*) was written at Khwārizm in 391/1000, "Canon Masudicus" (*al-Qānūn al-Mas'ūdi*) at Ghazni in 421/1030, and the "Book on Mathematics" (*Kitāb al-Taḥīm*) like the one on stones<sup>35</sup> (*Kitāb al-Jamāhir fi al-Ma'rifat al-Jawāhir*) towards the later years of his life, during the reign of Sultān Maudūd. Al-Bīrūni was truly a scientific geographer and discussed all matters from a critical point of view.<sup>36</sup>

Yet another contemporary was ibn Sa'id al-Qartabi al-Andalusi (420-463/1029-1070) who lived and worked in Toledo. Though he was a leading

<sup>31</sup> Maqdisi, pp. 2-3.

<sup>32</sup> Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, p. 13.

<sup>33</sup> Sarton, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 707.

<sup>34</sup> Sachau, *Al-Bīrūni's India*, Vol. I, p. 210 and Vol. II, pp. 152-53.

<sup>35</sup> F. Krenkow, "Al-Bīrūni," *Islamic Culture*, Vol. XV, No. 4, 1941.

<sup>36</sup> Nafis Ahmad, *Muslim Contribution to Geography*, pp. 29-35.

astronomer and historian, he tackled geographical problems scientifically. His *Tabaqāt al-Umam* paid special attention to the history of science. The 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 Jāmi described Alexandria and discussed its climate. 'Abd al-Latīf's book on Egypt may be considered to be one of the most important topographical works of the Middle Ages. This work attempts at analysis on the basis of known facts and theories which are discernible though they are not necessarily geographical. Al-Zamakhsharī's (d. 539/1144) *Kitāb al-Amkinah w-al-Jibāl w-al-Miyāh* was a work of geographical dictionary. Ibn Sa'īd al-Maghribī's main work was a geographical treatise entitled *Kitāb al-Jaghrāfiya*. 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 Hulāgu gave him an opportunity to become a connecting link between his predecessors and the mathematical geographers led by Naṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī at Marāghah. Some of his ideas were derived from al-Ḥasan al-Marrākushī (627/1229).

A notable writer of scientific geography was Zakariya al-Qazwini (600-688/1203-1283). He is noted for his two works,<sup>37</sup> namely, '*Ajā'ib al-Makhlūqāt*' and '*Ajā'ib al-Buldān*' (Marvels of Countries). A later enlarged edition of his geography was called *Āthār al-Bilād*. Qazwini's works exerted a deep influence upon the Arabic-speaking people as well as on those reading Persian and Turkish. Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Ṭūsī also wrote a cosmography in Persian. A notable treatise on commercial geography was written by 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Naṣr under the title *Nihāyat al-Rutbat al-Zarīfah*.

In the seventh/thirteenth century, abu al-Fidā' al-Ayyūbi (b. 672/1273) was an outstanding geographer who had thoroughly assimilated the earlier geographical contributions, especially those of Ptolemy, al-Idrisi, and ibn Sa'īd. His main geographical work *Taqwīm al-Buldān* displays extensive knowledge and balance in the selection of information. Abu al-Fidā's geographical work has earned high recognition among modern European geographers.<sup>38</sup> The geographical work of Ḥamd Allah Mustaufi, *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, 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

<sup>37</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. II, pp. 841-44.

<sup>38</sup> Reinaud, "Introduction Generale a la Geographie des Orientaux," *Géographie d'Aboulféda*, Paris, 1848.

Baku and the islands of South-East Asia.<sup>39</sup> His historical work, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdeh* (Select History) also contains useful geographical interpretations. A contemporary of Mustaufi was al-Dimashqi (d. 728/1327). His cosmographical work, *Nukhbat al-Dahr fī 'Ajā'ib al-Barr w-al-Bahr*, was in the traditional style, but is remarkable for its knowledge about the Coromandal Coast of South India.<sup>40</sup>

Ibn Khaldūn's "Universal History" (*Kitāb 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.<sup>41</sup> Ibn Khaldūn 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.<sup>42</sup> He also gave a critical appraisal of the industrial and agricultural resources of Andalusia.

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 *Manāẓir al-'Ālam* (Descriptions of the World) written at Damascus in 1007/1598, Hāji Khalīfah's encyclopedia, *Kashf al-Zunūn*, and Auliya Chelebi's travel book, *Tārīkh-i Saiyāh*. 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 centres and areas developed strong traditions of their own. For example, Baghdād 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

<sup>39</sup> *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, Chap. XX.

<sup>40</sup> Nainar, *Arab's Knowledge of South India*, p. 19.

<sup>41</sup> *Murūj*, tr. Sprenger.

<sup>42</sup> *Muqaddimah* tr. Franz Rosenthal, Vol. II, Chap. IV, Sec. 5.



Baghdād, many other parts of the eastern world of Islam became centres 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-Fazārī's *Kitāb al-Zīj* (Tables) reflects strong Indian influence. The first series of regular observations with accurate instruments were conducted at Jundi-Shāhpūr during the first half of the third/ninth century and were utilized by Ahmad al-Nahāwandi and others. Ya'qūb al-Kindī's works and those of others such as Yahya ibn Mansūr, Sanad ibn 'Ali, and al-Marwarūzi 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-Māmūn, to determine the size of the earth, in latitude  $36^{\circ}$  North.<sup>43</sup> 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 Mūsa ibn Shākir. The result of these two measurements was the calculation of the earth's circumference as 20,400 miles and the diameter 6,500 miles<sup>44</sup> respectively. A large map of the world was also drawn. The three sons of Mūsa ibn Shākir, 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-Khwārizmi and al-Kindi, the great astronomer abu Ma'shar of Balkh (d. c. 272/836) was specially interested in celestial phenomena. Al-Māhāni (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-'Ālam, al-Rāzi, al-Kūhi, and abu al-Wafā' were among the leading lights of this wonderful age.

In the course of time, Cairo also developed into an important centre for work in mathematical geography. The Caliph al-'Aziz (365-386/975-996) founded an observatory near Cairo and al-Hākim continued to patronize it. Ibn Yūnus (d. 399/1009) was a great mathematician and astronomer and ibn

<sup>43</sup> Naillino, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. I, p. 498.

<sup>44</sup> The degree near Tadmur was measured and computed at  $56\frac{2}{3}$  miles. But the measurements were in Arabian miles and one Arabian mile is equal to 6472.4 English feet. Hence the circumference of the earth, 20,400 Arabian miles, is equal to 24,847.2 English miles which is remarkably near the actual figure.

al-Haiṭham a notable physicist. In point of time, al-Birūnī'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-Birūnī's contemporary, ibn Sīna, 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 centres of scientific work relating to mathematics. An outstanding scholar and practical geographer was al-Marrākushi, the writer of *Jāmi' al-Mabūdi w-al-Ghāyah* (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-Marrākushi 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-Battānī's tables. His works were translated into Latin under Alfonso. Al-Zarqālī (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 Jābir (Geber), ibn Aflah (d. 535/1140), ibn Rushd (Averroës) (d. 595/1198), and ibn Bājjah (Avempace) (d. 533/1138) were all interested in the mathematical side of geography.

In the eastern Islamic lands, in later generations, the Saljūq period was productive of much scientific work in mathematical geography, particularly the reign of Jalāl al-Dīn Malik Shāh (r. 465–485/1072–1092). The Mongol princes turned out to be great patrons of scientific activity. Hulāgu Khān (d. 664/1265) had many mathematicians at his Court and a great observatory was set up at Marāghah on the shores of lake Uruniyeh, fifty miles from Tabriz. Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsi was the leading light. The Marāghah astronomers were greatly interested in geography. For example, al-Ṭūsi's *Tadhkirah* (History) in its third chapter deals with geodetic matters and seas and winds. Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī's (634–711/1236–1311) *Nihāyat al-Idrāk* is devoted to astronomical, meteorological, and geographical questions. Al-Qazwini and al-Watwāt 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 measurement 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.<sup>45</sup> The early Arab astronomers, al-Khwārizmi, al-Farghani, Ḥabash al-Ḥasīb, and al-Battāni, made use of Indian and Greek methods of finding latitude. But better techniques soon began to be employed. The sons of Mūsa ibn Shākir at Baghdād determined the city's latitude, accurate within a minute, and ibn Yūnus at Fustāt (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-Bīrūni 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 demonstrated 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 Baghdād and Ghazni found by al-Bīrūni by the terrestrial method was remarkably accurate. *Qānūn al-Mas'ūdi*, *Kitāb al-Hind*, and *Kitāb al-Taḥīm* are the repositories of calculations. Other almost exact calculations were those of the three sons of Mūsa ibn Shākir at their observatory in Baghdād, of al-Māhāni at Surra Man-Ra'a, of ibn Yūnus 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

<sup>45</sup> Schoy, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-68.



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-Māmūn in the plains of Sinjār, and al-Bīrūnī's measurement of 56 miles 0' 50'' 6'' for a degree conducted in India was remarkable for its accuracy.<sup>46</sup> 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 centre of space. Al-Bīrūnī, 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 Sa'id 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-Kātibi al-Qazwīni (d. 676/1277), who was connected with the Marāghah 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 Quṭb al-Dīn, a pupil of Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī. His semi-geographical work, *Nihāyat al-Idrāk*, contains a discussion of these questions. Thus, Muslim mathematical geographers often expressed doubts on Greek and Ptolemaic concepts about the earth. Sarton<sup>47</sup> rightly emphasizes that the doubts expressed in Arabic writings were not sterile as they eventually paved the way for the Copernican reform in 950/1543.

## 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

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 269.

<sup>47</sup> Sarton, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 674

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.<sup>48</sup>

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-Khwārizmī's *Kitāb Sūrat 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-Māmūn 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 suggested<sup>49</sup> that there was a collection of maps of Iran including a pre-'Abbāsīd 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-Faḡīh mentions a map of Dailam which was made for Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf, and al-Balādhuri notes in his *Futūḥ al-Buldān* that a petition to Caliph al-Mansūr was supported by a map of the canals of the Baḡrah area.

In the evolution of Muslim cartography, the Balkhī School represents a distinct advance. Al-Balkhī's atlas included, besides a map of the world, maps of Arabia, the Indian Ocean (Baḡr Fars), Maghrib, Egypt, Syria, the Mediterranean 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 Balkhī's effort have been lost and only the copied material by al-Iṣṭakhri and ibn Ḥauqal has been handed

<sup>48</sup> Raisz, *General Cartography*, p. 21.

<sup>49</sup> Kramers, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Sup., p. 65.

down to posterity. A follower of these traditions was al-Maqdisi who explained the basis of the drawings of al-Iṣṭakhri and then made his own regional maps of the world, using symbols and a colour scheme for physical features which made his maps almost similar to modern maps.<sup>50</sup>

Al-Birūni made a round map of the world in *Kitāb al-Taḥīm* to illustrate the position of seas, and in *al-Āthār al-Bāqīyyah* (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-Rahmān al-Ṣūfi in Cairo in about 432/1040; a bronze globe was made by ibn Hula of Maṣil in 674/1275. Maḥmūd Kāshghari, in his *Dīwān Luḡhat 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 subtropical 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 navigators 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'ūdi and al-Idrisi have mentioned the attempts of their co-religionists. Al-Mas'ūdi mentions in his *Murūj al-Dhahab* the venture into the Atlantic before 346/957 by Khashkhāf of Cordova, and

<sup>50</sup> Maqdisi (Constantinople MS.), p. 8.



al-Idrisi relates the story of the Maghrūrīn (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 (*Jazīrat 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 professional 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 Abān, Muḥammad ibn Shādhān, and Laith ibn Kablān. Later, Aḥmad ibn Mājid wrote *Kitāb al-Fawā'id fī Uṣūl al-Baḥr* in 895-896/1489-1490 and Sulaimān al-Mahri produced his '*Ulūm al-Baḥrīyyah* in the early tenth/sixteenth century. Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Mājid 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 Mājid 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 Mājid and al-Mahri may be regarded among the early modern writers on nautical matters. Their knowledge of the geography and meteorology of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean was extensive.

Between 867/1462 and 896/1490, ibn Mājid wrote thirty nautical texts. Of these, the most important work was *Kitāb al-Fawā'id*. The book is a compendium 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 harbours 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.<sup>51</sup>

Sulaimān al-Mahri was a younger contemporary of 'ibn Mājid. He wrote five treatises on sailing instructions. Of these the third was entitled *al-'Umdat al-Mahriyyah fī Dabṭ al-'Ulūm al-Baḥrīyyah*. 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

<sup>51</sup> G. Ferrand, *Introduction à l'astronomie nautique*, p. 228.

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.<sup>52</sup> 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 says<sup>53</sup> 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 Shirāzi, the geographer of the Ilkhāns 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 labours of Konrad Miller, Prince Youssouf Kamal, and Kramers have been very rewarding and have presented Muslim cartography in a new light.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Sarton, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, Part II, p. 1047.

<sup>53</sup> Maqdisi, *Ahsan al-Taqāsīm*, p. 14.

<sup>54</sup> *Monumenta Cartographica Africae et Aegypti*.

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 development 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 Baghdād 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.<sup>55</sup> 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-Farghāni and al-Battāni; 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-Zarqāli and al-Biṭrūji. 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 references<sup>56</sup> 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 Skuggsjá* 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

<sup>55</sup> Beazley, *Dawn of Modern Geography*, Vol. II, p. 8.

<sup>56</sup> Roger Bacon, *Opus Majus*, Vol. I, p. 318.

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.<sup>57</sup> 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 Borgian world map (c. 854/1450), Este world map<sup>58</sup> (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.<sup>59</sup>

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.

<sup>57</sup> G. Ferrand, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

<sup>58</sup> Kimble, *Geography in the Middle Ages*, p. 197.

<sup>59</sup> Keane, *The Evolution of Geography*, p. 48.



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## Chapter LXIII

### 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 *Encyclopaedia 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 neighbours, 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."

Labouring under this fixed idea, Cantor proceeds to attribute almost everything 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 investigated 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.<sup>1</sup> 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 learning 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, trigonometry, 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.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. I, Chap. VIII.



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-Khwārizmi 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 development, 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-Birūni (363–432/973–1040), ibn Sīna (370–428/980–1037), ibn al-Samḥ (d. 427/1035), Muḥammad ibn Ḥusain al-Karkhi (d. 410/1019 or 420/1029), abu Sa'id 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:

- (i) *Tāmm* (perfect numbers), i.e., those which are equal to the sum of their divisors, e.g.,  $6 = 1 + 2 + 3$ .
- (ii) *Muta'ādilān* (equivalents), i.e., two numbers, the sum of the divisors of which is the same, e.g., 39 and 55:  $1 + 3 + 13 = 1 + 5 + 11$ .
- (iii) *Mutaḥābbān* (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) *Muthallathāt* (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.<sup>2</sup>

The Arabs also solved the famous problem of finding a square which, on the addition and subtraction of a given number, yields other squares.<sup>3</sup>

The extent of their knowledge of arithmetic can be gauged from the fact that al-Birūni was able to give the correct value of  $16^{16}-1$ .<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. I, p. 124.

<sup>3</sup> Moritz Cantor, *Geschichte der Mathematik*, Vol. I, p. 752.

<sup>4</sup> George Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science*, Vol. I, p. 707.

## ALGEBRA

The ancient mathematicians, including the Greeks, considered the number to be a pure magnitude. It was only when al-Khwārizmi (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-Khwārizmi 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. Ibrāhīm ibn Sinān (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.<sup>5</sup> Abu Kāmil Shujā' al-Miṣri developed the algebra of al-Khwārizmi, and determined the real roots of quadratic equations and their interpretations. Al-Khāzin (d. c. 350/961) solved the cubic equation by employing the conic sections.<sup>6</sup> Abu al-Wafā' (al-Būzjāni) (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-Kuḥi (fl. c. 378/988) investigated the solvability of algebraic equations. Abu Maḥmūd 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-Bīrūni, solved the problem which leads to the equation:  $x^3 + 13.5x + 5 = 10x^2$ , and founded geometrical methods for solving cubic equations. Al-Bīrūni 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 mathematicians, wrote a book on algebra, called *al-Fakhri*, 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-Khayyām (c. 430-517/c. 1038-1123), who has recently become the most glamorous figure of the fifth/eleventh century on account

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 632.

<sup>6</sup> Heinrich Suter, *Die Mathematiker und Astronomen der Araber und ihre Werke*.

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.<sup>7</sup> 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, Khayyām has a very exalted place in the history of algebra.<sup>8</sup>

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."<sup>9</sup> He goes on to relate the story that in the seventh/thirteenth century, Frederick II Hohenstaufen sent a special deputation to Mosul to ask Kamāl al-Dīn ibn Yūnus (d. 640/1242), the mathematician of a college later on called after him the Kamalic College, to solve some mathematical problems. Kamāl al-Dīn solved these problems for the Emperor.<sup>10</sup> 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, Muḥammad, Aḥmad and Hasan, sons of Mūsa bin Shākir, 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-Wafā', al-Kuhi, and others founded and successfully developed a branch of geometry which consists of problems leading

<sup>7</sup> Cantor, *op. cit.*, p. 775.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 776.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 778

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*



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 Kāmil Shujā' al-Hāsib al-Miṣri 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 Thābit bin Qurrah, a Ṣābian astronomer of the court of the Caliph Mu'taḍid, was the anticipation of Descartes' great discovery of analytical geometry in the eleventh/seventeenth century. Abu Sa'id 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)."<sup>11</sup>

Abu al-Wafā' 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 polyhedra, which is even now considered to be a very difficult subject.<sup>12</sup>

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 intersecting a circle.<sup>13</sup>

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-Dīn Rāzi (d. 606/1209) made a preliminary critique of Euclid's postulate, but it was Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 673/1274), who, in the later 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,

<sup>11</sup> Sarton, *op. cit.*, p. 665.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 667.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 721.

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-Khwārizmi 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.<sup>14</sup>

Al-Battāni (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."<sup>15</sup> The previous works contained only the full arc, but al-Battāni remarked that it was more advantageous to use the half arc. Cantor considers this "an advance in mathematics which cannot be appreciated highly enough."<sup>16</sup> Al-Battāni completed the introduction of tangents and cotangents in trigonometry, 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:<sup>17</sup>

$$\cos a = \cos b \cos c + \sin b \sin c \cos a.$$

Abu al-Wafā'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

$$\begin{aligned} 2 \sin^2 \frac{a}{2} &= 1 - \cos a, \\ \sin a &= 2 \sin \frac{a}{2} \cos \frac{a}{2}. \end{aligned}$$

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.<sup>18</sup>

Al-Khujandi is considered to be the discoverer of the sine theorem relative to spherical triangles. This sine theorem displaced the theorem of Menelaos.<sup>19</sup>

Ibn Yūnus (d. 400/1009) made considerable contributions to trigonometry, and solved many problems of spherical astronomy by means of orthogonal

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 563.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 603.

<sup>16</sup> Cantor, *op. cit.*, p. 737.

<sup>17</sup> Sarton, *op. cit.*, p. 603.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 667.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 668.

projections. He discovered the first of those addition-subtraction formulae which were indispensable before the invention of logarithms, namely, the equivalent of

$$\cos a \cos b = \frac{1}{2} [\cos (a - b) + \cos (a + b)]$$

He also gave a formula for the approximate value of  $\sin 1^\circ$ .<sup>20</sup>

Kūshyār ibn Labbān (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.<sup>21</sup>

Al-Zarqālī (fl. 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.<sup>22</sup>

Al-Ḥasan al-Marrākushī (fl. c. 661/1262) introduced in 627/1229 the graphic method in trigonometry and prepared the tables of trigonometric functions.

Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī wrote on plane and spherical trigonometry as a subject independent of astronomy.

Bahā' al-Dīn (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 astronomy was begun.<sup>23</sup> 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 summarize 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 observatory 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-Māmūn in Iraq in 214/829.
- (ii) The Ispahān observatory built by abu Ḥanīfah al-Dīnāwari (d. 282/895).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 717.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 759.

<sup>23</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. I, p. 498.



- (iii) The **Kh**wārizm observatory built by al-Bīrūni.
- (iv) The **Baghdād** observatory of **Th**ābit ibn Qurrah.
- (v) The **Baghdād** 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 Antākiyah (Antioch) observatories where al-Battāni made observations from 264/877 to 306/918.
- (viii) The banu Mūsa observatory at **Baghdād**.
- (ix) The **Sharaf** al-Daulah observatory where al-Ṣāghāni and al-Kuhi made their observations.
- (x) The **Ṭabīṭala** observatory where abu Ishāq worked and made observations.
- (xi) The **Būzjān** observatory associated with the name of abu al-Wafā'
- (xii) The ibn A'lam observatory built at **Baghdād** in 351-352/962-963.
- (xiii) The Egyptian observatory where ibn Yūnus produced his famous almanac.
- (xiv) The **Māmūni** observatory, associated with the name of Māmūn Bataihi (d. 519/1125).
- (xv) The **Marāghah** observatory erected by Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsi 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-Dīn.
- (xvii) The **Kashmir** observatory.
- (xviii) The **Firūzshāhi** observatory.
- (xix) The **Samarqand** observatory erected by Sultān Ulugh Beg Mirza in 823/1420.

An account of these observatories lies scattered in various books, such as: *Khulāṣah Tārīkh al-'Arab*; *Tamaddun-i 'Arab*; *Kitāb al-Khiṭaṭ w-al-Āthār*; *Sharḥ Chaghmani*; *Jāmi' Bahādur Khāni*; *Mu'jam al-Buldān*; *Iktifā' al-Qunū'*; *Fuwāt al-Wajnat*; *Raudat al-Ṣafā'*; *Wafayāt al-A'yān*; *Kashf al-Zunūn*.

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'tidāl* (Meridian Circle), fixed in the plane of the meridian, and devised to determine the distances of the heavenly bodies.

- (iii) *Dhāt al-Autār*, constructed by Taqi al-Dīn, served as an alternative for the Meridian Circle which was useful during night as well as day.
- (iv) *Dhāt 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) *Dhāt al-Samt w-al-Irtifā'* (Alt-azimuth) consisted of a semi-circle and had the diameter of an equi-surfaced cylinder. Taqi al-Dīn has mentioned it in his work, to have been constructed by Muslim astronomers.
- (vi) *Dhāt al-Shu'batain*. It had three faces on one base and served to determine the altitude of the heavenly bodies.
- (vii) *Dhāt al-Jaib* consisted of two faces and was used for the determination of the altitude.
- (viii) *Al-Mushabbah bi al-Nāṭiq* constructed by Taqi al-Dīn and used for determining the distance between two stars.
- (ix) *Ṭabaq al-Manāṭiq* constructed by Ghiyāth al-Dīn Jamshīd 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) *Zarqālah* constructed by Shaikh Ishāq ibn Yahya, generally known as *al-Naqqāsh al-Andalusi* (the Spanish painter). It was a very useful instrument for observing the movement of the heavenly bodies.
- (xi) *Dhāt al-Kursi* constructed by Badi' of the Astrolabe (Badi' al-Asturlābi), as described by Abd al-Rahmān al-Ṣūfi.
- (xii) *Al-Ālat al-Shāmilah* constructed by al-Khujandi and used for determining the latitudes.
- (xiii) The several types of quadrants as described in *Kashf al-Zunūn*.
- (xiv) *Asturlāb Sarṭāni Mijnah*, the transit instrument described by Muḥammad ibn Naṣr and Manṣūr ibn 'Ali.
- (xv) *Al-Jaib al-Ghā'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 Ibrāhīm al-Fazāri (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-Māmūn (198-218/813-833). The observatory of Baghdād under Yahya bin abi Manṣūr (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 *Almajest*, 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."<sup>24</sup> He was also the author of several works on astronomy.

Under the orders of al-Māmūn, 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  $38^\circ$  and  $36^\circ$  latitudes by 2,877 ft.

Habash al-Hāsib was an astronomer under al-Māmūn 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.<sup>25</sup>

'Ali bin 'Isa al-Asturlābi was a famous maker of astronomical instruments. He took part in the degree measurement ordered by al-Māmūn, and wrote one of the earliest Arabic treatises on the astrolabe.<sup>26</sup>

Al-Marwarrudhi was one of those who took part in the solar observations made at Damascus in 217-218/832-833.<sup>27</sup>

The three sons of Mūsa bin Shākir made regular observations in the observatories in Baghdād between 236/850 and 257/870.<sup>28</sup>

Al-Farghāni was one of the most distinguished astronomers in the service of al-Māmūn and his successors. His famous work, *Kitāb fi Ḥarakāt al-Samā-wiyyah wa Jawāmi'* 'Ilm al-Nujūm (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.<sup>29</sup>

Al-Mahāni (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 Yūnus.<sup>30</sup>

Al-Nairīzi (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.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Sarton, *op. cit.*, p. 565.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 566.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. I, pp. 498 *et seq.*

<sup>29</sup> Sarton, *op. cit.*, p. 567.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 597-98.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 599.



Thābit ibn Qurrah published solar observations, explaining his methods. He revised the theory of the movement of the sun.<sup>32</sup> 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.<sup>33</sup>

Al-Battāni 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° 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 co-efficients 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.<sup>34</sup> He determined the moon's nodes and discovered the wobbling motion of the earth's orbit.<sup>35</sup>

Ibn Amājūr (abu Qāsim 'Abd Allah) together with his son abu al-Ḥasan 'Ali made many observations between 272/885 and 321/933 which were recorded by ibn Yūnus. They produced many astronomical tables, including the table of Mars according to Persian chronology.<sup>36</sup> Abu al-Ḥasan discovered that the moon's distance from the sun is not constant as assumed by Ptolemy.<sup>37</sup>

Al-Kūhi was the leading astronomer working in 378/988 at the Sharaf al-Daulah observatory.<sup>38</sup>

'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣūfi (291-376/903-986) was one of the most eminent Muslim astronomers. His chief work, *Kitāb al-Kawākib al-Thābitah al-Muṣawwar* (Book of the Fixed Stars Illustrated), is regarded as one of the three masterpieces of Muslim observational astronomy, the other two being one by ibn Yūnus and a work prepared for Ulugh Beg.<sup>39</sup>

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.<sup>40</sup> He determined the stellar motion by observing that the stars traverse one

<sup>32</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. I, p. 498.

<sup>33</sup> Sarton, *op. cit.*, p. 599.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 603.

<sup>35</sup> *Iktifā' al-Qunū'*, p. 243.

<sup>36</sup> Sarton, *op. cit.*, p. 630.

<sup>37</sup> *Tamaddun-i Arab*, p. 420.

<sup>38</sup> Sarton, *op. cit.*, p. 665.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 666.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

degree in seventy solar years.<sup>41</sup> He also determined the latitude and longitude of many stars,<sup>42</sup> and measured the greatest declination of the planet Mercury.<sup>43</sup> He found that the earth is spherical and may, therefore, be supposed to be inhabited everywhere.<sup>44</sup> He discovered the satellites of Jupiter, discussed the motion of the sun-spots, and determined the eccentric orbit of the comets.<sup>45</sup>

Abu al-Wafā' al-Būzjāni 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 liberation in the moon's motion. Some of the older writers believed that he discovered the third liberation and that Tycho Brahi rediscovered it in the tenth/sixteenth century.<sup>46</sup> But Sarton remarks that abu al-Wafā' 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 Brahi.<sup>47</sup>

Al-Khujandi made astronomical observations, including a determination of the obliquity of ecliptic, in Rayy, in 384/994.<sup>48</sup>

Maslamah ibn Aḥmad al-Majrīti (d. c. 398/1007) edited and corrected the astronomical tables of al-Khwārizmi 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.<sup>49</sup>

Ibn Yūnus 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-Zīj al-Kabīr al-Ḥākimi*, 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 quinoxes  $51.2''$  per annum), and give an account of the geodetic measurements made under al-Māmūn's orders.<sup>50</sup> 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 Yūnus 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.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>41</sup> *Sharḥ Chaghmani*, p. 23.

<sup>42</sup> *Iktifā' al-Qunū'*, p. 248.

<sup>43</sup> Ghulām Husain Jaunpuri, *Jāmi' Bahādur Khāni*, p. 596.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 668.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 628.

<sup>46</sup> *Khulāṣah Tārīkh al-'Arab*, 243.

<sup>47</sup> Sarton, *op. cit.*, p. 666.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 668.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 716.

<sup>51</sup> Carl Rufus, "The Influence of Islamic Astronomy in Europe and Far East," *Popular Astronomy*, May 1939, pp. 233-38.

Al-Birūni 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."<sup>52</sup> He made accurate determination of latitudes and longitudes and also other geodetic measurements. He discussed in his book *Qānūn al-Mas'ūdi* 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-Birūni, viz., *al-Qānūn al-Mas'ūdi*, 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.<sup>53</sup> It should be noted that Copernicus gave the scientific formulation and detailed working out of the heliocentric theory some three centuries later.

Al-Zarqāli was "the best observer of his time. He invented an improved astrolabe called *Ṣafīḥah*; 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 measurements it amounted to 12.04" per year (the real value being 11.8")." He edited the planetary tables called the "Toledan Tables."<sup>54</sup>

'Umar *Khayyām* was called to the new observatory of Rayy in 467/1074 by Sultān Malik *Shāh Jalāl al-Dīn Saljūqi* to reform the old calendar. Moritz Cantor remarks that the calendar prepared by 'Umar *Khayyām*, called *al-Tārīkh al-Jalāli*, was more accurate than any other proposed before or after his time. Its date was 10th Ramadān 471, i. e., 16th March 1079. The modern interpretation of *Khayyām'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.<sup>55</sup>

*Chingīz Khān* erected a magnificent observatory at *Marāghah* near Tabriz far surpassing any built by his predecessors. Naṣir al-Dīn *Tūsi* was the greatest genius of this institution. He was quite original and independent, and criticized

<sup>52</sup> Sarton, *op. cit.*, p. 707.

<sup>53</sup> *Tamaddun-i 'Arab*, p. 425.

<sup>54</sup> Sarton, *op. cit.*, p. 758.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 760.



Ptolemy quite severely, "paving the way for the overthrow of the geocentric system."<sup>56</sup>

Ulugh Beg, grandson of Tīmūr, 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.<sup>57</sup> 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.<sup>58</sup>

The Mughuls inherited their fondness for astronomy from Ulugh Beg. Farishtah remarks that Humāyūn was a keen astronomer and spent a good deal of time in its pursuit.<sup>59</sup> An observatory was founded in Delhi under the orders of Muḥammad Shāh 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.<sup>60</sup>

The Nizāmiyyah 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

<sup>56</sup> Carl Rufus, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-38.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Tamaddun-i 'Arab*, pp. 422-24.

<sup>59</sup> *Tārīkh Farishtah*, p. 213.

<sup>60</sup> Ghulām Husain Jaunpuri, *Jāmi' Bahādur Khāni*.

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-munākh*), almacantar (*al-muqantarāh*), nadir (*nādir*), zenith (*samt al-rās*), algol (*al-ghūl*), altair (*al-tā'ir*), aldebaran (*al-dabarān*), fomalhaut (*fam al-hūt*), denab (*dhanab*), vega (*wāqi'*), and the various names of Muslim astronomers given to the craters of the moon.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Mohammad Abdul Rahman Khan, "Names of Thirteen Muslim Astronomers Given to Some Natural Features of the Moon," *Islamic Culture*, Vol. XXVII, No. 2, April 1953, pp. 78-85.

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## Chapter LXIV

### 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 Yūsuf Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq al-Kindi<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XXI.

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-Kindī'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-Kindī's writings more have survived in Latin translations than in the Arabic original.<sup>2</sup>

An observatory was opened by the three sons of Mūsa ibn Shākir (236–257/850–870) in their house at Baghdād. The Buwaihid Sulṭān Sharaf al-Daulah (372–379/982–989) instituted another in his palace at Baghdād where 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Ṣūfi (d. 376/986), Aḥmad al-Ṣāghāni (d. 380/990), and abu al-Wafā' (d. 387/997) carried out their astronomical observations. At the Court of another Buwaihid, Rukn al-Daulah (320–366/932–976) of al-Ravy, flourished abu Ja'far al-Khāzin of Khurāsān 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 Shirāz, Nishāpūr, and Samarqand.<sup>3</sup> Banu Mūsa published a work on the balance.

'Uṭārid ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥāsib wrote a book on lapidary which is reckoned among the oldest Arabic works on this subject: abu Zakariya al-Rāzi quoted from 'Uṭārid in his famous book *al-Ḥāwi*. Al-Rāzi the Iranian was one of the greatest medical men of the Middle Ages. He was an expert chemist and physicist.

Al-Ḥākim the Fāṭimid was personally interested in astronomical calculations. He built on the Muquṭṭam an observatory to which he used to ride before dawn. The intellectual lights of his Court were 'Ali ibn Yūnus (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, *Kitāb al-Manāẓir*, 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 manufactured in Italy centuries later.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> P. K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 1958, *passim*, pp. 370f.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 376.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 629.



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  $19^\circ$  vertically below the horizon. He tried by these means to estimate the height of the homogeneous 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 Afghānistān lived Abu al-Raiḥān Muḥammad ibn Ahmad al-Birūni (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-Birūni 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-Birūni 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-Rāzī's is that of Ibn Sīna (Latin Avicenna) (370-428/980-1037). Al-Rāzī was more of a physician than Ibn Sīna, but Ibn Sīna was more of a philosopher. In this physician, philosopher, philologist, and poet, medieval Arab science culminates and is, one might say, incarnated. Ibn Sīna 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 Sīna 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 *Shaiḫ al-Ra'īs*.

Jalāl al-Dīn Malik Shāh patronized astronomical studies. He established in 467/1074 at Rayy an 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-Khayyām. 'Umar al-Khayyām was born between 430/1038 and 440/1048 at Nishāpūr 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-Khayyām and his collaborators resulted in the production of the calendar named, after his patron, *al-Tārīkh al-Jalāli*, 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-Khayyām's leads to an error of one day in about 5,000 years. 'Umar al-Khayyām 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. Muḥammad al-'Afi was the first to mention it in his *Jawāmi*. 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 navigating their ships as is evident from Chu Yu's account of sailing vessels using it between Canton and Sumatra.

Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's most brilliant pupil Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzi (634-711/1236-1311) wrote *Nihāyat al-Idrāk fī Dirāyat al-Aflāk* 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.

Kamāl al-Dīn Fārisi (d. 720/1320) was a famous pupil of Quṭb al-Dīn and under his inspiration wrote *Tanqīḥ al-Manāẓir* (a commentary on ibn al-Haiṭham's classical work on optics, *Kitāb al-Manāẓir*), which was published with notes by the Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif, 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 'Alī, al-Bīrūnī, 'Umar al-Khayyām, Muẓaffar al-Asfuzāri,<sup>5</sup> and several others did some work on these branches of physics, but the most important work was done by 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Khāzini in

<sup>5</sup> G. Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science*, Vol. II, p. 216.

his *Mizān al-Hikmah*, written in 618/1221 and considered among the masterpieces of the Middle Ages. In this work al-Khāzini discussed mechanics, hydrostatics, and physics in a masterly way. He gave tables of specific gravities of liquid substances (on the lines adopted by al-Birūni) 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 Hārūn al-Rashīd's presenting Charlemagne with a water-clock in 192/807.

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## Chapter LXV

## 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 332 B.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 Taylor<sup>1</sup> 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 Wilson<sup>2</sup> 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* (χέω), to melt and pour, as in the casting of a bronze statue, then its derivative *chuma*, 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 *kīmiya* 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 *kīmiya* from the Greek-speaking alchemists—to know what the word *chemeia* signifies and how the Arabic word *kīmiya* compares with it in meaning. Gildemeister<sup>3</sup> explains that "*kīmiya* 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

<sup>1</sup> F. Sherwood Taylor, *The Alchemists*, 1951, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> J. W. Wilson, "Review of Taylor's *The Alchemists*," *Btn. Hist. Med.*, 1951, Vol. XXV, No. 397.

<sup>3</sup> J. Gildemeister, "Alchymie," *Z.D.M.G.*, 1876, Vol. XXX, No. 534.

preparations made out of it. It is thus a synonym of *iksīr* which likewise signifies a transforming agent. By contrast *chumeia* is never used by the Greeks in any other sense than transmutation of metals."<sup>4</sup> 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 *kīmiya* and *iksīr*, the latter not being represented in Greek literature. In fact, *iksīr* occurs far more in Arabic than the word *kīmiya*. *Iksīr* or *al-iksīr* has been Europeanized into elixir which has come to mean as an agent for prolonging life. According to Taylor,<sup>5</sup> "the alchemy of China was primarily concerned with the prolonging of life"; he adds<sup>6</sup> 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 predecessors." P. Kraus<sup>7</sup> published a voluminous work on Jābir. Its reviewer<sup>8</sup> correctly noticed that "as to the origin of all those theories, Kraus maintains that not much of Jābir'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. *Iksīr* 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 Alexandria.

*The Urge to Pursue Alchemy.*—There were two types of seekers after longevity. 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, Wiedemann<sup>9</sup> 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, Jurji<sup>10</sup> states that "later tradition makes Jābir

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 538.

<sup>5</sup> F. Sherwood Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>7</sup> P. Kraus, "Jābir ibn Ḥayyān," *Memoires del' Inst. Egypte*, Cairo, 1945, Vols. XLIV and LXV.

<sup>8</sup> *J. A. Or. Soc.*, Vol. LXV, 1945, pp. 68-70.

<sup>9</sup> E. Wiedemann, "al-Kīmiya," *Encycl. of Islam*, Vol. II, p. 1010.

<sup>10</sup> E. J. Jurji. *Illumination in Islamic Mysticism*, 1938.

ibn Ḥayyān the first Sufi." Kraus<sup>11</sup> explains how Jābir, the alchemist, became interested in Sufism. He writes, "Alchemy is never practised by Jābir 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,<sup>12</sup> "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 Khān 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.

Khālid, 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 Khālid, son of the Caliph Yazid I and grandson of Mu'āwiyah. In the Arabic literature on alchemy, compiled about 377/987 by the famous bookseller al-Nadīm, it is stated, as translated by Fuck,<sup>13</sup> that "Khālid 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-Nadīm 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 Khālid 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 Khālid by Professor Ruska,<sup>14</sup> the famous German historian of alchemy.

*The Oldest Alchemy and How it Reached the Muslim World*.—A series of

<sup>11</sup> P. Kraus, "Islamic Dogmatic Theology and Manichaeism," *al-Urwa*, Bombay, I: 34, 1947.

<sup>12</sup> W. A. P. Martin, "Alchemy in China," *Hanlin Papers* 1880, p. 234.

<sup>13</sup> J. W. Fuck, "The Arabic Literature on Alchemy according to al-Nadīm," *Ambix*, 1951, Vol. IV, No. 81.

<sup>14</sup> J. Ruska, *Arabische Alchemisten, I, Chalid Ibn Yazid Ibn Muawiyah*, Heidelberg, 1924



authors have established that alchemy is indigenous to China. Among the older writers may be mentioned Martin,<sup>15</sup> while the best historical evidence has been offered by Dubs.<sup>16</sup> 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-ia*, Gold-making Juice, became the loan-word *kīmiya*, upon which Schneider<sup>17</sup> has published the most recent communication. It is probable that the word *kīmiya*, 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 *kīmiya*. The pre-Islamic Arabs, bringing 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-Shāpūr, 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 Māni. 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-Shāpūr academy was by no means dead during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd to which period Jābir also belonged. When Kraus and others notice that there was much in Jābir 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 'Abbāsīd dynasty. Such agents were active as far east as the province of Khurāsān in Persia. One such emissary was Jābir's father, Ḥayyān, a druggist by profession. Jābir was born at Tūs, in Khurāsān, about 104/722, during the family's sojourn in Persia. When Jābir was a mere boy, Ḥayyān was arrested for his activity and had to pay with his life. Khurāsān being the

<sup>15</sup> W. A. P. Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

<sup>16</sup> H. H. Dubs, "The Beginnings of Alchemy," *Isis*, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 62.

<sup>17</sup> W. Schneider, "Über den Ursprung des Wortes 'Chemie'," *Pharm. Ind.*, Vol. XXI, p. 79.

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 Ṭūs, in Khurāsān, where Imām Ghazālī, one of the great Muslim mystics, was born. Above all, we find in Jābir 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. Khurāsān, rather than Egypt, was the centre from where Islamic alchemy got its real initiation. Between Khālid ibn Yazīd and Jābir bin Ḥayyān was a period of seventy-five years. Historically, the political power shifted from Damascus to Baghdād. At this latter centre the so-called Persian influence, but really Chinese-Manichaeic doctrines, rapidly promoted Islamic alchemy. Those who compare Greek alchemy with that of Jābir 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 Jābir begins a school of alchemy much nearer to its original source, with its centre at Ṭūs, 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. Jābir's reputation as a physician grew after the services he had rendered at the Court of Hārūn al-Rashīd. His alchemical writings on the contrary were misunderstood even by a savant like ibn Khal-dūn<sup>18</sup> who remarked that they read like puzzles. The effect of the chemical mysticism, which was alchemy, was demonstrated in the form of life-saving *iksīrs*; 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

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Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, tr. F. Rosenthal, Vol. III, 1958.

their preparations for making everything everlasting. When the omnipotent substance, *iksir* or *kīmiya*, 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.

*Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (81-148/700-765).*—It will now be apparent how Jābir would venerate a master of mysticism like Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, the sixth Imām, who lived like an interneer at Baghdād. Of all the Imāms 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 Jābir speaks of him as a Master and also because of the fact that alchemy and Sufism both aim at immortality. Since Jābir was both a Sufi and an alchemist, he could have received initiation from the Imām at least as a mystic. Ruska<sup>19</sup> has edited a treatise attributed to the Imām and discussed his position in the history of alchemy, devoting an introduction of sixty pages to the problem.

*Jābir ibn Hayyan (104-200/722-815).*—Our knowledge of Jābir's life is very sketchy. He was born at Ṭūs, in Khurāsān, 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 Hārūn al-Raṣhīd and as a companion of Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. His special patrons were Hārūn's viziers, the Barmakids, who really introduced him to the Court. When the Barmakids fell into disfavour in 188/803, Jābir, then over eighty years old, returned to Kūfah where he used to live before coming to Baghdād. The early life of the man, say from twenty to thirty-five, must have been spent in the pursuit of alchemy probably at Ṭūs. If he had merely been born there he would have hardly been called al-Ṭūsi. Another designation of his, al-Sufi, also sets us inquiring as to where he acquired proficiency in this field. With Ṭūs as a common centre for both Sufism and alchemy, the search is reduced to the minimum. When he left Baghdād immediately for Kūfah, 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 Kūfah to Ṭūs where Sufism and alchemy were very much at home. According to one source, he died at Ṭūs, 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 Kūfah where Jābir 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

<sup>19</sup> J. Ruska, *Arabische Alchemisten, II, Gafar Alṣadiq*, Heidelberg, 1924



gives much reality to the personality of Jābir with his many-sided features. Those who have been prejudiced in favour of Greek culture have nourished myths such as given by Thompson,<sup>20</sup> who writes that "Jābir is said to have been either a native of Mesopotamia or a Greek who afterwards embraced Mohammadanism." 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 prejudice 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 Hopkins<sup>21</sup> 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 Taylor<sup>22</sup> 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 *kīmiya* and *iksīr*; 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,<sup>23</sup> "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 Jābir enjoyed among his contemporaries. The fact that Jābir 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. Chickashige<sup>24</sup> 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 generation." 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, Jābir's career fully confirms the remarks of Paracelsus and Liebig.

Among those who spared no energy to study the writings of Jābir may be mentioned the late Dr. Holmyard. He observes that "Jābir ibn Ḥayyān has many claims to be considered the first to whom the title of chemist may

<sup>20</sup> C. J. S. Thompson, *The Lure and Romance of Alchemy*, 1932, p. 59.

<sup>21</sup> A. J. Hopkins, *Alchemy, Child of Greek Philosophy*, 1934, p. v.

<sup>22</sup> F. Sherwood Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>23</sup> C. J. S. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

<sup>24</sup> Masumi Chikashige, *Alchemy and Other Chemical Achievements of the Ancient Orient*, 1936, p. 1.

legitimately be applied.”<sup>25</sup> Hopkins<sup>26</sup> 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 Jābir) 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 experiments. 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 Jābir must have preached is confirmed by the converse having continued to exist even afterwards. Fuck<sup>27</sup> explains that “al-Nadīm 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 Jābir. Hopkins rightly showers praises upon Jābir, 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,<sup>28</sup> could admit that “it is certain that no other people have pursued alchemy with so much persistent zeal as the Arabs.” The special urge on the part of the Arabs to devote to alchemy would be apparent from what follows.

*Kīmiya*.—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 *chih*; 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-iyā* in the Hakka dialect of South China, the original of the Arabic term *kī-miya*.<sup>29</sup>

*How Kīmiya 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

<sup>25</sup> E. J. Holmyard, “Islam and Chemistry,” *Islamic World*, Lahore, 1928, Vol. VI, p. 116.

<sup>26</sup> A. J. Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

<sup>27</sup> J. W. Fuck, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

<sup>28</sup> K. C. Schneider, *Geschichte der Alchemie*, reprinted, 1959, p. 82.

<sup>29</sup> W. Schneider, *op. cit.*, p. 79.



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 Jābir, 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 *kīmiya*, inorganic preparations called *iksīrs* were used.

*Rūh*.—It is necessary to describe how the minds of the alchemists worked in preparing a simple substance such as *rūh* (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 *rūh*. The flower is now a dead body and the soul is its perfume or essence. When such an essence or *rūh* 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 another 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.

*Iksīr*.—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 required 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 *iksīr* 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 *rūh* 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 *rūh*. Whereas *kīmiya* 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 Jābir talked mostly, if not solely, of *iksir* and not of *kīmiya*, 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. Jābir 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 Jābir 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 Jābir's enthusiasm and made him a master. Holmyard,<sup>30</sup> a chemist and an author of standard text-books on chemistry, after a careful study of Jābir, 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, Jābir ibn Ḥayyān." 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 Jābir. 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 Jābir 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 Jābirian legends. What is still required is to isolate alchemy proper from Jābir'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. Jābir 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. Jābir 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. Kraus<sup>31</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup> Hārūn al-Rashīd's ministers belonged to the Barmakid family. One of them, Yaḥya, was much devoted to a lady in his harem. She fell ill. The case ultimately became so hopeless that Jābir was sent for. The report<sup>33</sup> as coming from Jābir 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 Yaḥya fell at my

<sup>30</sup> E. J. Holmyard, *Alchemy*, Pelican Book Series, 1957, p. 116.

<sup>31</sup> P. Kraus, "Studies zu Jābir ibn Ḥayyān," *Isis*, Vol. XV, p. 22.

<sup>32</sup> E. J. Holmyard, *Alchemy*, p. 70.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

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. Jābir's alchemy consisted only in preparing *iksirs* or wonder-drugs which were more precious than gold.

*The Philosophers' Stone* (Ḥajr Mukarram).—The preparation which marks the zenith of alchemical achievement is the Benevolent Stone (*ḥajr mukarram*). The alchemists called themselves philosophers or *Hakims* as opposed to physicians or *ṭabībs*. 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,<sup>34</sup> 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 Khaldūn upon Jābir]. 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 Jābir, 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 Jābir all metals including gold were composed of mercury and sulphur. Davis<sup>35</sup> states that, "for the Chinese alchemists, positive *yang* was lead instead of sulphur; negative *yin* was mercury." Jābir died in about 184/800. The Chinese alchemist, Chang Po-tuan,<sup>36</sup> 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 Jābir 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

<sup>34</sup> Li Ch'iao-p'ing, *The Chemical Arts of Old China*, 1948, p. 16.

<sup>35</sup> T. L. Davis, "The Chinese Beginnings of Alchemy," *Endeavour*, Vol. II, pp. 154–57.

<sup>36</sup> Chang Po-tuan, "Essay on the Understanding of the Truth," tr. T. L. Davis and Chao Yun-ts'ung, *Proc. Am. Aca. Arts & Sci.*, 1939, Vol. LXXIII, p. 104.



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 Jābir'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 prepared. 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 *rūḥ* or spirit consists of only the positive element, the

soul; and *iksīr* consists of two elements, the positive element and the purified material element sublimated into reactive negative energy. Philosophers' Stone is double *iksīr*; 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 Philosophers' 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. Baghdād 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 Baghdād was an importation from *Khurāsān*, which in turn was really an importation from China. Now two substances used by Jābir reveal the alchemy which he borrowed and upon which he improved. Ammonium chloride has played a very important role in alchemical preparations to which Stapleton<sup>37</sup> devotes a special monograph. From Holmyard<sup>38</sup> we learn that Jābir's "is one of the earliest Arabic mentions of sal-ammoniac which for a time was imported from inner Asia. Jābir, however, 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, Stapleton<sup>39</sup> explains that the Arabic word, *nushādar*, for sal-ammoniac, is a loan word from Chinese. The origin of the product is thereby assured.

Another substance Jābir used is what he named *khār sīni*. Holmyard<sup>40</sup> 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." *Khār* is salt and a loan-word in Arabic. It cannot be made to express any metal or alloy. An alloy comparable 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 Jābir's alchemy.

<sup>37</sup> H. E. Stapleton, "Salammoniac, A Study in Primitive Chemistry," *Mem. As. Soc. Bengal*, Vol. I, No. 2, p. 41.

<sup>38</sup> E. J. Holmyard, *Alchemy*, Pelican Book Series, 1957, p. 78.

<sup>39</sup> H. E. Stapleton, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

<sup>40</sup> E. J. Holmyard, "Islam and Chemistry," *Islamic World*, Lahore, 1928, Vol. VI, p. 78.



Jābir being a mystic incorporates numerology into his alchemy, a fact discussed by some writers, above all by Stapleton.<sup>41</sup> 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 Jābir's numerology can thus be safely classed as Chinese in origin.

*The Emerald Table of Hermes.*—Among Jābir'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 decorative 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 Jābir 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,<sup>42</sup> that "it is the three-fold result of the cosmological discussion, the Qur'ānic 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 Jābir's writings, the reputation he enjoyed in the Middle Ages can be easily visualized.

*Al-Rāzi (c. 251–313/865–925).*—Engaged as he was in preparing elixirs, Jābir was called upon as a consultant to use them when ordinary drugs had proved ineffective. On the contrary, abu Bakr Muḥammad ibn Zakariya al-Rāzi, 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 Baghdād, where the achievements of Jābir must have been narrated almost as miracles. Al-Rāzi could not but have been inspired by the tradition existing at Baghdād in favour of Jābir's elixirs. At Baghdād he decided to become a physician. As a Muslim alchemist he comes next only to Jābir. His fame in the medical world became so high that he was consulted when a hospital at Baghdād was being extended and ultimately became its chief physician. Holmyard unwittingly remarks that "like the majority of physicians of medieval times, Rāzi was led to the study

<sup>41</sup> H. E. Stapleton, "Probable Sources of the Numbers on Which Jabrian Alchemy was Based," *Arch. Int. Hist. Sci.*, Vol. XXII, p. 59.

<sup>42</sup> E. J. Holmyard, *Alchemy*, p. 83.



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 Rāzi 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.<sup>43</sup> "Stapleton," says Holmyard,<sup>44</sup> "places Rāzi on an intellectual level with Gallileo and Boyle." There is an illuminating article on al-Rāzi and alchemy by Heym,<sup>45</sup> where we read<sup>46</sup> 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. Rāzi accepted Jābir's Sulphur-Mercury theory of the constitution of metals but Heym says that "in the same way the attribute of salinity enters into Rāzi's scheme." He comments at the same time that "without doubt it is here [with Rāzi] 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 Rāzi's name, Thompson<sup>47</sup> 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,<sup>48</sup> 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 Rāzi, 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 proponent of this modified theory. Heym writes that "in Europe throughout the Middle Ages until the seventeenth century, Rāzi'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-Rāzi was so much influenced by dualism that Heym says, "al-Rāzi was also called a Manichaean," though he gives a different

<sup>43</sup> J. Ruska, *Al-Rāzi's Buch Geheimnis der Geheimnisse*, Berlin, 1937.

<sup>44</sup> E. J. Holmyard, "Islam and Chemistry," *Islamic World*, Lahore, 1928 Vol. VI, p. 87.

<sup>45</sup> G. Heym, "Al-Rāzi and Alchemy," *Ambix*, 1938.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 184.

<sup>47</sup> C. J. S. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>48</sup> H. S. Redgrove, *Alchemy, Ancient and Modern*, 1922, p. 54.

explanation for this appellation of his. Where Rāzi continued the tradition of Jābir, which rightly made an appeal to the judgment of Hopkins, was his love for practical work. Heym states that "even though al-Rāzi 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-Rāzi 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-Rāzi 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 Jābir, it was practical phase of alchemy, which was inorganic pharmaceutical chemistry of the age, that naturally appealed most.

*Ibn Sīna (370–428/980–1037.)*—Europeans in the Middle Ages had Latinized the names Jābir into Geber and Rāzi 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 Sīna 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 Rāzi. 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 Bukhāra 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 *iksīrs*. In his writings alchemy is discussed but critically. As a physician he did not use any *iksīr*; 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, Davis<sup>49</sup> 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.

<sup>49</sup> T. L. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

Stapleton<sup>50</sup> 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,<sup>61</sup> 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 Davis<sup>62</sup> 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 Holmyard<sup>63</sup> summarizes it by saying, "That there is a great deal of similarity between the ideas contained in the quotations of Jābir 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-Rāzi or at the most after 'Umail we find repetition of what had been said before in different words and with other

<sup>50</sup> H. E. Stapleton and others, "Three Arabic Treatises on Alchemy by Muḥammad Bin 'Umail," *Mem. Asia Soc. Bengal*, Vol. XII, No. 1.

<sup>51</sup> E. J. Holmyard, "Alchemy in Medieval Islam," *Endeavour*, 1955, Vol. XIV, p. 117.

<sup>52</sup> T. L. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

<sup>53</sup> E. J. Holmyard, "Alchemy in Medieval Islam," *Endeavour*, 1955, Vol. XIV, p. 117.



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 Baghdād. What about the impact of local schools of alchemy upon Muslims living in India, Burma, Indonesia, and elsewhere? Dr. Maung Htin Aung,<sup>54</sup> 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." Jābrian alchemy was certainly that and it is impossible to think that any two systems incorporating such ideas did not fuse.

<sup>54</sup> Maung Htin Aung, "Burmese Alchemy Beliefs," *J. Burmese Res. Soc.*, Vol. XXXVI, Part 2, p. 91.

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## Chapter LXVI

### 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 (*tauḥīd*). 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 sciences<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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,

<sup>1</sup> 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," *Etudes Traditionnelles*, Vol. XLIX, 1948, pp. 216-19.

<sup>2</sup> 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 *'Ajā'ib al-Makhlūqāt* (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 "*wa fi kull-i shai'in lahu āyātun ta'dullu 'ala annahu wāḥidun*" (that His sign exists in all things is a proof of His unity).

and anthropology, but also cosmogony and sacred history.<sup>3</sup> 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 Ṭabari and Mas'ūdi. The many allusions in the Qur'ān to natural phenomena and the fact that the verses of the sacred book as well as the phenomena of nature are called *āyāt* (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.<sup>4</sup> 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 passion either a virtue or a basic need of man and for this reason has never legitimized a science based only on curiosity.<sup>5</sup> The desire of natural historians

<sup>3</sup> But in this chapter we are concerned only with botany and zoology.

<sup>4</sup> The medieval Christian scientists had a similar aim in view when they sought to observe the *vestigio dei* in nature.

<sup>5</sup> Our argument does not seek to make knowledge subservient to action. Knowledge 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.



to learn moral and spiritual lessons from the phenomena of nature is, therefore, legitimate from the point of view of Islam because it is spiritual, meaningful and fulfils a need, whereas finding the weight of a certain leaf or a tree to be so many grams is from this point of view a secondary and unimportant inquiry unless it leads to higher knowledge. The modern criticisms 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.

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.<sup>7</sup> 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

<sup>6</sup> Many medieval authors, especially certain alchemists, were quite aware of animal and plant symbolism and were conscious of what they were writing.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

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 *Tārīkh al-Rusul w-al-Mulūk*, the universal history of Ṭabari, the *Kitāb al-Buldān*, the book of countries of Ya'qūbi, the *Kitāb al-Bad' w-al-Tārīkh* of Maqdisi, the *Murūj al-Dhahab* and *Kitāb al-Tanbīh w-al-Ishrāf* of Mas'ūdi, the *Tārīkh-i Jahān-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.<sup>8</sup> 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,<sup>9</sup> 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-Ḥasan al-Maghribi, ibn Jubair,

<sup>8</sup> 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. Mieli, *La science arabe et son rôle dans l'évolution 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 *Murūj al-Dhahab* (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.

<sup>9</sup> 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 *Rasā'il* of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafa, Cairo, 1928, I, pp. 116ff. and P. Duhem, *Le système de monde*, Vol. II, A. Hermann et fils, Paris, 1914, pp. 267ff.



Bīrūni, Nāṣir **K**husrau, and ibn Baṭṭūṭah, 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 Bīrūni, or philosophical and metaphysical reflection upon natural forms as is found in the writings of Nāṣir **K**husrau.

Besides these land travellers, there were several ocean travellers like Sulaimān 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 Shihāb al-Dīn ibn Mājid, Sulaimān ibn Mahri, and Piri 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*, *Sinḍbād Nāmeḥ*, 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 (*mizāj*) of animals, which provides a major source of information for the internal structure of animals and the functioning of their organs.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, 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 'Alī al-Ṭabarī's *Firdaus al-Ḥikmah* (The Paradise of Wisdom), Muḥammad Zakariya Rāzī's *al-Ḥāwi* (Continens), and ibn Sīnā's *Qānūn* (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

<sup>10</sup> Regarding the internal constitution of animals, perhaps no book is so masterly and complete as ibn Sīnā's *Qānūn*. See the introduction to ibn Sīnā, *A Treatise on the Canon of Medicine, Incorporating a Translation of the First Book*, by O. C. Gruner, Luzac & Co., London, 1930; also ibn Sīnā, *Poème de la médecine-Urgūza fi't-tibb*, Société d'édition "les Belles Lettres," Paris, 1956.



suggested that the Arabic word *kīmiya* itself, from which the English word alchemy is derived, comes from the Chinese *Chin-Ia*, meaning the gold-making juice of a plant.<sup>11</sup> 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 Jābir ibn Ḥayyān or in the Western world Flamel and Basil Valentine demonstrate. In Muslim alchemy certain authors like Jābir have written specific treatises on plants and animals dealing with their hidden and "occult" qualities.<sup>12</sup> Authors writing on the esoteric sciences (*al-'ulūm al-gharībah*), like Jābir, Shams al-Dīn al-Būni, 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 (*Mashā'iyūn*), 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 Fārābi, ibn Sīna, and ibn Rushd but also in the philosophers of the Illuminationist (*ishrāqi*) school like Suhrawardi Maqtūl and Mulla Ṣadra, and in Sunni and Shī'ah theologians like al-Ghazālī and Khwājah Naṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī. The most detailed and profound scientific account of plants and animals in these philosophical treatises appears in ibn Sīnā's *Shifā'* (*Sufficientia*), the greatest encyclopedia of philosophy and sciences ever written by one man. Here, ibn Sīna 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 *Shifā'* on natural philosophy (*Ṭabī'iyāt*) are among the most important pages of medieval natural history.

Writings similar to the *Shifā'* 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.<sup>13</sup> More important works are the *Rasā'il* of the Ikhwān

<sup>11</sup> 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 Ṣuffa, as Loan-words from the Chinese," *Iqbal*, 1959, Vol. VII, No. 3.

<sup>12</sup> See P. Kraus, *Jābir Ibn Ḥayyān*, 2 Vols., Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, Cairo, 1942-43.

<sup>13</sup> A. Mingana, *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences as Taught in Baghdad in c. 817 A. D. or Book of Treasures of Job of Edessa*, Cambridge, 1935.

al-Şafa 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.<sup>14</sup> Also of great importance for natural history is the encyclopedia of Mustaufi Qazwini entitled *Nuzhat al-Qulūb* (Delights of the Heart), written in Persian in the eighth/fourteenth century, which includes sections on plants and animals.<sup>15</sup> Other works of this kind include the *Kitāb al-Awā'il* (Book of Primordial Knowledge) and *al-Nuqāyat al-Usud al-Muhimmah li 'Ulūm Jammah* (the encyclopedia of sciences) of 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Suyūṭi, the ninth/fifteenth-century historian, and the *Kashf al-Zunūn* (The Clearing of Doubts) of Ḥāji 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-Qulūb* and the *Rasā'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 '*Ajā'ib al-Makhlūqāt* (The Wonders of Creation) of abu Yahya Zakariya al-Qazwini and the *Nuḥbat 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*,<sup>16</sup> the *Shāh Nāmeḥ* of Firdausi, the *Thousand and One Nights*, and the *Gulistān* of Sa'di. Likewise, in certain theological texts animals are discussed in the light of their moral virtues. The famous *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* (Book of Animals) of al-Jāhiz is above all a theological and moral discussion about animals.<sup>17</sup> In Sufi

<sup>14</sup> An interesting section of the *Rasā'il* dealing with the discussion between man and animals has been translated into English as *Dispute between Man and the Animals*, by J. Platts, W. H. Allen Co., London, 1869.

<sup>15</sup> See J. Stephenson, "The Zoological Section of the *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*," *Isis*, 1928, Vol. XI, pp. 285-316.

<sup>16</sup> 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 *Anwār-i Suhaili* of Husain Wā'iṣ Kāghifi have remained very popular throughout the centuries.

<sup>17</sup> This *genre* of writing has continued to recent times. A work called *Inṣān wa Ḥaiwān* (Men and Animals) by Ḥāji Mulla Ismā'il Sabziwāri written during

writings also, plants and animals are discussed in the light of their cosmic qualities and in relation to the initiate's (*sālik'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 Maulāna Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmi is particularly rich in this respect. There is also the *Mantiq al-Tair* (Conference of the Birds) of Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār 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,<sup>18</sup> 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 *Filāḥat al-Nabāṭīyyah* (Nabataean Agriculture) of ibn Waḥshīyyah 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.<sup>19</sup> The agricultural section of the work was systematized and elaborated by ibn 'Awwām in the sixth/twelfth century in his *Kitāb al-Falāḥah* (Book of Agriculture) which is perhaps the most important Muslim work on agriculture. Ibn 'Awwām 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 *Kitāb al-Nabāt* (The Book of Plants) of abu Ḥanīfah al-Dīnawari (the celebrated third/ninth-century historian and scholar) of which only fragments have

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the last century, treating of the moral and spiritual qualities of animals, is still widely used by Persian preachers in their sermons.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> Ibn Khaldūn 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 Waḥshīyyah could know anything about the Babylonian civilization and therefore consider his claim to be a forgery.



survived.<sup>20</sup> Among later writings in which pharmacology and botany proper are combined, the most famous works are the *Kitāb al-Adwiyat al-Mufradah* (The Book of Simple Drugs) of abu Ja'far al-Ghāfiqi,<sup>21</sup> the writings of the seventh/thirteenth-century Andalusian author, ibn al-Baitār, the best of all Muslim botanists,<sup>22</sup> and the *Hadīqat al-Azhār fi Sharḥ Maziyat al-'Ushb w-al-'Aqqār* (Garden of Flowers in the Explanation of the Character of Herbs and Drugs) of the tenth/sixteenth-century Moroccan author, Qāsim al-Ghassāni.

In zoology, the *Manāfi' al-Ḥayawān* (The Benefits of Animals), by abu Sa'id Bakhtishū', and the treatises on various wild and domestic animals by Aşma'i are among the earliest works on animals. To this early period belongs also the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* (Book of Animals) of al-Jāhiz, 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'ān, the Ḥadīth, and Arabic poetry, especially pre-Islamic poetry, which last contains many descriptions of animals that al-Jāhiz often quotes to refute Greek authors, personal observations of Aristotle, and information collected from various travellers.

*Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān* (Life of Animals) of Kamāl al-Dīn al-Damiri, written five centuries after al-Jāhiz, 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-Jāhiz as well as on the writings of the intervening 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

<sup>20</sup> M. Hamidullah, "Dinawari's Encyclopaedia Botanica (*Kitāb al-Nabāt*) in the Light of Fragments in Turkish Libraries," *Mélange F. Koprülü*, pp. 195-206. See also B. Lewin, *The Book of Plants of Abu Hanīfah al-Dinawari*, A. B. Lundeguiatska Bokhandeln, Upsala, 1953, introduction, in which is discussed the influence of this early work on the later Muslim botanists.

<sup>21</sup> This sixth/twelfth-century Maghribi botanist has given some of the most detailed descriptions of plants found anywhere in Muslim botanical literature.

<sup>22</sup> His two most important books are the *Kitāb al-Jāmi' fi al-Adwiyat al-Mufradah* (The Complete Book of Simple Drugs), dealing with the classification of plants, and *Kitāb al-Mughni fi al-Adwiyat al-Mufradah* (The Sufficient Book of Simple Drugs), dealing with the medical properties of plants.

sublunary region. This region is made of four elements, fire, air, water, and earth,<sup>23</sup> 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 nexus,<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup> 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.<sup>27</sup> The causes for animals are the same except that their final cause is their use by man.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> 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.

<sup>25</sup> 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 *Ikhwān al-Ṣafa*, for example, has a chyme (*kaimūs*) formed from a particular combination of elements which always reproduces the same plant as each animal has a sperm which propagates the same species

<sup>26</sup> "Although plants are obvious and visible creations, the causes of their existence are hidden and veiled from the perception of man. It is what the philosophers call 'natural forces,' what the *Shari'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.'" *Ikhwān al-Ṣafa, Rasā'il*, II, p. 130; also R. Levy, *The Social Structure of Islam*, Cambridge, 1957, p. 490.

<sup>27</sup> We are following here the teaching of the *Ikhwān*, but these views are shared by most Muslim authors writing on this subject.

<sup>28</sup> The *Ikhwān* have a most interesting section in their *Rasā'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

The plants have the powers of the mineral soul (*rūḥ 'aqdiyyah*) as well those of the vegetative soul (*al-naḥs al-nabā'iyyah*) which is possessed of the three faculties of feeding (*ghadhā'iyyah*), growth (*nāmīyyah*), and reproduction (*muwallidah*).<sup>29</sup> 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 follows:<sup>30</sup>

Animal soul	{	power of motion ( <i>muharrikah</i> )	{	power of desire ( <i>shauqīyyah</i> )	{	power of lust ( <i>shahwatīyyah</i> )
		power of comprehension ( <i>mudrikah</i> )		power of motion of body ( <i>'āqilah</i> )		power of anger ( <i>ghadhabīyyah</i> )

Subscribing to the view that all things are alive and that plants and animals have souls of their own, Muslim natural historians have tried to understand the behaviour of these creatures in terms of the faculties stated above and, thus, averted many of the difficulties of the post-Cartesian view which regards plants and animals as "machines."

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.<sup>31</sup>

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 creation, that animals finally agree to submit to man. See the *Dispute between Man and the Animals*.

<sup>29</sup> The most thorough discussion of the vegetative and animal souls appears in the sixth part of the *Ṭabī'iyyāt* of the *Shifā'* of ibn Sina where he deals in detail with all the faculties of plants and animals and their functions. Cf. J. Bakoš, *La psychologie d'Avicenne*, Editions de l'Académie Tchécoslovaque 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 *Ikhwān*, however, enumerate the faculties somewhat differently: as attraction, fixation, digestion, repulsion, nutrition, formation, and growth.

<sup>30</sup> For a summary of ibn Sina's views on the souls and their faculties, see E. Gilson, "Les sources gréco-arabes de l'augustinisme avicennant," *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge*, Vol. IV, 1929, pp. 5-149.

<sup>31</sup> In general, the Muslims depended more upon the Greeks in the study of animals 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.



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 *Ṭabī'iyāt* of the *Shifā'* 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-Qulūb* 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 not.<sup>32</sup> 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 (*akhlāt*)—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 (*mashmūmāt*) 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 *Shifā'* 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 *Ikhwān al-Ṣafa* 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 *Ikhwān* make continuous comparison of plants with the animal world; in the case of the *Ikhwān* 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.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> See the botanical section of the *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, *Shirāzi*, Bombay, 1311/1893, pp. 87 ff., where sixty-nine fruit-bearing trees and sixty-six fruitless ones are described 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.

<sup>33</sup> The famous scientist and compiler, *Birūni* 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

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-Baiṭār, the greatest of the Muslim botanists. Basing himself on al-Ghāfiqi 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 *Kitāb al-Mughni*, following the example of ibn Sina's *Qānūn*, he gave the medical uses of these plants. The influence of ibn al-Baiṭār was felt everywhere within the Islamic world from Morocco to India. Three centuries later, the Moroccan botanist, al-Ghassāni, was to give the best classification of plants found anywhere in Muslim literature, drawing mostly upon the information accumulated by ibn al-Baiṭār.

In the study of animals, like that of plants, interest evolved around the constitution of plants and their classification and description. The temperament (*mizāj*) 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.<sup>34</sup>

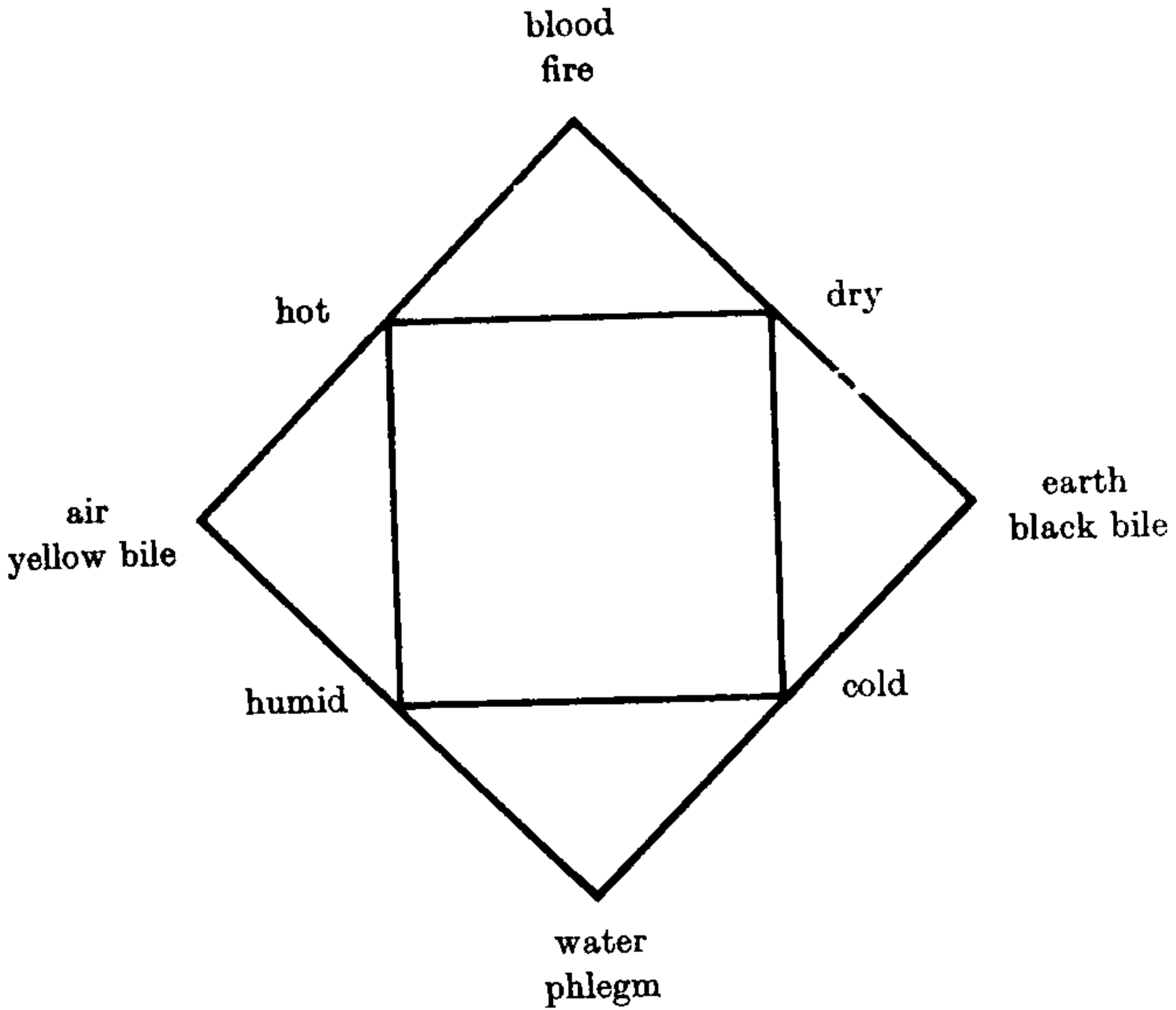
The animal constitution has been understood in terms of the equilibrium of the four humours each of which is connected with a particular internal organ. The organs in turn have been studied in the light of their function of preserving internal equilibrium. Likewise, the effect of plants both as food 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.

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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.

<sup>34</sup> This is a schematization of ideas presented in ibn Sina's medical poem as well as in the *Qānūn* 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.



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-Jāhiz in his *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* 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 *Ikhwān al-Ṣafa* give several types of classification. One type is similar to that of al-Jāhiz 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.<sup>35</sup> 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

<sup>35</sup> Mustaufi Qazwini in the *Nuzhat al-Qulūb* follows a somewhat similar procedure dividing animals into those living on land, in sea, and in air, and subdividing each of the classes according to its more specific features.



of it in the *Rasā'il* of the *Ikhwān* 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 Sīna, ibn Rushd, and many later commentators of the *Shifā'* which contain a detailed discussion of animals.

A rather general definition of animals including the jinn<sup>36</sup> and men is given by Qazwini in his '*Ajā'ib al-Makhlūqāt*. He divides animals into seven classes. First, there is man who possesses a rational soul (*nafs nāṭiqah*) 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 Iblīs is himself from this species of animals.<sup>37</sup>

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 colours.<sup>38</sup>

In the description of animals, there is no book in Muslim writings that is as complete as Damiri's *Hayāt al-Hayawān* in which he is concerned with the traits, instincts, and psychology of animals and their use, medical and spiritual, for man. Following ibn al-Baitār, 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-Dīn al-Būnī, Arabic poetry, and the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth. 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.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> They may be said to symbolize psychic forces.

<sup>37</sup> A similar account is to be found in the *Rasā'il* of the *Ikhwān*.

<sup>38</sup> 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.

<sup>39</sup> 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.

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 Bīrūni and the Ikhwān 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.<sup>40</sup>

Some thinkers, especially the Mashā'i philosophers, envisage, like Aristotle, the gradation of fixed spheres, while the Ishrāqi 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-Jāhiz, the Ikhwān al-Ṣafa, ibn Miskawaih, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūni, etc.), whatever their persuasion otherwise, who believe in the continuous self-development 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 Renaissance 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'ān states, and to learn spiritual lessons from it. Only in following this spirit has this

<sup>40</sup> A beautiful expression of this doctrine appears in the *Mathnawi* of Maulāna Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmi. See Book IV, verses 3637 to 3647 of the text of *Mathnawi* ed. R. A. Nicholson, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1929.

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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## Chapter LXVII

### 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 Fonahn<sup>1</sup> enumerated no less than one hundred and fifty-one works on Persian medicine alone during this period and Max Meyerhof<sup>2</sup> 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, Baghdād, 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 (*jarrāh*) 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'ānic injunction,<sup>3</sup> 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,<sup>4</sup> 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 Reade<sup>5</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> Fonahn, *Zur Quellenkunde der persischen Medizin*.

<sup>2</sup> Max Meyerhof, "Science and Medicine," *The Legacy of Islam*, 1942, p. 311.

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān, vii, 31.

<sup>4</sup> Sa'di, *Gulistān*, Vol. III, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Winwood W. Reade, *The Martyrdom of Man*, Walts & Co., London, 1872, p. 214.

London, Paris and Berlin . . . and in obscure villages situated by obscure streams." According to Browne,<sup>6</sup> 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 Wāṣṭi, the so-called *Ṭibb-i Nabawi* is not, therefore, to be confused with any medical treatise as such.<sup>7</sup> The book is not taught in any recognized medical Yūnāni institution (as remarked by Browne), nor is it credited by Ḥakīms and scholars of Arabian medicine.

The only known physician in Prophet's time was al-Ḥārith ibn Kaladah, an Arab Jew who later embraced Islam. He had studied medicine at Jundi-Shāpūr 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 Ramṣiah of the tribe of Tamīm.

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, choler, 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. Browne,<sup>8</sup> 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.

Wāṣṭi<sup>9</sup> 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 Cumston<sup>10</sup> 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

<sup>6</sup> E. G. Browne, *Arabian Medicine*, Urdu translation with commentary by Sayyid 'Ali Aḥmad Nayyar Wāṣṭi, p. 15.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 164-66.

<sup>10</sup> C. G. Cumston, *An Introduction to the History of Medicine*, London, 1926, p. 185.

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-Ṭabari, Aḥmad al-Ṭabari, al-Rāzi (L. Rhazes), 'Ali ibn al-'Abbās (L. Haly), ibn al-Baiṭār, abu al-Qāsim al-Zahrāwi (L. Abulcasis), and ibn Sīna (L. Avicenna). In fact, this was precisely the period which is known as the dark age of the West.<sup>11</sup>

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:<sup>12</sup>

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 superfluous.<sup>13</sup> One has merely to read Galen and afterwards ibn Sīna 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

<sup>11</sup> G. Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science*, Vol. I, pp. 16-17.

<sup>12</sup> A. A. Khairallah, *Outline of Arabic Contributions to Medicine and Allied Sciences*, p. 43.

<sup>13</sup> Cumston, *op. cit.*, p. 191.



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."<sup>14</sup> 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 conception of Arabian medicine to the medieval scholastics"<sup>15</sup>; 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."<sup>16</sup>

## 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-Mansūr, Hārūn al-Rashīd, and al-Māmūn in Baghdād, of Zangi in Damascus, of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in Cairo and of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III and Ḥakam 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 Hārūn al-Rashīd conquered 'Amnūriyah and Ankara, he collected all the

<sup>14</sup> Khairallah, *op. cit.*, pp. 54ff.

<sup>15</sup> Campbell, *Arabian Medicine*, Vol. I, p. xii.

<sup>16</sup> E. G. Browne, *Arabian Medicine*, p. 113.

manuscripts he could find,<sup>17</sup> and al-Māmūn sent a special mission to the Byzantine Emperor to collect manuscripts.<sup>18</sup> On several occasions books were sent and accepted as appeasing presents.<sup>19</sup>

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.<sup>20</sup>

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 undertook 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 Ishāq and al-Jauhari, who would read the whole sentence or paragraph, get its meaning or sense, and then put it in proper Arabic.<sup>21</sup> According to al-Nadim's *Fihrist*, Khālid ibn Yazid ibn Mu'āwiyah 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 Māsarjawaih (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 Ishāq, who died in Baghdād in about 264/877. He was assisted by Ishāq, his son, Hubaish al-A'sam, his nephew, Yahya ibn 'Adi, 'Isa ibn Yahya, and others. Other translators of repute were abu Yahya ibn al-Batriq (d. c. 191/806), Thābit 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 Baghdād and *Dār al-Hikmah* (Hall of Wisdom) in Cairo. The library at Cordova had over a quarter of a million volumes. The library of Nūh ibn Mansūr, ruler of Bukhāra, contained books on all subjects together with their indices. Ibn al-Matrān, the famous physician of Ṣalāh al-Dīn, had a library of 10,000 manuscripts. Ibn al-Tilmīdh, author of the best known pharmacopoeia of his time, had 20,000 manuscripts

<sup>17</sup> Ya'qūbi, Vol. II, p. 436.

<sup>18</sup> Uṣaibi'ah, Vol. I, p. 187.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

<sup>21</sup> Khairallah, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

in his library. The well-known medical historian al-Qifti had a library worth more than 50,000 *dīnārs*. Every large hospital possessed a library of its own.\*

C

HOSPITALS

The hospital at Jundi-Shāpūr in Persia was the first and foremost to influence the Arabs. Al-Ḥārith 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 'Abbāsīd period. Those at Baghdād, 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 Baghdād, Damascus, and Cairo, but also at Mecca, Jerusalem, Aleppo, Harrān, 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-Mansūr Qalāwūn, 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."<sup>23</sup> Foundations (*auqāf*) were created to support the hospitals and were administered by high dignitaries with the utmost care. Issa writes in his *Histoire des bimaristans a l'epoque Islamique*:<sup>24</sup> "The furniture, bedding, and clothing at the Mansūri 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'ah:<sup>25</sup> "Abu al-Ḥakam, the dean of the Nūri hospital of Damascus, used to make the rounds of patients every morning, find out their condition and consider

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>23</sup> Maqrizi, Vol. II, p. 406.

<sup>24</sup> Issa, *Histoire des bimaristans a l'epoque Islamique*, p. 20; Khairallah and Haddad, "A Study of Arab Hospitals in the Light of Present-Day Standardization," *Bull. Amer. Coll. Surg.* Sept., 1936; Khairallah, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

<sup>25</sup> Usaibi'ah, Vol. II, p. 153



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. Nūr al-Dīn 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." Uṣāibi'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." Uṣāibi'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-Rāzi and al-Majūsi until the advent of ibn Sinā's *Canon* which eclipsed them all."<sup>26</sup>

Several books were written on hospitals and hospital management. Unfortunately, most of them have been lost. Al-Rāzi wrote a book on *Ṣiḡat al-Bīmāristān* and Zāhid al-'Ulamā' wrote *Kitāb al-Bīmāristān*. The first regular hospital was built by Hārūn al-Rashīd in Baghdād in 170/786, but a bigger and more up-to-date hospital was founded in 368-369/978-979 by 'Aḍud al-Daulah. In Damascus there was the al-Nūri, built by Nūr al-Dīn Zangi; one was built by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn at Jerusalem and another at Cairo. Qalāwūn built the al-Mansūri at Cairo. Besides these there were hospitals in Mecca, Medina, Harrān, 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

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243; Khairallah, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

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 Zakariya al-Rāzi. 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-Rāzi's works, *al-Hāwi* (Continens), running into twenty volumes, is undoubtedly the most important. This work was translated into Latin by Faraj bin Sālim in 678/1279 and printed at Brescia nearly two centuries later. Al-Rāzi 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-'Amīd, 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-Rāzi's own pupils. 'Ali ibn 'Abbās (Haly Abbas) was of the view that during his time only two copies of the book were in existence. He regarded *al-Hāwi* the repository of medical knowledge concerning hygiene, diseases, their symptoms, and treatment with medicine and diet, al-Rāzi'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-Rāzi's minor treatises is *Kitāb al-Judari w-al-Ḥaṣbah*. 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-Rāzi was the first to include in the pharmacopoeia 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."<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Cyril Elgood, *A Medical History of Persia*, p. 203.



The next great physician was 'Ali ibn al-'Abbas al-Majūsi known in the West as Haly Abbas. Either he himself or his father was originally a Zoroastrian; hence the name al-Majūsi. He was a Persian by birth and flourished during the period of 'Adud al-Daulah and died in 384/994. After al-Rāzi and ibn Sīna his is the greatest name in the Caliphate of Baghdād. His most famous work is the medical encyclopedia called the *Kitāb al-Māliki* (Liber Regius). Sarton regards this work as more systematic and concise than al-Rāzi's *al-Hāwi* and more practical than ibn Sīnā's *Qānūn* 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.<sup>28</sup> In al-Qiftī's words *al-Māliki* 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 Sīnā's *Qānūn*.

Al-Majūsi 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.<sup>29</sup>

Al-Majūsi'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

<sup>28</sup> P. K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 365.

<sup>29</sup> Khairallah, *op. cit.*, p. 28.



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-Majūsi 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.<sup>30</sup>

The famous physician who succeeded 'Ali ibn 'Abbās in the Muslim world was abu al-Qāsim Khalaf ibn 'Abbās al-Zahrāwi (d. 404/1013). He took his name from his birthplace al-Zahrā', the famous suburb of Cordova. He was Court physician to the Caliph al-Ḥakam 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-Taṣrīf*, in thirty sections. One of the topics discussed in this work is the preparation of medicines by sublimation and distillation. Its 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 dissection."<sup>31</sup> 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-Taṣrīf* 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.<sup>32</sup>

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"<sup>33</sup> is abu 'Ali al-Ḥusain 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 Sāmānid Amīr of Bukhāra and as a result was appointed Court physician and given permission to use the royal library.

Ibn Sīnā's greatest medical work was the *Qānūn* (Canon) used as "medical Bible for a longer period than any other book,"<sup>34</sup> an encyclopedic work of about a million words covering the entire medical knowledge, ancient as well

<sup>30</sup> Al-Majūsi, *Kitāb al-Māliki*, Vol. II, p. 467, see Khairallah, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

<sup>31</sup> P. K. Hitti, *op. cit.*, p. 577.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> G. Sarton, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 709.

<sup>34</sup> Sir W. Osler, *Evolution of Modern Medicine*, 1922, p. 98.

as contemporary. In many ways he resembled Galen. Before ibn Sinā's *Qānūn*, the best work on medicine was al-Rāzī's *al-Hāwi* but, according to all competent authorities, that work was superseded by the *Qānūn*. 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: Inasmuch 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.<sup>35</sup>

The *Qānūn* 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 *Qānūn* are extant, the best known being by ibn Nafīs under the title *al-Mu'jiz*. In the Asian part of the Muslim world, the *Qānūn* held the sway, but in Spain it was played down by ibn Zuhr and ibn Rushd. It was translated into Latin by Gerard of Cremona.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Ibn Sina, *al-Qānūn fi al-Ṭibb*, Vol. II, pp. 240-41.

<sup>36</sup> Khairallah, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-25.

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-Shifā'*. Uṣaibi'ah credits him with having written nineteen medical and ninety non-medical books.<sup>37</sup>

The illustrious "Shaikh," by which name ibn Sina is generally known throughout the Muslim world, died at Hamdān 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 *Qānūn*, are still widely respected in the Orient by Ḥakims 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."<sup>38</sup> He was born in Baṣrah but migrated to Egypt in the time of Caliph al-Ḥākim. "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 Marwān 'Abd al-Malik (d. 470/1077-78). He was renowned as a diagnostician. His son abu al-'Alā' (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 Yūsuf ibn Tāshifīn. He wrote several medical works, viz., *Kitāb al-Khwāṣṣ* (Book of Properties), *Kitāb al-Adwiyah al-Mufradah* (Book of Simple Drugs), *Kitāb al-Idāḥ* (Book of Explanation), *Mujarrabāt* (Personally Tested Prescriptions), *Kitāb Hall Shukūk al-Rāzi 'ala Kutub Jālinūs* (Resolution of al-Rāzi's Doubts regarding Galen's Works), *Kitāb al-Nuḳāt 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 Sinā's work on simple drugs.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> G. Sarton, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 721.



The most illustrious member of this family was abu Marwān 'Abd al-Malik ibn abi al-'Alā' 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-Rāzi. Only three of his at least six works are now extant.

1. *Kitāb al-Taisir fi al-Mudawāt 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. *Kitāb al-Aghdhiyah* (Book on Eatables).

3. *Kitāb al-Iqtisād* 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 Muḥammad ibn al-Mālik was a successful physician and his daughter and the daughter of that daughter were capable midwives. 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 *Kulliyāt* saw several editions.

The great Spanish philosopher ibn Rushd (Averroës) 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 *Kitāb al-Kulliyāt fi al-Ṭibb* (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 Ṭufail, 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 Baiṭār. 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-Jāmi' li Mufradat al-Adwiyah w-al-Aghdhiyah*, 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. Uṣaibi'ah<sup>39</sup> describes the thoroughness of his teacher's methods; Uṣaibi'ah was not only al-Baitār'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.<sup>40</sup>

'Alā' al-Dīn abu al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn abi al-Ḥazm, better known as ibn al-Nafīs, 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 Manṣūri hospital. He wrote several books, the most important being *al-Mu'jiz* and *Sharḥ Tashrīḥ al-Qānūn*. In describing the anatomy of the pulmonary vessels, ibn Nafīs 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 Sīnā'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.<sup>41</sup>

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-Qiftī, ibn abi Uṣaibi'ah, and ibn Khallikān, 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 Baghdād, is very great indeed for the present renaissance of the Muslim world. The task is not easy; in fact, it is superhuman.

<sup>39</sup> Uṣaibi'ah, Vol. II, p. 133; cf. Khairallah, *op. cit.*, p. 154, also P. K. Hitti *op. cit.*, p. 576.

<sup>40</sup> M. M. Sharif, *Muslim Thought, Its Origin and Achievements*, p. 63.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Khairallah, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-30.

## 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-Rāzi and ibn Sīna. Within a century and a half of the death of ibn Sīna 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. Hārūn al-Rashīd 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-Rāzi and ibn Sīna. 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-Rāzi and ibn Sīna were considered superior even to Hippocrates and Galen.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> C. Elgood, *op. cit.*, pp. 205ff.

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3

## BOOK SIX

### Influence of Muslim Thought

#### Chapter LXVIII

#### INFLUENCE OF MUSLIM THOUGHT ON THE WEST

##### A

#### 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, moulded the modern European thought down to the time of Immanuel Kant, in certain directions even later.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

Nothing can prove their own humanism better than the fact that within eight years of the establishment of Baghdād they were in possession of the greater parts of the works of Aristotle (including the spurious *Minerology*, *Mechanics*, and *Theology*, the last of which was actually an abridged paraphrasis 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 Persian and Indian writings on mathematics, astronomy, and ethics. All this

<sup>1</sup> M. M. Sharif, "Muslim Philosophy and Western Thought," *Iqbal*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, Lahore, July 1959, pp. 1-14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

was taking place in the Muslim world when Greek thought was almost unknown in the West. While in the East "al-Rashīd and al-Māmūn were deluged into Greek and Persian philosophy their contemporaries in the West, Charlemagne and his lords, were reportedly dabbling in the art of writing their names."<sup>3</sup>

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 enemy and acted with the purpose of subduing it first in the Arab lands and then throughout the world. The Qur'ān 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 in Islam was against their frame of mind, the Christians started a religious struggle against Islam. The following verses from the Qur'ān indicate this: *Lakum dīn-u-kum wa li-ya dīn* (you have your religion and I have mine); *ikrā'ha fi al-dīn* (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 they accepted Islam.<sup>4</sup> Although these sociological factors play a significant role in 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

Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 315.  
Barthold, *Mussulmane Culture*.



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.<sup>5</sup>

Peter de Cluny (d. 551/1156) translated the Qur'ān 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 Peitier participated in Peter Cluny's attempt at translating the Qur'ān. The Latin translation of an epistle on the discussion over the principles of Christianity and Islam between 'Abd al-Masīh al-Kindi who was the Caliph Māmūn's secretary and Yahya al-Dimashqi was added at the end of this version of the Qur'ān. This epistle indicates how tolerant the 'Abbāsid Caliph was about religious discussions even in the third/ninth century.<sup>6</sup> 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. 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.<sup>7</sup> 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 disinterestedness was later accepted by the Popes after Raymond's long endeavour to that effect; it became indeed the foundation of the Missionary movement. Raymond translated *Asmā' al-Husna* (The Beautiful Names of God) of Muḥyi al-Dīn ibn 'Arabi. He adapted several passages from *Futūḥāt al-Makkīyyah* (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 Prophet with respect and politeness in a passage of his work on history. Ibn Sab'in, an adherent of *taṣawwuf*, in a book entitled *al-Ajwibah 'an al-As'ila al-Ṣaqalīyyah* (Answers to Sicilian Questions) answered the questions asked on Aristotle's philosophy by the King of Naples and Emperor of Germany.

<sup>5</sup> Gustave E. Von Grunbaum, *Medieval Islam*, Chicago, 1946.

<sup>6</sup> *Risālah 'Abd Allah Ibn Ismā'il al-Hāshimi ila 'Abd al-Masīh Ibn Ishāq al-Kindi* (a work of the third/ninth century written in defence of Christianity), London, 1885.

<sup>7</sup> *Petits traités Apologétiques de Yahya ben 'Adi*, Arabic text with French translation by Augustin Perier. Geuthner, Paris, 1920.

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, translations, 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 translations and interpretations thereof for centuries, the attitude of some Western people who were hostile to the very civilization that created these works indicates 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'ān in 1147/1734, likens the Prophet to Theseus and Pompeius. He praises his philosophy, his political views, and his realism. Boulainvilliers in his book,<sup>7</sup> *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'ān completed in 1198/1783, describes Muhammad as "one of the marvellous persons who appear in the world from time to time." Due to its importance, Savory's translation was again published ten years ago.<sup>8</sup>

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

<sup>8</sup> Gustave E. Von Grunebaum, *op. cit.*



order."<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup> Goethe read the Qur'ān in 1184/1770 and annotated certain verses which were later referred to in Megerlin's German version of the Qur'ān. 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'ān (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.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup>

Although Nietzsche severely attacks Christianity in all his works, particularly in his *Antichrist*,<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup>

Carlyle designates Islam as a very superior faith and thinks that Muhammad is the hero of the prophets.<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>9</sup> E. Kant, *La Religion dans les limites de la simple raison*, French translation by J. Gibelin, J. Vrin, Paris, 1943, pp. 230-40.

<sup>10</sup> Goethe, *Mahomet* (French translation).

<sup>11</sup> Auguste Comte, *Système de la politique positive*, Vol. III, p. 470.

<sup>12</sup> Oswald Spengler, *Le Declin de l'Occident*, trad. de l'allemand par M. Tazerout, Vol. II, pp. 173-298.

<sup>13</sup> F. Nietzsche, *Der Antichrist*.

<sup>14</sup> Eduard von Hartmann, *La Religion de l'Avenir*, p. 148.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship*, French translation by Jean Izoulet, Armand Colin, 1928, pp. 67-122.

<sup>16</sup> *La Conquete du Monde Musulman: La Croisade Spirituelle chez les musulmans, de Saint Francois d'Assise à Raymond Tulle*, 1912; H. Z. Ulken, *Islam Dusuncesine Giris*, Istanbul, 1954.



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, Quartermère, 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.<sup>17</sup>

In the above account an attempt has been made to show how, starting with thorough antagonism to Islam, the West gradually moved towards a humanistic 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 *Indische Bibliothek* in three volumes and also edited the *Bhagvad Gīta* and the *Rāmāyana*. 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'ān 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'ānic 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-Ṭabari, al-Mas'ūdi, ibn Ḥayyān, ibn Khaldūn, and others. One of them, al-Birūni, 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-Rāzi and ibn Haitham. Ibn Ḥazm, 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

<sup>17</sup> Rene Guenon, "L'esoterisme islamique," *l'Islam et l'Occident*, 1947; F. Bonjean, "Culture occidentale et culture musulmane," *ibid.*; Ph. Guiborteau, "Islam, Occident et Chritiente," *ibid.*; F. Bonjean, "Quelques causes d'in-comprehension entre," *ibid.*

the only form of reliable inference. Suhrawardi Maqtūl too offered a systematic refutation of Greek logic. It was the method of observation and experiment which led al-Bīrūnī 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.<sup>18</sup>

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 Cantimpré, by Albertus Magnus."<sup>19</sup>

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.<sup>20</sup>

"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."<sup>21</sup>

"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 accumula-

<sup>18</sup> Sir Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore, 1954, p. 129.

<sup>19</sup> Briffault, *The Making of Humanity*, London, 1928, pp. 200-01.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

tion 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, and 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.

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 J. 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 imaginative apparatus owed much to those Muslim mystics who had also been native of Spain." In the beginning of the eighth/fourteenth century, Raymond Lull wrote on mysticism. He was an accomplished scholar and founder of a 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 'Arabī's influence on Dante. The relationship between ascension to heaven in Dante's book and the Ascension (*mi'rāj*) 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 *taṣawwuf*, at least those of ibn Sīna and al-Ghazālī. 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

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.



time, Modi de Goeje and some other authors held similar views. More recently Edgard Blochet published two studies on this problem: *Etudes sur l'histoire 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'ān, there is a reference to *mi'rāj* (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'rāj* description in the Mazdakite poet Artāy Virāf's literary work based on Zend-Avesta. Barthelemy translated Artāy Virāf's *Nāmak* and in his foreword demonstrated similarities between the *Divine Comedy* and the Mazdakite book. Blochet 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 'Arabī's "Revelations" he solved the problem with great success. Ibn Masarraḥ al-Jibāli from Mercier and Cordova who specialized in ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of *taṣawwuf*, 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'rāj*; (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'rāj* 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 imagination about a verse in the Qur'ān on *mi'rāj*.<sup>23</sup> All these got incorporated in the descriptions of descent to hell at night (*isra*) and the Ascension to heaven (*mi'rāj*). The theme of *mi'rāj*, which public imagination worked on, is used as a mystic symbol by ibn 'Arabī. Several adherents of *taṣawwuf*, e. g., Junaid Baghdādi, Bāyāzid Bisṭāmi, etc. had used the moral symbol before. In ibn 'Arabī's work it received a more significant place. Later, in the books entitled *Mi'rāj Nāmeḥ* and in Nizāmi Ganjeh's *Makhzan al-Asrār* 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 'Arabī's hell. Both are large funnel-shaped edifices composed of several storeys. Spiral stair-

<sup>23</sup> Qur'ān, xvii, 1.

cases 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 'Arabī'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'rāj Nāmeḥ*.

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 Imru' 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 *Almajest*. 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'rāj Nāmeḥ* 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 travellers are dazzled by getting near God as they enter a new phase of the *mi'rāj*. 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-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī's *Risālat al-Ghufrān*. There is a close 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'rāj* 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-'Alā', the Prophet meets Ḥamdūn from Aleppo and Taufiq from Baghdād. 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 *taṣawwuf*, with the exception of ibn Masarraḥ of Spain (270-319/883-931) and ibn 'Arabi, were not as well known in Europe as were the "philosophers." Ibn Masarraḥ was the founder of the illuministic or *ishrāqi* school. From Spain the ideas of this school were transmitted to the Augustinian scholastics such as Duns Scotus, Roger Bacon, and Raymond Lull.<sup>24</sup> Yet Goethe wrote the *Der west-östliches Dīwān* (Compendium of Poems

<sup>24</sup> E. J. Jurji, *Illumination in Islamic Mysticism*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1938, p. 5.

on the East) during his mature years after reading Ḥāfiẓ. Fitzgerald translated **Khayyām's** *Rubā'iyāt* into English and it was received with great interest. Nicholson published in several volumes English translation of Rūmī's *Mathnawī* in addition to the selections from his *Dīwān* and also from the *Mathnawī*. Massignon has devoted his entire life to the study of Ḥallāj Mansūr. The number of studies on the works of Ḥārith Muḥāsibī have increased recently. Aldous Huxley makes frequent references to Rūmī in his *Perennial Philosophy*, and thinkers like René Guénon have been directly inspired by *taṣawwuf*.<sup>25</sup>

In our own times Corbin, by publishing the greater part of Suhrawardī Maqtūl's books in two volumes with their Arabic and Persian originals at Istanbul and Teheran entitled *Opera Metaphysica et Mystica*,<sup>26</sup> has brought the great martyr to the attention of existentialists and philosophical anthropologists.<sup>27</sup>

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.

## B

### 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-Ghazālī's theology was known to the Western scholars directly. St. Thomas refers to the theologians in his *Contra Genetiles* as *loquentes*.<sup>28</sup> However, for long knowledge of Muslim theology remained meagre and that for two reasons: (i) the information about the Mu'tazilah and the first theologians was second-hand, nothing was taken from their own works; and (ii) the masters of the philosophico-theological movements after al-Ghazālī long remained unknown. Up to the thirteenth/nineteenth century hardly any scholar in the West was acquainted with the works of Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī,

<sup>25</sup> Margaret Smith, *An Early Mystic of Baghdād, Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī*, London, 1933; L. Massignon, *La Passion d'al-Ḥallāj*, 2 Vols.; "Dīwān d'al-Ḥallāj," ed. and tr. in *Journal Asiatique*, 1931; A. J. Arberry, *Sufism*, London, 1950; R. A. Nicholson, *Mathnawī*; Dr. Muḥammad M. Ḥilmi, *al-Ḥayāt al-Rūḥiyyah fi al-Islām*; abu 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyyah*, al-Khanjī, Miṣr, 1953.

<sup>26</sup> Henry Corbin, "Shihāb al-Dīn Yahya al-Suhrawardī," *Opera Metaphysica et Mystica*, Vol. I, Istanbul, 1945, *Œuvres philosophiques et mystiques de Shihābuddīn Yahya al-Suhrawardī*, prolégomènes en français, Teheran, 1952.

<sup>27</sup> *Idem*, *Suhrawardī d'Alep. fondateur de la doctrine illuminative*, Paris, 1939, pour *l'Anthropologie Philosophique*; un traité persan inédit de Suhrawardī (*Le Familier des Amants*), pp. 371-423 (in *Recherches Philosophiques*, Vol. II, 1932-33, Paris).

<sup>28</sup> La critique thomiste des Motecallemin (Loquentes) in: "Pourquoi St. Thomas a critiqué St. Augustin" by E. Gilson in *Archives*, 1926.



Saif al-Dīn 'Amīdī, ibn Taimiyyah, Sirāj al-Dīn Urmāwi, Sayyid Sharīf al-Jurjāni, Sa'd al-Dīn Taftazāni, and others. No complete account can, therefore, be given of the influence of Muslim theology on the West.<sup>29</sup>

However, important works on the philosophy of religion have been translated since the beginning of the present century. Among these the *Irshād* of abu al-Ma'ālī (Imām al-Ḥaramain) 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.<sup>30</sup> Recently, Louis Gardet together with Anawati has released *Introduction à la Théologie Musulmane*. Albert Nader has written *Le système Philosophique des Mu'tazila* (first published in Arabic and then translated into French by the same author).<sup>31</sup>

Al-Ghazālī had a unique position. He was a theologian as well as a philosopher. Therefore, his influence in the West was theological as well as philosophical. Miguel Asin Palacios studied al-Ghazālī's theological influence on Western thought in several of his writings.<sup>32</sup> As it was previously assumed, this influence cannot be confined to the *Tahāfut* only, the Latin version of which was made during the sixth/twelfth century. Al-Ghazālī's influence was also effected through his other works. The *Maqāṣid* was translated into Latin under the heading *Logika et philosophia Algazelis Arabic* by Gundisalvus; it was published in Venice in 912/1506. His *al-Nafs al-Insāni* was also translated under the title *De Anima Humana*.

Al-Ghazālī'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-Ghazālī'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-Ghazālī 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-Ghazālī, it is quite possible that his influence was widespread in the intellectual circles where al-Ghazālī was brought up.<sup>33</sup> Palacios, however,

<sup>29</sup> Henri Laoust (Ed.), *Contribution à une étude de la Methodologie de Taki al-Din Ahmad b. Taimiya*, two opuscules of ibn Taimiyyah, Cairo, 1939.

<sup>30</sup> Max Horten, *Die philosophischen Systeme der spekulativen Theologen im Islam*, Bonn, 1912.

<sup>31</sup> L. Gardet and M. M. Anawati, *Introduction à la Théologie Musulmane*; Albert N. Nader, *Le Systeme Philosophique des Mu'tazila* (Premiers penseurs de l'Islam), Beyrouth, 1956; Tor Andrae, *Les Origines d l'Islam et le Christianisme*, trad. de l'allemand par Jules Roche, Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1955.

<sup>32</sup> This problem has been discussed by Wensinck in his book, *La Pensée de Ghazzali*. The author considers the great importance of this influence, and compares al-Ghazālī with Plotinus, Augustine, and Pascal.

<sup>33</sup> Saint Augustine is mentioned by Qurṭubī (fifth/eleventh century) in his *Kitāb al-Islām fi Din al-Naṣāra min al-Fasād w-al-Auhām wa Izhār-i Mahāsini-i Din al-Islām* (Library Köprülü, Istanbul), as *Qissisnikum Ogustin* (Your Priest Augustine), p. 9; on page 53 in these words: *Qāla Ogustin qad ijta'ma'at al-milat al-thalath* (the three religions, Augustine said, have gained common ground).

fails to refer to any evidence to prove his assertion, though he has much documentary evidence about the transmission of al-Ghazālī'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-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā'* (Revivification of Religious Sciences) and adapted them in his books entitled *Ethicon* and *The Book of the Dove*. This marks the beginning of al-Ghazālī's influence on Christian spirituality. If an author like Bar Hebraeus, who was rather influential in the Christian church, profits by al-Ghazālī'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-Ghazālī, Wensinck shows that the two books by Bar Hebraeus are not only written in accordance with the organization of the chapters taken from al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā'* (e.g., virtues, vices, the degrees of moral perfection) but also al-Ghazālī's ideas and even his examples, analogies, and at times phrases, and the kind of evidence *Iḥyā'* brings from poetry and literature, are employed in them in exactly the same way.<sup>34</sup> 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.<sup>35</sup>

Palacios traces the development of al-Ghazālī'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-Ghazālī. Instead of profiting only by the books of Muslim "philosophers," he, unlike the scholastics, directly profited by al-Ghazālī's texts in his books entitled *Pugio Fidei* and *Explanatio Symboli*, written in the field of religion. These texts were taken from *Tahāfut*, *Maqāṣid*, *al-Munqidh*, *Mizān*, *Maqṣad*, *Mishkāt al-Anwār* and *Iḥyā'*. 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.

<sup>34</sup> A. J. Wensinck, *op. cit.*, Paris, 1940, pp. 10, 14, 15, 16. The author finds similarities between *Mishkāt al-Anwār* and the *Enneads* of Plotinus (p. 270). The same comparison between al-Ghazālī and Plotinus appears in D. B. MacDonald's article: "al-Ghazālī" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. II, pp. 146-49. For the influence of al-Ghazālī on the medieval Christian thought, cf. H. Z. Ulken, *La Pensée d'Islam*, Istanbul, 1953, p. 235, and R. A. Nicholson, *Fi al-Taṣawwuf al-Islāmīyyah*, Egypt, 1927, pp. 140-44; M. Luṭfi Jum'ah, *Tārīkh Falāsifat al-Islām*, p. 74.

<sup>35</sup> M. Asin Palacios, "Contacts de la spiritualité musulmane et de la spiritualité Chrétienne," *l'Islam et l'Occident*, 1935.

Furthermore, St Thomas used some texts of al-Ghazālī's in *Contra Gentiles* either directly or through the mediation of Raymond Martini. Al-Ghazālī'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-Ghazālī's philosophy well, and used his arguments in attacks on Aristotelianism. St. Thomas' *Summa Theologica* and al-Ghazālī'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 opponents fairly before pronouncing their own judgments on it. The questions on which St. Thomas seems to have been deeply influenced by al-Ghazālī 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 *verbum mentis*, the miracles as a testimony to the truth of prophecies, and resurrection of the dead.<sup>36</sup>

Al-Ghazālī'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'arī's arguments on the problem of causality through the mediation of al-Ghazālī. Their names are (1) Peter of Ailly, (2) Nicholas of Autrecourt, and (3) Gillaume of Occam. Occam, the scholar most influenced by al-Ash'arī'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 philosophy) under al-Ghazālī's influence.<sup>37</sup>

A relation was established for the first time between Christian and Muslim philosophies with Gundisalvus' translations from al-Ghazālī. 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 Sīnā had an influence on the West in two ways: (1) directly through his own works and (2) indirectly through al-Ghazālī's works translated by Gundisalvus. Al-Ghazālī was in a way ibn Sīnā'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 Sīnā divided the soul into three faculties named in Latin: *vegetabilis, sensibilis, rationalis*. In Ghazālī's translations, the terms used are: *anima vegetative, anima animalis, anima humana (al-nafs al-nabāti, al-nafs al-ḥayawāni, al-nafs al-insāni)*. As to *nafs al-nāṭiqah* (the soul endowed with the gift of speech) Gundisalvus uses slightly different terminology. Above

<sup>36</sup> A. Guillaume, *The Legacy of Islam*, London, 1952, p. 274.

<sup>37</sup> S. Horowitz, *Der Einfluss der griechischen Skepsis auf die Entwicklung der Araber*, 1915, Chap. 4: "The relation Between Ghazālī's Thought and Christian Scholastics."



the hierarchy of the intellects there is *al-'aql al-ja'āl* (*intellectus agens*) which al-Ghazālī 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 Sīna and which proved valuable for the Western scholastics. Al-Ghazālī calls the active intellect *dator formarum*.<sup>38</sup>

Al-Ghazālī'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-Ghazālī'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-Ghazālī, known in the West as "betting" (*pari*), is elaborated again and again by Pascal in his *Pensées*. 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 lose 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 Schund'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 *Immortalité de l'Âme*. 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-Ghazālī to Raymond Martini and then to Pascal. Let us see only the comparisons Palacios draws between Pascal and al-Ghazālī basing them on well-founded studies of the texts. Pascal, like al-Ghazālī, is of the opinion that our senses may deceive us. Here, Palacios compares the text of *al-Munqidh* with that of *Pensées* and indicates the similarities. Pascal as much as al-Ghazālī 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

<sup>38</sup> MacDonald, "Life of al-Ghazzālī with Special Reference to His Religious Experience and Opinions," *Journal of American Oriental Society*, Vol. XX, 1899, pp. 71–132; Carra de Vaux, *Ghazali*, Paris, 1902; A. J. Wensinck, *op. cit.*, Paris, 1940; Miguel Asin Palacios, *La Mystique d'al-Ghazzali*; Quadri, *La Philosophie Arabe*, Payot, 1947; Qāssim Kufrahi, "Ghazzālī," *Islam Anisklopedisi*; H. Z. Ülken, *Islam Felsefesi Tarihi*, 1955.

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-Ghazālī and Pascal. It is evident that the foundation of Pascal's theory about the "logic of the heart"<sup>29</sup> was laid in al-Ghazālī'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 *élite*; 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-Ghazālī and Pascal on faith and human certitude, and also the anecdote on p. 68 in al-Ghazālī's *Faiṣal al-Tafrīqah* with that on p. 350 in Pascal's *Pensées*. 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 cœur, non- a la raison*). Then, Palacios notes the following points in Pascal about "betting" which remind us of al-Ghazālī.

(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-Ghazālī's *Mizān al-'Amal* (Criterion of Action) and *Iḥyā'* 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 *Pensées* with certain chapters and passages in al-Ghazālī's works, e.g., *Iḥyā'*, *Mizān*, 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 convince non-believers of it. Here again Palacios compares passages from al-Ghazālī's works, e.g., *Iḥyā'*, *Mizān*, *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

<sup>29</sup> Logic of Heart: *Logique du cœur* (le cœur a des raisons que in raison ne connaît pas).



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 *Iḥyā'* and *Mīzān*, al-Ghazālī 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-Ghazālī's books, e.g., *Iḥyā'*, *Mīzān*, and *Mustaḥhiri*, and compares them with those in the works of Silhon, Sirmond, and Pascal. Pascal says, *Lequel prenez vous voyons; 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-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā'*, *Mīzān*, and *Mustaḥhiri* 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-Ghazālī'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 *Mīzān*, *Iḥyā'*, 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 *Mizān al-'Amal* and *Ihyā'* 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 latter 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 controlling the passions, putting them under the control of the intellect. Only in this 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 weakness, and leaves him with infinite peacefulness of the soul, which is pure and more lasting than the sensuous pleasures. Here also Palacios quotes from *Mizān al-'Amal*, *Arba'in*, *Mustazhiri* and shows how many of Pascal's statements resemble those of al-Ghazālī.

According to Palacios, it should be granted that there are some differences between the two philosophers besides their similarities. First of all, like Sirmond, Pascal did not present the problem openly but mentioned it in an indirect way. Al-Ghazālī, 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-Ghazālī 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 favour 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-Ghazālī 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-Ghazālī begins debating with the irreligious in *Ihyā'* and *Arba'in* because of their ruthless actions and in *Mizān al-'Amal* so, al-Ghazālī'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-Ghazālī seems more open and thorough than Pascal on betting. Pascal's *Pensées* does not seem to be a completed work as al-Ghazālī'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-Ghazālī. Palacios finds the reason for this in the Muslim philosopher's Islamic view of regarding all chance games as illegitimate.<sup>40</sup>

## C

### 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 endeavour. 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.

<sup>40</sup> Palacios, "Contacts de la spiritualité musulmane et de la spiritualité Chrétienne," *l'Islam et l'Occident*, Cahier du Sud, 1952.

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.<sup>41</sup> 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 Köln 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-Biṭrūji (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-Rāzi 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

<sup>41</sup> L. Massignon, *Ibn Sab'in et la critique psychologique dans l'histoire de la philosophie musulmane* (Memorial Henri Basset), Paris, 1928. Serfathin Yaltakaya, "Sicilya cevaplari nin tel'kik ve tercumesi," *Felsefe Yilligi*, II, 1936 (Turkish).



*Optica*, and ibn Haitham's *Kitāb al Manāẓir*. 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 Aristotelianism. 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 incomplete. 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-Rāzi, founder of the philosophy of nature in Islam, was an important step in the transmission of Muslim philosophy to the West.<sup>42</sup> Constantine the African translated into Latin two philosophical works of al-Rāzi, *Kitāb al-'Ilal* and *Sirr al-Asrār*, and Gerard of Cremona translated *al-Manṣūri*, another work of his, under the title *Liber Alubatri Rasis qui dicitur Almansorius*. Al-Rāzi's greatest work *Kitāb al-Hāwi (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 Brescia, then in Venice in 906/1500, 912/1506, 915/1509, and 949/1542. Al-Rāzi'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.<sup>43</sup>

The famous Jābir bin Ḥayyān is known among the naturalists as an alchemist, chemist and philosopher.<sup>44</sup> He is known in the Latin world better than in

<sup>42</sup> Paul Kraus, "Abi Bakr Muḥammadi filii Zachariae Rasis," *Opera Philosophica*, Vol. I, Cairo, 1939; M. Amin, *al-Taṣkīr al-Islām*.

<sup>43</sup> Steinschneider, *Die europäischen Übersetzungen aus dem Arabischen*, bis Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts, 1904.

<sup>44</sup> Paul Kraus, *Rasā'il Jābir Ibn Ḥayyān, Essai sur l'histoire des idées scientifiques dans l'Islam*, I, textes choisis, Maisonneuve, Paris, 1935; ibn Khaldūn, *Muqatimmat*; Aldo Mioli, *La Science Arabe*.

Islam, not as a philosopher and chemist but as a magician and alchemist. *Summa perfectionis magisteri* is a translation of his collected works.

E. Gilson, in a number of detailed studies, investigated how Aristotle's psychology reached al-Fārābi and al-Kindi, how it developed in their hands and how it was transmitted to the Latin world.<sup>45</sup> 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.<sup>46</sup> One of al-Kindi's important books, *Kitāb 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 introductorius in artem logica demonstrationis*, were also known in the West. The latter was compiled by his disciple Muḥammad ibn Ṭaiyib 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.<sup>47</sup>

Coming to al-Fārābi, not all but some of his works were known in the West during the Latin medieval period.<sup>48</sup> 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

<sup>45</sup> E. Gilson, "Le sources greco-arabes de l'augustinisme avicennisant" (le texte latin médiéval du *D'intellectu* d'Alfarabi); "Jean Scot Eriugene, source du Pseudo-Avecenne," *Archives d'Histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen-Age*, Année, 1929, pp. 5-149.

<sup>46</sup> D. Campbell, *Arabian Medicine*, 2 Vols., 1926, Chap. IV, "al-Kindi"; F. Wüstenfeld, *Die Übersetzungen arabischer Werke in das Lateinische seit dem XI. Jahrhundert*, 1877, p. 129.

<sup>47</sup> Albino Nagy, *Die philosophischen Abhandlungen des al-Kindi* (Beiträge II, 5), Münster, 1897; S. Munk, *Mélanges de philosophie juive et arabe*, Paris, 1895.

<sup>48</sup> Ibrahim Madkour, *La Place d'Al-Fārābi dans la Philosophie Arabe*; Steinschneider, *Al-Fārābi*, Berlin, 1868; R. Hammond, *The Philosophy of Alfarabi and Its Influence on Medieval Thought*, New York, 1947.



leader at Segovia; in addition to numerous translations, he wrote a book, *De Divisione Philosophiae*, which imitated al-Fārābī almost step by step.<sup>49</sup> In this book he substituted al-Fārābī's encyclopedic classification for the system of seven types of knowledge (*trivium et quadrivium*) which was traditional in the East during the medieval period,<sup>50</sup> 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-Fārābī and, following him, ibn Sīna 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 Sīna 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-Fārābī's idealistic logic, according to B. Carra de Vaux, produced a permanent effect on the logical thought of Latin scholars.<sup>51</sup> Robert Hammond, comparing the arguments of St. Thomas about the existence of God with al-Fārābī's, has recently shown his influence on the Christian philosopher.<sup>52</sup> 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:*

Due to our sense it is evident that in this world there are things that move. Each being is moved by something else. *Summa*

*Active cause:*

In this world we evidence an order of active cause. *Summa*

*Divine attributes:*

God is an absolutely eternal Being. *Summa*

*The proof of movement:*

In this world there are moving beings. Each being is moved by an instigator. *'Uyūn al-Masā'il*

*Al-'illat al-fā'ilah:*

Every being has a cause in this changing world and this is the cause of another being. *Fuṣūs al-Hikam*

*Divine attributes:*

God is an eternal Being without cause. *Al-Siyāsat al-Madanīyyah*

Al-Fārābī synthesizes Aristotelianism and Neo-Platonism but supports the trends towards Neo-Platonism in the medieval West. As E. Gilson has shown,

<sup>49</sup> Moritz Steinschneider, *op. cit.*; F. Wüstenfeld, *Die Übersetzungen arabischer Werke in das Lateinische seit dem XI. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen, 1877.

<sup>50</sup> Inspired by Fārābī's *Iḥṣā' al-'Ulūm*.

<sup>51</sup> M. M. Sharif, *Muslim Thought, Its Origin and Achievements*, Lahore, 1951, p. 97.

<sup>52</sup> R. Hammond, *op. cit.*



al-Fārābī's translations were long used as arguments by those Western philosophers who wished to reinstate the Augustinian era.

With al-Fārābī originated the idea of definite determinism based on a metaphysical foundation. As a result this conception led to the distinction between psychological necessity and physical necessity. God is the Necessary Being according to al-Fārābī (*Wājib al-Wujūd*) 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 automaton"<sup>53</sup> 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-Fārābī 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-Fārābī:

John of Seville and Gundisalvus, *Liber Alfarabii de Ortu Scientiarum*.

Gerard of Cremona, *Liber Alfarabii de sillogismi, De Divisione, de Scientiis Distinctio super librum Aristotelis de naturali auditu* and *Liber Alfarabii de Scientiis*.

Hermann the German, *Declaratio compendi viam divisionis Alfarabii super libri rhetoricum Aristotelis ad formam clariorom et totale reducta*.

To this list may be added E. Gilson's edition of *De Intellectu et intellectu* with a French translation.<sup>54</sup>

The philosophical development of the great Arab physicist ibn Haitham (Alhazen) proceeded from scepticism to a kind of criticism. The evolution from scepticism to his own ideological synthesis, he owed to al-Fārābī. The Latin translations of some of ibn Haitham's books written during his empiricist and sceptical 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-Rāzi. Ibn Haitham explained the role of induction in syllogism. He criticized Aristotle for the meagreness of his contribution to the method of induction which he regarded as superior to syllogism. He considered it to be the basic requirement for true scientific research.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup> The Mutakallimīn's conception of God is expressed by the term *fa'il-i mukhtār*.

<sup>54</sup> F. Wüstenfeld and D. Campbell. Steinschneider has annotated *De Intellectu*, Dieterici has published the Arabic text, and E. Gilson the Latin version. E. Gilson has also translated it into French in *Archives*, 1930.

<sup>55</sup> Muṣṭafa Naẓif Bey, *al-Ḥasan Ibn al-Haiṭham*, 2 Vols., Cairo, 1943; Aldo Mieli, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-07; de Boer, *Geschichte der Philosophie im Islam*, Stuttgart, 1901; Nallino, "Ibn Heysem," in *Encyclopedie de l'Islam*.

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-Shifā'* was first transmitted to the West in the fifth/eleventh century through *Yanbū' al-Hayāt*, a philosophical work by the Jewish philosopher, Solomon b. Gabriel (known to the Latins as Avencebrol or Avicenna). Many adaptations of ibn Sinā's philosophy were made by the Latin philosophers. B. Haneberg has given an elaborate account of this influence (*Zur 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 Sinā'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</i> — <i>concupiscibilis</i>
		<i>al-quwwat al-shauqīyyah</i> —
		<i>efficiens</i>
		<i>motum irascibilis al-ghadabīyyah</i>
		<i>visus</i> <i>al-hāṣirah</i>
		<i>auditus</i> <i>al-sāmi'ah</i>
		<i>olfactus</i> <i>al-shūmmah</i>
		<i>gustus</i> <i>al-dhā'iqah</i>
		<i>tactus</i> <i>al-lāmisah</i>
		<i>fantasia sensus communis</i> —
		<i>al-bantāsīyyah</i>
		<i>imaginatio</i> <i>al-muṣawwirah</i>
		<i>imaginativa</i> <i>al-mutakhayyilah</i>
		<i>estimativa</i> <i>al-wahmīyyah</i>
		<i>memorialis</i> <i>al-dhākirah</i>
		<i>passiones corporales artem</i> —
		<i>al-akhlāq al-radhīyyah</i>
b. <i>vis apprehendens</i>	(	
( <i>al-quwwat al-mudrikkah</i> )		
	)	
		<i>ab intus</i>
		<i>al-hawāss al-bātinah</i> —

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(iii) <i>Anima rationalis</i> <i>al-nafs al-nāṭiqah</i>	{ <i>activa intellectus</i> — <i>activus</i> — <i>al-quw-</i> <i>wat al-'āmilah</i> <i>contemplativa</i> <i>al-quwwat al-'āli-</i> <i>mah</i> —	{ <i>principia actionis</i> — <i>al-akhlīq al-ḥadīthiyah</i>
		{ <i>intellectu in potentia, materialis</i> — <i>al-quwwat al-hayūlana</i> <i>intellectu in effectu</i> — <i>al-'aql bil malakah</i>
		<i>ingenium subtilitas (al-ḥads)</i> <i>intellectu adeptus prophetia (al-quwwat al-qudsīyyah)</i>

The translation movement received new impetus during the beginning of the sixth/twelfth century. By his work *Dalālat al-Hā'irīn* (The Guide for the Perplexed) Maimonides introduced Muslim philosophers and especially ibn Sina (Avicenna), to the West in great detail.<sup>56</sup> During the same century arguments started between Abelard and St. Thomas in the Latin world. Numerous translations from Arabic into Latin, especially of al-Fārābi and ibn Sina, during that era suddenly widened the horizons of thought in the West.<sup>57</sup>

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 Sinā's *al-Shifā'* was also partly rendered into Latin and entitled *Sufficiencia. Kitāb al-Qānūn fi al-Ṭibb* (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.<sup>58</sup>

The influence of these translations has to be classified in two groups.

- i) The influence beginning with ibn Sina and al-Fārābi and leading to the development of the trend of Avicennism.
- ii) The continued influence exercised by al-Ghazālī's summaries of al-Fārābi's and ibn Sinā's views.

The translations from al-Fārābi and ibn Sina helped in the establishment of Augustinian philosophy. It supplied it with affirmative arguments. Hippone, in his book *Doctrina Sacra*, succeeded in making that synthesis. Ibn Sinā's influence on medieval Christian thinkers was of primary importance since

<sup>56</sup> Munk, *Mélanges*, pp. 461-511 (Esquisse historique de la philosophie chez les Juifs); Vajda, *La Philosophie juive*; Moses Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, English translation by M. Friedlander, London, 1904.

<sup>57</sup> A. M. Goichon, *La Philosophie d'Avicenne et son Influence en Europe Médiévale*, Paris, 1944.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 90-133; E. Gilson, "Pourquoi St. Thomas a critiqué St. Augustin," *Archives d'histoire etc.*, Vol. I, Paris, 1926.



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 *Shifā'*.<sup>59</sup>

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 Sinā'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 Sinā'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 Sinā'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 Sinā'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 Sinā's life and works. He did not only know all of ibn Sinā's works translated into Latin, but also knew that apart from these he had other books in Arabic. With ibn Sinā'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 Sinā'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 Sinā's idea of the separate active intellect.

<sup>59</sup> Steinschneider, Wüstenfeld, Campbell, etc.

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 throughout 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-Fārābi 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-Ghazālī was under their influence 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 Dāwūd. Some of ibn Sina's books on metaphysics were translated by him. John compiled these under the title *Opera* (*Majmū'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. *Sufficientia*; 3. *De Coelo et Mundo*; 4. *De Anima*; 5. *De Animalibus*; 6. *Intelligentia* (*Kitāb al-'Aql*); 7. *Philosophia Prima* (*Falsafat al-'Ula*).<sup>60</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Haneberg, *Zur Erkenntnislehre von Ibn Sina und Albertus Magnus*, München, 1800; E. Gilson, "L'augustinisme avicennisant," *Archives d'Histoire*, Vol. IV, 1929 (Memorial de 1000 èmo anniversaire d'Ibn Sina à Bagdad).



Ibn Sinā'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 Bājjah's books, the Latin translations of most of which have now been lost, Albert the Great was led to the study of ibn Sinā's works as also of al-Ghazālī's. Both he and his disciple Ulrich of Strassburg were influenced by him. The former followed ibn Bajjāh'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 Sinā's influence on St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas. St Thomas criticized ibn Sina indirectly while making a penetrating study of ibn Rushd (Averroës). 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 Sinā's and ibn Rushd's theories on the problem of the intelligible as separate from the material (*al-mufāriqāt*). 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 altogether 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 Sinā's doctrine is a form of Platonism without being faithful to it in its results.<sup>61</sup>

It is certain that the translations of the majority of ibn Sinā'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 départ de Duns Scotus," *Arch.*, 1927. Ibn Sinā'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,

<sup>61</sup> Henry Corbin, *Avicenne et le récit visionnaire; Étude sur le cycle des récits avicenniens; Notes et glosses de la traduction du récit de Hayy Ibn Yaqzān*, Tuhoran, 1954; E. Gilson, "Pourquoi St. Thomas a critiqué St. Augustin," *Archives d'Histoire*, Vol. I, Paris, 1926.



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 Sinā'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 Sinā'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.<sup>62</sup>

For ibn Sina as for al-Ghazālī 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 commonplace of Muslim philosophy in the sixth/twelfth century. It was expounded not only by ibn Sina and al-Ghazālī, but also by the latter's contemporaries: ibn Haitham, famous for his optics, and al-Bīrūnī (d. 440/1048), well known for his studies in mathematics, astronomy, geography, and ethnology.<sup>63</sup>

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-Fārābī, 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: *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* (Destruction of Destruction) into Latin and Hebrew;<sup>64</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Hammer Jensen, *Das sogenannte IV. Buch der Meteorologie des Aristoteles*. M. T. Alvordy discussed this problem in an article he wrote on the occasion of the millenary of the philosopher: "L'introduction d'Avicenne en Occident," in *Revue du Caire*, June 1951.

<sup>63</sup> M. M. Sharif, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

<sup>64</sup> *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut: The Incoherence of the Incoherence*, translated into English by Simon van den Bergh, London, 1954.

was his *Manāhiġ al-Adillah*, a work on philosophy and theology;<sup>65</sup> his *Faṣl al-Maqāl* which discusses the relationship between faith and philosophy was translated into Hebrew; the Latin version of his three volumes on Law is entitled *Vigilia super erroris reportas in textibus civilis*. There was also the Hebrew translation of ibn Ruṣḥd's summary of *al-Majisti* (*Almagest*) on astronomy, but only its Latin version is extant under the title *De Motu spheare celestis*. His writings on medicine were compiled in a volume entitled *Kulliyāt* (Compendium). These were translated into Latin and published in seven volumes entitled *De Colliget*. Volumes 2, 4 and 7 were compiled by Jean Bruyerin Champier and entitled *Collectanea de Remedica*. He also wrote an interpretation of ibn Sīnā's poem on medicine entitled *Urjuzah fi al-Ṭibb* which was one of ibn Ruṣḥd's best known books. An epistle by ibn Ruṣḥd entitled *Theriacque* (*Tiryāq*) too was translated into Latin and Hebrew. Ibn Ruṣḥd's commentaries on Aristotle's works were translated into Latin by Michael Scot, Hermann the German, and others. Ernest Renan in his book entitled *Averroës et l'averroïsme* gives full account of the Latin texts.

Ibn Ruṣḥd is considered to be the greatest interpreter of Aristotle in the Muslim world. He composed three kinds of works on the interpretation of 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 called Averroism continued for centuries. Siger de Barbante was its last representative. Ibn Ruṣḥd considered all former interpretations of Aristotle to 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 Ruṣḥd's works that Aristotle became widely known in Europe. Those who were looking in the medieval period for the real Aristotle, and had a glimpse of him from those preceding ibn Ruṣḥd, became enthusiastic Averroists.<sup>66</sup>

No Muslim thinker influenced the medieval West more than ibn Ruṣḥd. The main ideas for which he was vehemently opposed by the scholastics of the East and of the West and most enthusiastically welcomed by the radicals in thought from the sixth/twelfth to the eighth/fourteenth century and which opened the door to the European Renaissance were: (1) allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures, (2) the theory of two truths, which, in the words of Macdonald, "ran like wild-fire through the schools of Europe," (3)

<sup>65</sup> Ibn Ruṣḥd (Averroës), *Traité décisif (Faṣl al-Maqāl) sur l'accord de la religion et de la philosophie suivi de l'appendice (Ḍamimah)*, Arabic text, with French translation by L. Gauthier, Algiers, 1848; *Faṣl al-Maqāl*, translation into Turkish by Nevzat Ayasbeyoglu, 1952.

<sup>66</sup> Munk, *Mélanges*, pp. 418-58; Ernest Renan, *Averroës et l'averroïsme*, Colman Levy, Paris; Quadri, *La Philosophie Arabe*, pp. 198-340; Luṭfi Jum'ah, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-224; L. Gauthier, *Ibn Ruṣḥd*, Paris, 1938; H. Z. Ulken, "Ibn Ruṣḥd," *Islam Ansiklopedisi*, 1952; Maḥmūd Qāsim, *al-Feylosof al-muṣṭera aleyh Ibn Ruṣḥd*, Cairo, n.d.

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 Yūsuf Ya'qūb al-Mansūr (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 neighbouring 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-Ghazālī, and Maimonides Ibn Sīnā, Gersonides was a disciple of Ibn Rushd. Besides Jewish scholars, Jewish statesmen and travellers 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 Courçon, 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 centres 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 ecclesiastic 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 Ximénez's order. In pursuance of this order, 80,000 manuscripts in Arabic were burnt in the squares of Granada.<sup>67</sup> In about 1009/1600, Scaliger, while searching for new manuscripts in Spain, could find not even a single copy of ibn Rushd's works.

## D

### 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 philosophy had penetrated deep into the West much before Descartes' time, and most

<sup>67</sup> Ernest Renan, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

of the works of al-Ghazālī 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 scepticism 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 *Tahūfut al-Falāsifah*, another of al-Ghazālī'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-Ghazālī 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-Ghazālī'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 philosophia* and *Principia philosophiae*, in Latin.

We notice that, exactly like al-Ghazālī, Descartes came to his conclusions by a study of his own self, al-Ghazālī's starting formula being "I will, therefore, I am," and Descartes' being, "I think, therefore, I am." He followed al-Ghazālī'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-Ghazālī and ibn Sīna and, following them, by Crescas and Bruno. Exactly like al-Ghazālī 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-Ghazālī 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-Ghazālī's *al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl* 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 méthode*, 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-Ghazālī's *al-Munqidh* and Descartes' *Discours de*

*la méthode*, are autobiographical. Both al-Ghazālī and Descartes began the stories of their lives from their youth (M. 4, D. 8).<sup>66</sup> 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 sceptical 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 (Tūs and finally Nishāpūr 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

<sup>66</sup> 'M' stands for al-Ghazālī's treatise *al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl* published by Maghūr-i 'Ālam Press, Lahore, 1311/1893, and 'D' stands for *Discourse on the Method* (translated into English from the French text of *Discours de la méthode* published in Paris in 1637) in *Descartes, Philosophical Writings*, selected and edited by Elizabeth Anscombe and Peter Thomas Geach, Edinburgh, 1954.



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-Ghazāli 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 scepticism 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-Ghazāli, *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-Ghazāli 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-Ghazāli who alone among his predecessors had followed exactly the same plan. In any case, whatever the facts, in our opinion the influence of al-Ghazāli on Descartes' *Discours de la méthode* is indubitable.

The next great luminary of modern philosophy was Spinoza. As shown by Dunnin Borkowski, he was deeply influenced by al-Fārābi, 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.'"<sup>11</sup> Ibn Sinā'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-Fārābi and ibn Sina was accepted by Spinoza, as by Maimonides and St. Thomas before him, and al-Ghazāli's distinction between the infinite and the indefinite was followed by him as it was done by Crescas, Bruno, Galileo,

<sup>11</sup> Osman Arnin, "The Influence of Muslim Philosophy on the West", *Iqbal*, Lahore, Vol. VIII, No. 3, January 1960, p. 2.

and Descartes. Besides, his idea of substance was the same as al-Ghazālī'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-Ghazālī's idea of necessity (non-dependence upon anything else) and that of necessity was identical with the latter's idea of possibility (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-Ghazālī. 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-Ghazālī, 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 being excepted by al-Ghazālī. 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-Ghazālī 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-Ghazālī or Kant.

How are we to explain this close resemblance between the philosophical ideas of al-Ghazālī and Kant? We believe that this explanation can be found in the philosophy of Leibniz, for, as T. H. Green observed, the doctrines of Leibniz formed a permanent atmosphere of Kant's mind, despite the inspiration he received from Hume in his youth.<sup>70</sup> The minds of both worked on the same lines.<sup>71</sup> Kant was only a corrected and developed form of Leibniz,<sup>72</sup> whereas Leibniz was an incorrect and undeveloped form of al-Ghazālī combined with the Ash'arite atomism.

Leibniz, like al-Ghazālī 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 senses. Like both of them, he made a distinction between concepts and percepts, though he used different terms (relatively clear and confused perceptions) to express this distinction. Time and space for him, as for them, are not real or

<sup>70</sup> T. H. Green, *Works*, Vol. III, p. 134.

<sup>71</sup> R. Latta, *Leibniz: The Monadology, etc.*, p. 172.

<sup>72</sup> T. H. Green, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 134.

characteristics of the real, though, like al-Ghazālī and unlike Kant, he regarded 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 by experience not by the senses but by the mind.<sup>73</sup> 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-Ghazālī's views through Latin translations. In fact, the influence of Muslim thought on him is evident in some other respects as well. Al-Fārābī's proof of the existence of God from the concepts of necessity and contingency came down to him through ibn Sīnā, 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 Sīnā's influence on him can hardly be doubted for there is a curious parallelism in *al-Shifā'* 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.<sup>74</sup>

Without intensive research in the education that Locke and Berkeley received and the studies they pursued it is difficult to say whether al-Ghazālī 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 scepticism 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-Ghazālī 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

<sup>73</sup> R. Latta, *op. cit.*, "New Essays," pp. 360, 367.

<sup>74</sup> F. Rahman, *Avicenna's Psychology*, London, 1952, p. 81.



of events must come to pass by necessity, for if it came by mere chance it 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 rationally justified.

Al-Ghazāli anticipates Schopenhauer and other voluntarists in holding that not thought but will is the fundamental reality, but he steers clear of Schopenhauer's pessimism. God, according to him, is Will and the world flows from Him like a river. Like Bergson, even more like Jacobi and Schleiermacher, he makes intuition or immediate consciousness the source of knowledge. Al-Ghazāli exerted great influence over the East and the West. It was the Protestant revolt that freed the West from the grip of this great man's intellect, and in the East, having conquered all rival thought, it has even to this day a hold too tight to allow any fresh movement.<sup>75</sup>

## E

### PHILOSOPHICAL INFLUENCE IN THE POST-KANTIAN PERIOD

In the sixth/twelfth century some stir was created by another Muslim thinker ibn Ṭufail (Chapter XXVII) known in the Latin world for long as Abentofal or Abubacer. Most of his writings were lost probably during the destruction by Ximénez. But his fame is due to his *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān*, 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 to 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 Yokdhan* 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 George Ashwell in 1098/1686. Simon Ockley published its translation into English from the original Arabic in 1120/1708. Its Dutch version was first published in Amsterdam in 1083/1672 and again in 1113/1701. It was translated into German twice. Finally, Gauthier published the French version of the book with an analytic summary in 1318/1900. In Paul Brönnle's words, "in a comparatively short time it caught the fancy of the public—in fact it took the world by storm and for a long time it remained in vogue." The world's interest in it has not yet ceased, for it was translated into Russian in 1339/1920, and into Spanish in 1353/1934.

The large number of these translations is indicative of the influence of this philosophical novel on Western thought. After the appearance of its

<sup>75</sup> M. M. Sharif, *Muslim Thought, Its Origin and Achievements*, pp. 78–80.

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 Khaldūn. 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 expounded in his *Muqaddimah* (Introduction) to his historical work entitled *Kitāb al-'Ibar*. The Introduction was first printed in Paris by Quatremere and then by Muṣṭafa Fehmi at Būlāq. Its first translation was made in Turkey by Pirizāde Şāhib Molla and Ahmet Jevdet Pāsha. 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, Hämmer Prugstall wrote articles about him and referred to him as the "Montesquieu of the Arabs." Some years later, Garcin de Quatremere published the original<sup>3</sup> version of the "Introduction" under the title *Prolegomènes d'Ebn Khaldoun* and attempted a summarized translation of it but could not finish it. Baron de Slane succeeded in making a complete translation 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 Khaldūn 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. Gampowitz, R. Mannier, Findikoglu, Sāti'u Bey al-Ḥuṣri, 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 Khaldūn in the *Journal Asiatique* (Paris, 1303/1885). Graberg of Hemsö, 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. Altmira, 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 LXIX

INFLUENCE OF MUSLIM THOUGHT ON THE EAST

A

INTRODUCTION

Gibbon describes the rise and expansion of Islam as one of the most memorable 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 sceptre



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 unprecedented 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 organization, 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,<sup>1</sup> and to the all-powerful influence of the Qur'ān. 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 Rivoire<sup>2</sup> 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'ān 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.

## B

### 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,

<sup>1</sup> M. N. Roy, *The Historical Role of Islam*, Chaps. 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Visages de l'Islam* quoted by Zaki Ali, *Islam in the World*, Lahore, 1947, p. 110.

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 Qādisiyyah. 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 *zakāt*, 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 Sāssānid 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, labourers, agriculturists—who defiled fire, earth, and

water in pursuance of their trades and professions. The labouring classes in the Zoroastrian society had the same miserable lot as the Śūdras 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 Sāssānid 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 Mazdāh and Ahriman, they found Allah and Iblīs; 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.<sup>3</sup>

Besides the causes enumerated above for the spread of Islam in Persia mention may also be made of the marriage of Shahrbānu, a daughter of Yazdigird—the last monarch of the Sāssānid dynasty—with Husain, the son of 'Ali. Consequently, in the descendants of Husain and Shahrbānu, the Persians could see the heirs to their ancient kings. This also accounts to some extent for the rise of Shī'ism as a separate sect in Persia and the devotion of the Persians to the 'Alīds. 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, Māni, and Mazdak—more or less dualistic despite a tinge of monotheism. The pre-Sāssānian thought indicated a tendency towards monotheism, especially in Zoroaster, but the tendency became a dominant feature of Persian thought, almost an indubitable truth,

<sup>3</sup> Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, Chaps. VII and IX.



only after the Muslim conquest. The dualism of Good and Evil yielded place to the dualism of God and matter.

The 'Abbāsid 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 Sīna, al-Ghazālī, Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzi, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, Mulla Ṣadra. The encyclopedists, Ikhwān al-Ṣafa, though not original in their contributions, are also worthy of mention. They had among them some good scholars like Zaid, son of Rifā'a, abu Sulaimān Muḥammad of Bust, 'Ali of Zanjān, abu Aḥmad Mihrajāni and 'Aufī.<sup>4</sup> Persian Sufism also contains some very great names such as abu Sa'id ibn abi al-Khair, 'Aṭṭār, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmi, Sa'di, Hāfiz, al-Jili, and Jāmi.

From Persia, Islam spread to China, Turkey, Afghānistān, India, and Indonesia.

### C

#### CHINA, TURKEY, AND AFGHĀNISTĀN

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.<sup>5</sup> The number of Muslims in China is estimated at about thirty million.<sup>6</sup> The Chinese Muslims have, however, identified themselves with the rest of their countrymen, in spite of their religious differences.

The Afghāns believe that they were invited to Islam by Khālid bin Walid in the first/seventh century. But the earliest record of their conversion to Islam dates from the reign of al-Māmūn (198-218/813-833) when a king of Kabul was converted to Islam. His successors, however, reverted to Buddhism. Afghānistān was won for Islam in 258/871 by Ya'qūb bin Laith, but Islamic ideas did not catch the imagination of the masses until after the conquest of the country by Subuktigin and Maḥmūd of Ghaznah.

The invasion of Chingiz Khān 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 Bukhāra, Khiva, Khurāsān, Iraq, and Russia. Not only did Chingiz Khān plunder whatever he laid his hands

<sup>4</sup> A. M. A. Shushtery, *Outlines of Islamic Culture*, Vol. II, Bangalore, 1938, p. 426.

<sup>5</sup> Arnold, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

<sup>6</sup> A. M. A. Shushtery, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 26.

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, Hulāgu, was destined to found a dynasty which lasted for about a century and a half. The official religion of the Mongols was Shamānism, 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 conquerors. 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 civilisation."<sup>7</sup>

It was towards the middle of the seventh/thirteenth century that a small band of nomad Turks migrated from Khurāsān under Sulaimān Shāh. 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 Saljūqian Turks, whose kingdom was disintegrating due to disputes of succession and invasions from Central Asia. Taking advantage of the decadent conditions, Ertoghrol and Dundar, two sons of Sulaimān, established themselves in a territory ceded by the Saljūqs in recognition of their military assistance. To 'Uthmān, the son of Ertoghrol, however, goes the credit of laying a secure foundation for the Turkish Empire.

Though the Saljūqs 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, Qūniyah, and Erzerum became covered with architectural designs inspired by the Persian and the Greek art. They also "encouraged religious thinkers and philosophers. The famous Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmi flourished under their auspices in Qūniyah, and so did others of the Sufi school."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> G. L. Lewis, *Turkey*, Ernest Benn Ltd., London, 1957, p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> M. Philips Price, *A History of Turkey*, London, 1956, p. 33.

The Ottoman Turks who replaced the Saljūqs were no less ardent in furthering the cause of learning and literature. It is said about 'Uthmān 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."<sup>9</sup> Ottoman literature is very extensive, comprising every species of letters then current. Among the earlier poets may be mentioned Ghāzi Fādil, Shaikhi, Mir 'Ali Shīr Nawā'i, Aḥmad Pāsha, Najāti, Dhāti, Zainab, Mihri, and ibn Kamāl. 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 Fūdūli, Bāqi, Nefi, Nabi, and Nadīm. They introduced new strains and new modes of thinking in poetry. Among the prose-writers, the names of 'Ali Chalabi, Avliya Efendi, Kātib Chalabi may be mentioned. They wrote on history, chronology, geography, travels, and other subjects.<sup>10</sup>

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.

## D

### 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, coloured 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

<sup>9</sup> Lord Eversely, *The Turkish Empire*, Lahore, 1957, p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Stanley Lane-Poole, *Turkey*, London, 1900, pp. 302-23.



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 casteless 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 Śaṅkara, then from Śaṅkara to Rāmānuja, and lastly from Rāmānuja 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 Shāh Khān<sup>11</sup> reports of the tomb of a Companion of the Prophet, named Tamīm Anṣārī at Mylapur, twelve miles south of Madras. Islam also penetrated Ceylon. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah found the tombs of several preachers and saints in Ceylon during his travels. He mentions the names of Shaikh ‘Abd Allah Ḥanīf, Shaikh ‘Uṭhmān, and Bāba Ṭāhir 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 of 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 Kayalappattan in Tinnevely, near the mouth of the Tamraparni, a number of Arab coins bearing dates from 71/690.”<sup>12</sup>

Muḥammad bin Qāsim invaded Sind in 94/712. The expedition was despatch-

<sup>11</sup> *Ā‘inah-i Ḥaqīqatnumā*, pp. 46, 47.

<sup>12</sup> *The Cultural Heritage of India*, ed. Bhattacharya, 1956, Vol. IV, p. 587.

ed by Ḥajjāj, 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 Ghaznah 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 Mahmūd and by a series of Mughul, Tartar, Khurāsāni, and Afghān 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 Śūdras and non-Śūdras 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 prevailed.<sup>13</sup> 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 Nānak the influence of Islam.<sup>14</sup>

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-Mansūr, al-Hārūn, and al-Māmūn attempts were made to understand Indian thought. From Sind, Hindu pundits came to the Court of al-Mansūr and presented to him *Brahmasiddhānta* and *Khandakhadyaka*, famous astronomical works of Brahmagupta. 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 Hārūn al-Rashīd. According to al-Bīrūni, 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 Baghdād to explain Hindu learning. In the fifth/eleventh century al-Muwaffiq and al-Bīrūni visited India with the object of understanding Indian medicine, astronomy, and philosophy. Al-Bīrūni was the first to translate *Sāṅkhya* of Kapila into Arabic. He also translated *Yoga Sūtra* by Patanjali and introduced *Bhagvad-Gīta* to the Muslims.

The Hindus also evinced eagerness for understanding Muslim religion and thought. Balādhuri writes in the *Futūḥ al-Buldān* that during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd, a Hindu rājah requested the Caliph to send a scholar to him to expound and discuss the fundamentals of Islam. Mas'ūdi, a historian, reports

<sup>13</sup> *Indian Islam*, pp. 172-77.

<sup>14</sup> *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. IV, p. 61.

that when he arrived in India in 302/914 he found a Brahmani ruler supreme 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.<sup>15</sup>

*From the First/Seventh Century to Śaṅkara.*—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 rationalism," 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 *Udarana's Kusumāñjali* written in the fourth/tenth century, nor would there have been Śaṅkara about whom Humayun Kabir observes, "Historical factors do not exclude the possibility of Śaṅkara's acquaintance with the elements of Islamic thought."<sup>16</sup> "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 probable."<sup>17</sup> Even today there is a group of Śaṅkara's followers who do not cremate but bury their dead in the Islamic way.

All the Mu'tazilites, with the solitary exception of al-Jāhiz, had discussed philosophy and propounded their theories, before Śaṅkara was born in the last quarter of the second/eighth century. Even al-Jāhiz would have died before Śaṅkara, 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. Śaṅkara too was an uncompromising monist, believing God to be one and the only reality, all else being illusion. In the writings of Śaṅkara one finds an increasing emphasis on the unity of God which some people have regarded as an extension of the ancient monotheism of the *Upaniṣads*. But this explanation has failed to satisfy a good many Orientalists who find in Śaṅkara's works "something pertaining to the semitic religions especially."<sup>18</sup> Abu al-Hudhail, a prominent Mu'tazilite, appears to be a precursor 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

<sup>15</sup> *Murūj al-Dhahab*, Vol. I, p. 254.

<sup>16</sup> *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. IV, p. 586.

<sup>17</sup> Tara Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, Allahabad, 1946, p. 107.

<sup>18</sup> Pope. Manikka Vashar. Cited by Tara Chand, *op. cit.*, p. 106



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 favourite of the Caliph al-Māmūn 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 exchange 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-Bāqillāni, al-Juwaini, al-Ghazāli, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzi, 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-Ghazāli, in whose hands the Ash'arite theology reached its final triumph, was born in 450/1058. Al-Ghazāli 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-Ghazāli 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-Ghazāli 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 Ibrāhīm bin Adham (d. 160/783), Faḍl bin 'Iyād (d. 185/901), Rābi'ah al-Adwiyyah (d. 185/802), were orthodox Muslims with no pantheistic bias; they revelled, however, in self-abandonment, fervent piety, and quietism, carried to the extreme. Rābi'ah conceived of prayer as a free and intimate intercourse with God. Her prayers indicate spontaneous outpouring 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 Śaṅkara to Rāmānuja.*—By the time of Rāmānuja, 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 itself 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'rūf al-Karkhī (d. 200/815), abu Sulaimān al-Dārānī (d. 236/850), and Dhu al-Nūn Miṣri. According to Nicholson, Dhu al-Nūn is the source of Neo-Platonic elements in Islamic thought. Abu Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī (d. 260/874) was the first Sufi to propound the doctrine of *fanā'*, and in his teaching Sufism became practically identified with pantheism. Ḥusain bin Mansūr, commonly known as al-Ḥallāj (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. Mansūr was not appreciated by his contemporaries owing to some of his unorthodox utterances as a result of which he was executed. It was al-Ghazālī, 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 Ḥajar 'Asqalānī mentions in his *al-Iṣābah fi Tamyiz al-Ṣaḥābah* a certain Bāba Rattan who



accepted Islam and visited Mecca twice. He was perhaps the earliest Indian Sufi. A little later came 'Abd Allah known as Bāba Khāki, who died in 101/719 and was buried in Pākdāman cemetery in Lahore. Another saint was Sayyid Sālār Mas'ūd Ghāzi Miān who, in 425/1033, met a martyr's death at the age of nineteen and was buried in Bharach 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 Dāta Ganj Bakhsh, the writer of the well-known work, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*.

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-Fārābi (258/870–339/950), who adopted the Neo-Platonic doctrine of emanation; al-Rāzi (251/865–313/925), the celebrated Muslim physician, physicist, chemist, and philosopher; Miskawaih (d. 421/1030), a Persian moralist, philosopher, and physicist; and ibn Sina (370/980–428/1037), the representative of purer Aristotelianism.

The philosophical thought that had developed from al-Kindi to ibn Sina, that is, before Rāmānuja'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 laboured in India, and through their personal contact and influence spread the ideas of Islamic philosophy and mysticism through the length and breadth of India."<sup>19</sup> 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 *Kusmāñjali*. The *Kusumāñjali* or the Hindu proof of the existence of God was written in the fourth/tenth century.<sup>20</sup> 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."<sup>21</sup> The same is true of the *Vaiśeṣika*. Radhakrishnan observes, "The *Vaiśeṣika* has been regarded as non-theistic. Kaṇāda . . . the author of the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtras* . . . does not mention God, but later commentators 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 *Nyāya*."<sup>22</sup>

In Indian philosophy the *Nyāya* and the *Vaiśeṣika* are generally treated together, but these systems in fact never formed a single unitary doctrine

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>20</sup> S. Radhakrishnan and C. A. Moore, *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy*, Oxford, 1957, p. 358.

<sup>21</sup> A. B. Keith, *Indian Logic and Atomism*, Oxford, 1921, p. 32.

<sup>22</sup> S. Radhakrishnan and C. A. Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 386.



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 Vācaspati composed his *Nyāyasucini-bandhu*.<sup>23</sup> 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 *Lakṣaṇāvli*. . . . Much more famous is his *Kusumāñjali* which is the classic exposition of the proof of God."<sup>24</sup>

It is worth remembering that the *Nyāya* and the *Vaiśeṣika* 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 Rāmānuja up to Date.*—Rāmānuja (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 colour. Rāmānuja admitted Śūdras 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 Upaniṣadism 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 Kuṅ-Pāndya.<sup>25</sup>

While not denying the influence of Buddhism and Upaniṣadism on the philosophy of Rāmānuja, 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*, Rāmānuja 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 Rāmānuja, is not the realization of *nirvāṇa*, but eternal blessedness in the presence of God—a Sufistic belief and not a Buddhistic view. His recommendation of a casteless society in which Śūdras 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 Lingāyats and the Siddhāris. The Lingāyats worshipped one God, who, according to them, reveals Himself, as the world-teacher ('*Allāmah Prabhu*). The leader of the movement, Basava, was regarded as an incarnation of *Shiva*, an '*Allāmah Prabhu*, whose divinity passed on to his successors and representatives. As

<sup>23</sup> A. B. Keith, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>25</sup> Tara Chand, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

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 Lingāyats 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.

Siddhāris, a group of philosophical rhymists, were more uncompromising in their monotheistic beliefs than the Lingāyats. They rejected the authority of the *Vedas* and *Śāstras* 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 Siddhāris were also alchemists, and followed *Dhu al-Nūn Miṣri* in this respect.<sup>26</sup>

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 unprecedented 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. Rāmānanda, 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 discontented till he came in contact with Muslims in Benares.<sup>27</sup> Followers of all religions were welcome to his creed. He admitted to his sect disciples from both sexes.

From the teachings of Rāmānanda arose two schools, one represented by Tulsidāsa 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 itself in the human race as a whole."<sup>28</sup> Kabir was introduced to Hindu philosophy and religion by Rāmānanda, but he spent a considerable part of his

<sup>26</sup> Caldwell, *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. I, p. 177.

<sup>27</sup> Macauliffe, *The Sikhs*, Oxford, 1909, Vol. VI, p. 109

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

time in the company of the Sufis. Kabir hated caste distinctions, rejected the authority of the six schools of the Indian philosophy, poo-hooed 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 *Shahid*.<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup> 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 Nānak and the subsequent generations remember him as Guru Nānak 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 Nānak 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. Nānak 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.<sup>31</sup> Guru Nānak did believe in the transmigration of souls and also in hell. Not satisfied with the punishment which the sinners were destined to

<sup>29</sup> *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*.

<sup>30</sup> Tara Chand, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

<sup>31</sup> Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 195.



suffer through repeated births in lower forms, he threatened them with dire punishments as described in the Qur'ān in the parable of hell.

Guru Nānak'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 Nānak was only superficially acquainted with the *Vedic* and the *Purānic* literature."<sup>32</sup> In his insistence on the unity and brotherhood of mankind and in his condemnation of idol-worship, caste distinctions, and ritualism, Guru Nānak 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, Tulsidāsa, and Guru Nānak 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 Rām, a Maratha saint, conceived of God on lines identical with those of Kabir, rejected *Vedic* sacrifices, idol-worship, and caste,<sup>33</sup> while Chaitanya, a Brāhman by caste, loved the Muslims so much that he had several Muslim disciples. Chaitanya preached the unity of God, insisted on love and devotion, song and dance and ecstatic trance for union with God.<sup>34</sup> 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 Ārya Samāj and the Brahmo Samāj. The former, despite its opposition to Islam, preaches what in reality is the essence of Islam. Swāmi Dayānand (*vide* his *Satyārath Parkāsh*), the founder of the Ārya Samāj movement, denounced idol-worship and ritualism as a corruption of the pure Hindu religion. He also condemned hereditary caste-system and instead favoured 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 Swāmi Dayānand's emphasis on this doctrine which is lacking in the pre-Islamic literature of India.

The Brahmo-Samājists 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 Rāma-Krishna religious reconstruction movement and the Theosophical

<sup>32</sup> Tara Chand, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

<sup>33</sup> Fraser and Marathe, *Hymns of Tukaram*.

<sup>34</sup> Jadunath Sarkar, *Chaitanya*.

Society following a religious and social programme; each of these bears close resemblance to Muslim faith and practice.

From India Islam goes to Indonesia.

E

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,<sup>35</sup> 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, makebelieve, 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 Hinayāna and that after a considerable period of time the other form of Buddhism, Mahāyāna, 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

<sup>35</sup> *Glimpses of World History*, p. 133.

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 practised and performed in a characteristic manner and style.

Wherever Hinduism was in ascendancy the Brahmans 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 *ahimsa*, a life-negating ethics and a life-renouncing philosophy. The natural outcome of this attitude was extension in the field of superstition, 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 Fāṭimids who ruled over the Arab countries, Egypt, and Africa were in a process of disintegration; the 'Abbāsids were on their last legs; Persia was the vantage ground for self-



interested upstarts; while Spain, once the pride of Muslim culture and philosophy, 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 programme.

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."<sup>36</sup>

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 Arnold<sup>37</sup> 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.

<sup>36</sup> Arnold, *op. cit.*, p. 363.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 365.

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 proselytising 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 themselves 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 civilisation in the service of their religion. . . ." <sup>38</sup>

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." <sup>39</sup> The same point of view is presented with much rigour and empirical data by Comp. J. C. van Leur <sup>40</sup> 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 fervour, 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 in a Śūdra 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

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 365-66.

<sup>39</sup> *Aspects of Islam in Post-Colonial Indonesia*, p. 35.

<sup>40</sup> "Indonesian Trade and Society," *Essays in Asian Social and Economic History*, The Hague, 1955.

exploited, but the others too with the exception of the priestly and 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 casteless 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 universal 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 crumbled 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 harbour 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 fundamental 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 marvellous power of winning its way into the consciences of men."<sup>41</sup>

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

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<sup>41</sup> Edouard Montet, *La propagande chretienne et ses adversaires musulmans*, Paris, 1890, pp. 17-18, quoted by Arnold, *op. cit.*, pp. 413-14.



grooves and makes him a member of the community (*ummah*) 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 propagating 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 centres 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 passionate longing for the all-loving God and ensures the purification of the heart by treading a well-regulated Path. The Sufis regarded prayers, fasting, and pilgrimage 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.

Maulāna Burhān al-Dīn is said to have been the first Muslim to preach his faith to the islanders. He belonged to the Qādiriyyah order of Sufism which is named after 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilāni (470/1077-561/1166), a saint whose writings, generally orthodox in content, have a tendency to mystical interpretation of the Qur'ān. The Maulāna also belonged to the Shāfi'iyyah sect—one of the four legal schools of Muslim theology named after Imām al-Shāfi'i who effected a synthesis of the strict adherence to Tradition of the Mālikī with the Hanafi method of *qiyās*, that is to say, with the analogical deduction. Abu Hanīfah, the founder of the Hanafi legal school, made free use of his own judgment in deciding between traditions, while Mālik ibn Anas maintained the exclusive validity of the accepted traditions. Al-Shāfi'i carved a *via media* between these two modes of approach and attempted a synthesis.

Maulāna Burhān al-Dīn was, thus, steeped in the best traditions of Islam. He followed the Sharī'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 Shāfi'iyyah sect and this is due to the teachings of the Maulāna.

It is interesting to note that the Shāfi'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 Maulāna belonged to India and travelled with or came in the wake of the Indian Muslim traders who also belonged mostly to the Shāfi'iyyah sect as well as to the Qādiriyyah school of mysticism.

Among the Muslim rulers of Sumatra, Sultān Aḥmad 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-Mālik al-Zāhir, a descendant of Sultān Aḥmad, 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 Baṭṭūṭah 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 Shāfi'iyah, 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 Mansūr, the Malayan language adopted the Arabic script. Ancient Indian Muslim literature was transliterated into Malayan Arabic script. Mansūr 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 Shāfi'iyah jurisprudence, social polity, and details of administration.

Islam spread to Java through the efforts of the trading mystics of Malay, particularly of Maulāna Malik Ibrāhīm, an Indian national of Gujerat district. The Maulāna was not only a Sufi of high order but also a scholar of the first rank and a Hakīm 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 Raḥmat. 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 fervour. 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 ardour 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.<sup>42</sup>

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

<sup>42</sup> Detailed information on this subject is to be found in Arnold's Preaching of Islam and Crawford's History of the Indian Archipelago, Edinburgh, 1820.



Hindus whose early contacts with the Archipelago were of purely commercial nature<sup>43</sup> soon developed colonial and imperialistic designs in the land<sup>44</sup> 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.<sup>45</sup>

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 Crawford<sup>46</sup> and also by Dr. Richards.<sup>47</sup> The latter maintains that the purpose of such literature was simply to humour the princely class by its esoteric and fictitious nature. The Muslim rulers replaced it by healthy literature. Sultān 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 Ḥajar al-Hutāmi, wrote a monumental book on mysticism entitled *Sīrat al-Muḥtāqīn*;<sup>48</sup> 'Allamah Nūr al-Dīn compiled a historical work called *Bustān al-Salātīn*,<sup>49</sup> while Tān Muḥammad, a premier of Malaya during the reign of Sultān 'Abd al-Jalīl, wrote a historical account of the rulers of Malaya and Sumatra. Besides original publications, a host of Persian and Arabic works were translated. Al-Ghazālī's *al-Isrār* was translated by 'Abd al-Ṣamad. *Sikandar Nāmeḥ* and *Mathnawi* of Maulāna Rūm and *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* of Jāmi were also rendered into the Malayan language.<sup>50</sup>

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 *Mathnawi* of Maulāna Rūm and *Manṭiq al-Ṭair* of 'Aṭṭār, and helped to inculcate a healthy attitude towards world and its affairs. Instead of *ahimsa* and life-negating

<sup>43</sup> J. Gonda, *Sanskrit in Indonesia*, p. 18.

<sup>44</sup> R. C. Majumdar, *Ancient India Colonies in the Far East*, Lahore, 1927, p. 70.

<sup>45</sup> D. G. E. Hall, *A History of South East Asia*, London, 1955, p. 18.

<sup>46</sup> John Crawford, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 298.

<sup>47</sup> Richard Winstedt, *The Malayas*, London, 1950, p. 143.

<sup>48</sup> Nūr Aḥmad Qādri, *Tārīkh-i Tamaddun-i Indonesia*, p. 357.

<sup>49</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. II, p. 507.

<sup>50</sup> Richard Winstedt, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

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ethics, emphasis was now laid upon effort, struggle, and achievement. Renunciation was eschewed in favour of community living, and a casteless 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 colour.

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## BOOK SEVEN

### The Dark Age (1111/1700–1266/1850)

#### Chapter LXX

#### 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 Ottomans lost their glory after Sulaimān the Magnificent, the Şafawids after Shāh 'Abbās the Great, and the Mughuls in India after Aurangzīb, the European nations went from strength to strength, acquiring more and more territories and trade centres 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*.—Sulaimān the Magnificent was the last and the greatest of the first ten Ottoman Sultāns 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 Sulaimān's reign. According to

Kotchi Bey, a Turkish historian, the decline or at least the signs of decline visible towards the end of Sulaimān's reign can be attributed to the following causes.

Sulaimān 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 councillors, acted arbitrarily or was in most cases swayed by the opinion of his harem and the prejudiced views of flatterers and fortune-seekers. Sulaimān would appoint men to offices of trust and responsibility without their having passed through the grades of lower offices, e.g., Ibrāhīm 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. Sulaimān permitted his favourite viziers to amass wealth. Rustam Pāshā, a son-in-law of Sulaimān, 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 Sulaimān'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 was possible by fair means or foul. 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 Sulaimān 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 Murād 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 Sultāns in keeping turbulent forces under control. The Janissaries were a useful instrument in the hands of strong Sultāns, but in the times of degenerate Sultāns they became a kind of Praetorian Guard, dictating the deposition of Sultāns 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 Maḥmūd II in 1242/1826.

Another important event which took place during the reign of Sulaimān 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 Sulaimān, when the Sultāns 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 practised 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 Sultāns. 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 jealous were they 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 Sultāns of the later period.

The Sultāns who succeeded Sulaimān 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 bickerings 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 Mamlūk rulers of Egypt, the Şafawid monarchs of Persia, and, last but not least, the Sultāns 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 a 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 *tanzīmāt*. 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 inconclusive 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 Pāshās was very short and that their high office could be purchased by bribery; and that the authority of the Sultāns 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 aggressiveness. 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 Sultāns. The supreme power of the State had fallen into the hands of the viziers or those of the harem—the centres of intrigues and corruption. More explicitly, the allegation is that it was neither the Sultān 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."<sup>1</sup>

2. *Persia*.—Two powers, the Uzbeks (Uzbegs) in Turkestan and the Şafawids in Iran, arose after the break-up of the Timūrid power. It was at the hands of Shaibāni Khān, the first ruler of the Uzbeks, that Bābur, the founder of

<sup>1</sup> Elie Kedoure, *England and the Middle East*, Bowes and Bowes, 1956, p. 14.

Mughul dynasty in India, suffered defeat. Because of his discomfiture, Bābur turned his attention to India and laid the foundation of an empire which lasted till 1274/1857.

The Şafawids began as leaders of a Shī'ite dervish-order in Ādharbaijān and turned to politics after the collapse of the Timūrid Empire when every chieftain took advantage of the chaotic conditions and tried to establish himself. In 904/1499 their leader Ismā'il proclaimed himself the leader of all Shī'ites, and three years later he took the title of Shāh. To the Şafawids belongs the credit of making Persia a nation once again. The rise of the Şafawid dynasty marks the restoration of the Persian Empire and the re-creation of Persian nationality.

The Şafawid State reached its peak during the reign of Shāh 'Abbās the Great. With a few exceptions, the successors of Shāh 'Abbās were a band of incompetent persons who revelled 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. Napoleon'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 Afghānistān 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 Britishers; 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, Jahāngir, Shāh Jahān, 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 Sulaimān the Magnificent, the Şafawids' in the reign of Shāh 'Abbās the Great, and the Mughul

Empire in the time of Aurangzib. As Sulaimān the Magnificent and Shāh 'Abbās 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 valour of a few great persons disappeared in no time. All the successors of Aurangzib, without exception, were persons of low worth. They revelled 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, Nādir Shāh invaded India. By his orders not only were the inhabitants of Delhi massacred but also the entire wealth of the Mughuls was taken away. Nādir's invasion left the Mughul Empire "bleeding and prostrate." And then it was given no time to recuperate as Nādir Shāh's invasion was followed by a wave of invasions conducted by an Afghān chief of the Abdāli clan, known as Aḥmad Shāh Abdāli.

From 1161/1748 to 1181/1767, Aḥmad Shāh 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 Nādir Shāh 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 Rājputs, the Satnāmis, the Bundels, the Sikhs, and the Jāts 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 Shūbah—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 kingdoms on the ruins of the Mughul Empire. The nation which ultimately succeeded 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 under 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 Russians 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 Independence 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 Shāh 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.<sup>2</sup> To the religious motive was added, in course of time, an intense economic urge to wrest the trade monopoly from

<sup>2</sup> D. G. E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, London, 1955, p. 197.

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."<sup>3</sup>

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 programme. In the opinion of Crawford, his main motive was to spread Christianity<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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 programme 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 programme 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,

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *History of the Indian Archipelago*, Edinburgh, 1820.

<sup>5</sup> Coleridge, *The Life and Letters of St. Francis Xavier*, London, 1872, Vol. I.



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 Sultāns 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 despatch 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.<sup>6</sup> Their cruel and capricious behaviour 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 rājahs 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 Sultāns 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 curried favour 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 947/1540. 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 1003/1595. Thus, the third foreign power which was destined to rule over Indonesia for about four hundred

<sup>6</sup> Sir Hugue Clifford, *Further India*, London, 1904, p. 48.



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 them 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.”<sup>7</sup>

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 favourable 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.<sup>8</sup> 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

<sup>7</sup> J. S. Furnivall, *Netherlands India, A Study of Plural Economy*, New York, 1941, pp. 43-44.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. George McTurnan Kahim, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, New York, 1959, p. 8.

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 labour 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 developing a native trading class."<sup>9</sup> 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 exorbitant 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

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 themselves were responsible for their decadence. The machinations of the imperialistic nations were helped, or shall we say abetted, by the inefficiency of Muslim

<sup>9</sup> "European Influence on Native Agriculture," in Schrieke, *The Effect of West Civilisation in the Malay Archipelago*, Batavia, 1929, p. 116.

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 spiritualism 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—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 leads 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 *ijtihād*. This principle has been variously interpreted by jurists, but all seem to agree, despite their differences, that a reinterpretation of the Qur'ānic injunctions for legalistic and extra-legalistic needs of a society is not at all forbidden by Islam. On the other hand, there are *ahādīth* 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.<sup>10</sup> No doubt, there are differences among the jurists as regards the nature and scope of *ijtihād*. 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 toto* 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 Imāms 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 *Hadīth*, provided its authenticity is guaranteed by unimpeachable evidence and criteria of sound historical criticism. Some *ahādīth* 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 *ahādīth* from the genuine ones. Hence all sorts of *ahādīth* were dug up to lend authority and weight to what-

<sup>10</sup> Sir Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore, 1951, p. 148.

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'ān or Hadīth or the decisions of juriconsults, 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 condemned, 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 It 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.<sup>11</sup> 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, however, 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 *mullās* 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 *zāhir* and *bāṭin* (appearance and reality) created an attitude of indifference to all that applies to Appearance and not to Reality."<sup>12</sup> The spirit of total otherworldliness, Iqbal observes further, "obscured men's vision of a very important aspect of Islam as a social polity." 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 degenerated into a path of controlling supernatural agencies through the recitation of certain liturgical formulas or by wearing certain amulets and practising 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 *pīrs* 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'ān and the Sunnah, there arose the need for implicit faith in the spiritual leadership of the *pīr* 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.

<sup>11</sup> Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, New York, 1936, pp. 59-88.

<sup>12</sup> Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 150.



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 *pīrs* 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 *pīrs* 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 *pīr* was supremely concerned with the betterment of his soul, so were his protégé. For the spiritual uplift of the soul the cultivation of an other-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-realization the performance of civic duties was as essential as the performance of the spiritual duties. The neglect of social and practical ethics cancelled all programmes 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 literature 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 Ghālib 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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2

## Chapter LXXI

### THE SILVER LINING

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE URDU LANGUAGE, GRAMMAR, AND LITERATURE

#### A

*Rekhtah*, *Hindi*, *Hindwi*, *Zubān-i Dilhi*, *Gujri*, *Zubān-i Urdū-i Mu'alla*—all these names<sup>1</sup> 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."<sup>2</sup> The name *Hindustani*<sup>3</sup> popularized by the Europeans was also used by some writers in the early period.

<sup>1</sup> Maḥmūd Khān Shairāni, *Panjab men Urdu*, 1st edition, pp. 1-23.

<sup>2</sup> Hobson Jobson, 1903, p. 417.

<sup>3</sup> Wajhi in his prose book *Sab-Ras* (c. 1040/1630) calls it *Zubān-i Hindustān*. Cf. *Sab-Ras*, Anjuman Taraqqi-i Urdu, 1932, pp. 11, 16.



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. *Nūr al-Abṣār*, MS. in the library of Dr. Muḥammad Shafī', Lahore). After undergoing several changes the word filtered into Persian books after the Mongol invasion of Iran. After the invasion of Eastern Europe by Bātu Khān it also entered into the languages of Europe.

It was, perhaps, Bābur 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 *Urdū-i Mu'alla* for the residential quarters belonging to Government officers (civil area) and *Urdu Bāzār* (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 Shāh Jahān. The term "Urdu" in this special sense appears to have been in vogue since the time of Aurangzib. Actually it came into being soon after the invasion of India by Muslims from the North. Shāh Murād 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 Muṣḥafi (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 Europeans<sup>4</sup> 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 princes<sup>5</sup> themselves composed Urdu verses and compiled *dīwāns* 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

<sup>4</sup> Ram Babu Saksena, *History of Urdu Literature*, 1927, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> For instance Muḥammad Quli Quṭub Shāh, Shāh 'Ālam Aftāb, Bahādur Shāh Zafar, Wājid 'Ali Shāh Akhtar, etc.

the Punjab and Delhi during the Ghaznawid and the early Sultānate period when the first powerful commingling of Hindu-Muslim cultures occurred causing a productive intermixture of Muslim (i.e., Persian, Turkish, and Arabic) languages with *Prākritis* (the *Apabhranṣa* of the Punjab and the *Khaḥ Boli* of Delhi, Meerut,<sup>7</sup> 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. Amīr *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 *Kitāb al-Saidanah* of al-Bīrūni and the early lexicographical works in Persian written in India contain a large number of Hindi words and idioms, and Chand's *Prithvi Rāj Rāsa*<sup>8</sup> and, later, *Ād Granth* of Nānak embody large materials drawn from Muslim sources.<sup>9</sup>

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 Gujerat and the Deccan where its growth and initial popularity awakened the first serious literary activities under the 'Ādilshāhi and Quṭbshāhi rulers,<sup>10</sup> some of whom were themselves good poets of Urdu. Earlier, the Sufis<sup>11</sup> 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-Aurangzib

<sup>6</sup> Maḥmūd *Khān Shairāni*, *op. cit.* (Mu'in al-Adab edition), p. 3; Mas'ūd Husain *Khān*, *Tārīkh-i Zubān-i Urdu*, p. 139.

<sup>7</sup> Sabzwāri, *Urdu Zubān ka Irṭiqā'*, 1956, p. 87, says: "Urdu and Pāli come from common source." He asserts that Urdu does not come from Surāseni Apabhranṣa, or Braj, or Haryāni, or Bundeli, nor from Punjābi (*ibid.*, p. 86). Pundit Kaifi, *Kaifīyyah*, p. 31, thinks that Amīr *Khusrau's Rekhtahs* were in Apabhranṣa of Surāseni Prākrit: also see Saksena, *op. cit.*, pp. 2 *sqq.* Al-Bīrūni visited the Punjab during the early Ghaznawid period. The "local" words used by him in his *Kitāb al-Saidanah* are called by him al-Hindiyyah—apparently synonymous with the "Punjab" Apabhranṣa; cf. S. M. Abdullah, "Arabi Taṣānif men Hindustāni Alfāz," *Oriental College Magazine*, May 1943.

<sup>8</sup> *Shairāni* doubts its period, *op. cit.*, p. 121. Also see Mas'ūd Husain *Khān*, *op. cit.*, pp. 115 *sqq.*, who thinks that some parts of it must have been written during the early Ghulāmān period.

<sup>9</sup> S. M. Abdullah, *Fārsi men Hindū'on ki Ḥiṣṣah*, Anjuman Taraqqi-i Urdu, pp. 277-89.

<sup>10</sup> Naṣir al-Dīn Hāshmi, *Deccan men Urdu*, 1926, pp. 16, 40 *seq.*

<sup>11</sup> 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Urdu ki Taraqqi men Ṣūfiyā' ka Ḥiṣṣah*, 1939, pp. 4 *seq.*



period, during which Hātim, 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 Hindustāni, 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" Hindustāni. So, by 1303/1885, Urdu, which was hitherto a common language of the Hindu-Muslim intelligentsia, came to be claimed as a language, more or less, of the Muslims. About the same time, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān 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.<sup>12</sup> 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 grammars<sup>13</sup>—and patronized it so long as it served their ends.

<sup>12</sup> S. M. Abdullah, *Fārsi men Hindū'on ka Hissah*, pp. 4 seq.

<sup>13</sup> The first grammar of Urdu was written perhaps by J. J. Koetler ('Abd al-Haqq, *Qawā'id-i Urdu*, 1951, Preface, pp. 11 seq.) and Inshā' was the first "local" writer who dealt with problems of Urdu grammar in *Daryā-i Latāfat*. It may, however, be noted that some preliminary discussions are also found in the *Muthmir* (MS. University of the Panjab) of Khān Arzu (a writer of Muḥammad Shāh period). Among several European writers and poets, Dr. Gilchrist, John Shakespeare, Fallen, Fransu, and Hederly Azād were the notable scholars who produced books in Urdu; Garcin de Tassy may also be considered to be among those who wrote about Urdu.



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

Now about Urdu composition and grammar. It is agreed that whatever form Urdu took ultimately, it is essentially an Indian language which developed on the grammatical pattern of Sureseni *Prākritis*. 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.<sup>14</sup>

Urdu is, therefore, a more advanced language than the *Prākritis* 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 idāfat* (vowel mark "i" to denote possession) instead of its Hindi form *kā, kī, kē*.

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,<sup>15</sup> 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 idāfat* has the advantage of economy over Hindi *kā, kī, kē*. The Persian compounds (*murakkabāt*) 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 favourite mode of expression with the Muslims—accomplished mostly by the use of *kasrah-i idāfat* and "concise compounds," although these features have sometimes 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.

<sup>14</sup> Sabzwāri, *op. cit.*, pp. 105 *sqq.* and 'Abd al-Haqq, *Qawā'id-i Urdu*, pp. 4-9.

<sup>15</sup> Shairānī's article: "Sab-Ras," *Oriental College Magazine*, November 1934, and "Introduction to *Diwānzādah Hātim*" (MS. University of the Panjab).

In the course of centuries, Urdu borrowed<sup>16</sup> thousands of words and phrases (nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and conjunctive prepositions) from Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Pashtu,<sup>17</sup> as it did also from European languages<sup>18</sup> on a limited scale. The *Farhang-i Āsfīyyah* 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 terms<sup>19</sup> (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 experience. It reflects a new attitude to life and a peculiar tone and colour, not present in other Indian languages.

The Urdu language combines the virility and vigour 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-colour 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,<sup>20</sup> 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 Tūrān.

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 Khān and other song-writers have attempted to revive Hindi metres.

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 *rūz marrah* and *muhāwarah* (i.e., the natural speech of men). Thus, although the reformers insisted on everyday 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 Hātim down to Nāsikh and Dhauq, the same

<sup>16</sup> Muḥammad Husain Āzād, *Āb-i Hayāt*, 14th edition, pp. 27 sqq., and Aḥmad Dīn's *Sargudhasht-i Alfāz*, 1932, pp. 137 sqq., and 236 sqq.; also see 'Abd al-Majīd Sālik's *Muslim Thaqāfat Hindustān Men*, 1st edition, pp. 515 sqq.

<sup>17</sup> Imtiāz 'Alī 'Arshī, *Oriental College Magazine*, May 1948, pp. 28.

<sup>18</sup> 'Abd al-Haqq, "Dakhil Alfāz," *Urdu*, July 1949, pp. 15 sqq.

<sup>19</sup> Waḥid al-Dīn Salīm, *Wadī' Istilāḥāt-i 'Ilmiyyah*, 1931, pp. 7 sqq.

<sup>20</sup> For the influence of Islam on Urdu poetry, see I'jāz Husain. *Madhhab-o Shā'iri*, 1955, pp. 66 sqq. Also see Āzād, *op. cit.*, pp. 16 sqq.

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 *Ghālib* and the reformer Sir Sayyid Ahmad *Khān*.

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, vigour, and dignity of tone, rarely found in the sister languages of India.

## D

In classical poetry, the chief forms—*ghazal*, *qaṣīdah*, *rubā'ī*, *muthnawī*, 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, *ghazal* attracted to its fold several great poets such as *Wali*, *Mir*, *Dard*, *Sauda*, *Muṣṣafī*, *Ātish*, *Momin*, *Ghālib*, and later *Hāli*, *Iqbāl*, *Ḥasrat*, and some of the prominent modern poets like *Ḥafīz*, *Firāq*, and *Faiḍ* (*Faiz*) who have adapted it to the changed mental atmosphere of the modern age.

*Qasīdah* (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 *qaṣīdah* is not confined to praise and that it has also been employed successfully for subjects of descriptive, narrative, dramatic, and subjective nature. The chief *qaṣīdah*-writers in Urdu are *Nuzrati*, *Sauda*, *Inshā'*, and *Dhauq*, whose art in this particular branch can compete with that of the best *qaṣīdah*-writers in Persian, at least, in their care for the externalities of technique, if not for internal beauties. To this list, one may add *Ghālib*, who introduced some changes in the structure of *qaṣīdah*.

Another form is *muthnawī* 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 *mathnawīs* in Urdu are those written by Mir Taqi Mir (*Daryā-i 'Ishq*), Mir Hasan (*Sehr al-Bayān*), Daya Shankar Nasim (*Gulzār-i Nasim*), and Shauq Lakhnawi (*Zehr-i 'Ishq*).

Out of the remaining poetical forms, special reference seems necessary to *shehr āshob*—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 *rithā'* (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 Imām 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 Damir had also contributed to its progress earlier.

*Rekhti* (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 licence and obscenity. The chief representative poets of this literary form are Rangin and Jān Šāhib, although its earliest specimens are also found in the Deccani period of Urdu poetry.

We may mention in passing the *rubā'i* (quatrain), the *musaddas* (Hālī's *Musaddas* being the most prominent), *wāsūkht* (ironical love-poems), *qit'āt* (the fragmentary and episodic poems written more or less on the model of shorter *qaṣīdahs* or quatrains), and a few other forms such as *mukhammas* (quintet), *mustazād*, etc. These forms were adopted from Persian and were employed by almost all the famous poets. Recently, the Hindi *gīt* and *doha* forms have been revived in Urdu by poets such as Hafiz, Maqbūl Ahmadpuri, Mukhtār Siddiqi, Jamil 'Ali, and others, while some of the European forms have been given currency by 'Azmat Allah Khān, Faiz, Rāshid 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, Muṣṣafi,

Ātish, Mir Ḥasan, Nazīr, Ghālib, Ismā'īl, Ḥālī, Iqbāl, and others) are Muslims, but the contribution by Daya Shankar Nasīm, Shafīq Aurangābādi, Chakbast, Surūr, Mahrūm, Firāq, 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 somewhat different but they too followed in most cases the general spirit of Urdu poetry. In recent times, Firāq 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. Iqbāl, 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 Persian. Iqbāl is also responsible for giving Urdu poetry a deeply Islamic and philosophical colour.

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 Ḥālī, Shibli, Akbar, Zafar 'Alī Khān, Chakbast, Iqbāl, Josh, Faīd, and certain other modern poets, while Ismā'īl Merathi, Meḥshar, Be-Nazīr, 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. Nazīr Akbar-ābādi 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 Rām's *Khumkhānah*—a dictionary of poets—is a monumental work of considerable worth. In fiction, Sarshār, Prem Chand, and Krishn Chandr (among the moderns) and Nihāl Chand (among the old) occupy a conspicuous place. The vast "fiction literature" (*dāstān* and *ḥikāyat*) 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 *Bāgh-o Bahār* (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 *Dāstān-i Rāni Kaitki* by Inshā' representing a new model. Then came Ghālib and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān, Hāli, 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 Ghālib and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān 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 Ghālib with touches of wit and delightful irony (as reflected in his Urdu letters) and the natural style of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān, 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 Ghālib is inimitable, Sir Sayyid tremendously influenced his age, especially the group of his associates in the Aligarh movement, such as Hāli, Shibli, Nadhīr Ahmad, Dhakā' Allah and others who enriched Urdu literature abundantly by producing works of unusual merit on various subjects.

Side by side with these prose-writers, we find Muhammad Husain Azād, once Professor at the Government College and the Oriental College, Lahore. He was with Hāli 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 Khān. 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 *Āb-i Hayāt* (a history of Urdu poetry), *Sakhundān-i Fāris*



(a history of Persian literature), *Nairang-i Khayāl* (a collection of essays) and *Darbār-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. *Absān*, *Lakhnawi*, *Āgha Hashr*, and Sayyid Imtiāz 'Ali Tāj 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 *Dār al-Muṣannifīn*, *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 (*dāstān*), 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 *dāstān-i adab*)<sup>21</sup> 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 *Tūrān* and *Khurāsān*, on occultism and on fabulous and imaginative pleasure in those associated with Iran. The Hindu element in the *dāstāns* is also conspicuous, although the number of Hindu writers of *dāstān* is not so very large.

The atmosphere in earlier novels of Urdu, as represented by *Nadhīr Ahmad*, *Sharar*, *Ṭabīb*, and *Rāshid 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 Chaghtā'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* (biographical dictionaries of poets) and other stray writings.

*Shibli*, *Hāli*, *Āzād*, and *Imdād Imām Athar* were the first to reorientate Urdu criticism along new lines. They tried to apply the principles of European

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Giyan Chand, Urdu ki Nathri Dāstānen*, 1954, p. 37.

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 Hāli, the *Shi'r al-'Ajam*, a history of Persian poetry by Shibli, *Āb-i Hayāt* (a history of Urdu poetry) by Muḥammad Ḥusain Āzād, and *Kāshif al-Ḥaqā'iq* (The Revealer of Critical Principles) by Imdād Imām Athar are some of the noteworthy 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 Qādri, Zor, Athar, Niāz, Majnūn, Firāq, Āl-i Aḥmad Surūr, Iḥtishām Ḥusain, Kalim al-Din Aḥmad, 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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## BOOK EIGHT

### MODERN RENAISSANCE

#### Part 1. Renaissance in the Near and Middle East

#### Chapter LXXII

#### RENAISSANCE IN ARABIA, YEMEN, IRAQ, SYRIA, AND LEBANON

#### MUHAMMAD BIN 'ABD AL-WAHHĀB 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 (*jāhiliyyah*) and tried their best to bring back the Muslims to the fountainhead of Islam. The first of these was Muḥammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhāb of Arabia whose spiritual influence spread far and wide in the Islamic world, particularly in the Arab countries: Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon.

##### B

Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb was born about 1111/1700 in the heart of the Arabian desert, the region known as Najd. This puritan reformer kindled a fire which 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 left in all these fields a deep and lasting imprint of his pioneering individuality. There was none amongst his contemporaries 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 Madīnah, travelled as far as Persia, and ultimately settled in his native place in the Najd. Amongst his teachers Shaikh 'Abd Allah bin Ibrāhīm Najdi, Shaikh Muḥammad Ḥayāt Sindhi, and Shaikh Muḥammad



Majmū'i 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 Qur'ān 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 approached, through 'Uthmān bin Ḥamad bin Ma'mar, the Amīr of Uvainah. The Amīr at the very outset responded enthusiastically to the call of the Shaikh, but did not keep his word.<sup>1</sup> The Shaikh left Uvainah and proceeded to Dariyyah where he continued his preaching despite opposition from the ignorant 'ulamā'. In the long run, he not only succeeded in converting the people to his point of view, but also won the heart of Muḥammad, the head of the great clan of Sa'ūd 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. Muḥammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhāb was, in truth, a faithful counterpart of the first two Caliphs, abu Bakr and 'Umar. When he died in 1201/1787, his disciple Sa'ūd proved a worthy successor. The new Wahhābi State was a close counterpart of the Meccan Caliphate."<sup>2</sup> A great change was brought about in the political and administrative set-up of the country. "Though possessing great military power, Sa'ūd 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 Wahhābi judges were competent and honest. Robbery became almost unknown, so well was the public peace maintained."<sup>3</sup>

Having consolidated the Najd politically, Sa'ūd was ready to undertake the greater task of purifying Islam from all those un-Islamic influences which 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 which had been eating into the vitals of the faith. An honest attempt was

<sup>1</sup> 'Uthmān bin Bashār al-Najdi, *Unwān al-Majd fi Tārīkh al-Najd*, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Lothrop Stoddard, *The New World of Islam*, New York, 1925, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

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 Qur'ān 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 Muḥammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhāb condemn this movement as retrogressive. But this is an absolutely baseless charge. Muḥammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhāb 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 which 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 which he found alien to the spirit of Islam and weeded out all those practices from Muslim society which 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 which 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 which he found un-Islamic, while he readily accepted the ideas and practices which could be fitted into the structure of Islam.

The Wahhābi movement is, therefore, not essentially retrograde and conservative 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 complacency 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 degeneration for Islamic culture.

In order to set his movement on the right lines and to perpetuate the influence 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 Ibrāhīm, had their own *maktabs* in their houses where students from distant places came to master Islamic learning. Their expenses were borne by the *Bait al-Māl*.<sup>4</sup>

Although the Shaikh was a follower of the Hanbalite school of *Fiqh*, yet he did not follow it rigidly. In his book *Hadyat al-San'iyyah*, he makes a frank confession of this. "Imām 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 Mu'tazilism which 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 Mu'tazilite doctors and in the sacred texts themselves. The principle that reason and not blind prescription was to be the test of truth opened the door to the possibility of reforms which they had most at heart.<sup>5</sup> They embarked on a process of introspection and self-examination.

These are the main characteristics of the Islamic revival in Arabia as everywhere 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 Muḥammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhāb a critical attitude was developed amongst Muslim scholars; they would not accept anything which came down from the past without testing its validity on the basis of the Qur'ān 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 Shari'ah 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 Qur'ān 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 awakened to the need of a fresh approach towards *Fiqh*. There was a general feeling

<sup>4</sup> 'Uthmān bin Baḡhar, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

<sup>5</sup> Lothrop Stoddard, *op. cit.*, p. 32.



of unrest towards everything which did not have the sanction of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, and the educated people began to feel that no finality and definiteness could be legitimately attributed to any interpretation or conclusion regarding any problem not justified by the *naṣṣ* of either of the two sources. In other words, they began to believe that the *ijtihād* of even the greatest Muslim scholar could not be binding on them.

It was the logical consequence of this critical attitude that the commentators of *Ḥadīth* like Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajar, Dār Quṭni, Imām Nawawi, Imām Dhahabi, Imām Shaukāni became popular with the people. Their writings attracted the attention of scholars and they began to devote themselves to the study of the Qur'ān 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-Fārābi (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 Khaldūn 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 Khaldūn'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 Imām. "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."<sup>6</sup> 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 which is anchored in the traditional pattern of her past.

### C

*Role of the Arab Academy of Damascus in Syria.*—In 1336/1918, Muḥammad Kurd 'Ali (1293/1876–1372/1953), a devoted scholar, founded the Arab Academy

<sup>6</sup> Sir M. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 158.

in Damascus (*al-Majma' al-'Ilm al-'Arabi*). The Academy was endowed by King Faiṣal. It assumed charge of al-Zāhiriyyah Library with 3,000 works, for the most part manuscripts. The Academy consisted of: (a) a literary linguistic committee (*lajnah lughawīyyah*) 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 'ilmīyyah fannīyyah*) in charge of enriching the language and broadening its scope for the expression of the various branches of science.<sup>7</sup>

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 which 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, philosophical, and scientific terms have been coined, and published in the above journal.<sup>8</sup>

*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.<sup>9</sup> 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-coloured 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

<sup>7</sup> *Majallah al-Majma' al-'Ilm al-'Arabi*, 1921, Vol. I, pp. 2-4.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 223.

<sup>9</sup> R. Landau, *Islam and the Arabs*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1958, p. 256.

in many ways, was being created in Cairo by means of schools, educational missions, and translations initiated or encouraged by Muḥammad '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.<sup>10</sup> 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 Ruṣhd and ibn Sina are again becoming popular in colleges, and ideas put forward by ibn Khaldūn and al-Fakhri on the problems of culture and State are being popularized. The speeches of Tāriq ibn Ziyād 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 Muḥammad 'Abduh, the social reformer Qāsim Amīn, the essayists Muḥammad Ḥusain Haikal and al-Manfalūti, the poets Aḥmad Shauqi and Ḥāfiẓ Ibrāhīm, the playwright and novelist Taufiq al-Ḥakīm, and the scholar Tāha Ḥusain. 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 Bustāni and Yaziji families; the religious reformer Rashīd Ridā', the learned disciple of Muḥammad 'Abduh; the leaders of Arabic journalism, Shidiq, Nimr, Sarrūf, Zaidān, and Taqla; the poet Khalil Matrān; the best of women writers in Arabic, May Ziadah; the traveller Amin Raiḥāni; and the mystic Khalil Jibrān.<sup>11</sup>

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 Muḥammad Sharaf, Aḥmad 'Isa Bey, Mā'lūf Pāsha, Maẓhar Sa'id, and the scientific works of Ya'qūb Sarrūf, Fu'ād Sarrūf, al-Ghamrawaih, Muḥarrarafah, etc.<sup>12</sup>

*Role of the Arab League in Unifying the Arab World.*—The most recent

<sup>10</sup> A. H. Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon*, London, 1946, pp. 36–37.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>12</sup> Zaki Ali, *Islam in the World*, Lahore, 1938, p. 236.



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."<sup>13</sup> 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, Sa'ūdi 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 fulfilment of Arab hopes and aspirations.<sup>14</sup> 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. Moreover, with the failure of Arab League on the Palestine question, the particularizing 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 aspirations. 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. Significantly, 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

<sup>13</sup> F. W. Fernau, *Moslems on the March*, London, 1955, p. 153.

<sup>14</sup> See C. A. Hourani, "The Arab League in Perspective," *The Middle East Journal*, 1947, Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 125-26.

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.<sup>15</sup> 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 aspirations 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 inadequacies, in spite of all disappointments and frustrated hopes due to indecision 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.<sup>16</sup>

#### 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."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> I. Lichtenstandter, *Islam and the Modern Age*, Vision Press, London, p. 167.

<sup>16</sup> F. W. Fernau, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

<sup>17</sup> Zaki Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 230.



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 unlimited 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."<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Munir al-Ajilani of Iraq in one of his addresses remarks that Arabic is the earth; in it we have eternal poetry, eternal prose, and the Qur'an. 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 mainstay 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.<sup>19</sup> 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 loan-words.

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 which 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

<sup>18</sup> *Majallah Majma' al-'Ilm al-'Arabi*, 1922, Vol. II, pp. 283-84.

<sup>19</sup> See al-Husri, "Watanīyah," *Waḥdat al-Ummah*.



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.<sup>20</sup>

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 which has come in the wake of modern science. This is how the door of *ijtihād*, 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 Qur'an and the Sunnah, they sometimes make a departure even from the fundamentals of Islam. Such a trend is rightly considered dangerous by the 'ulamā' and the masses.

<sup>20</sup> Zaki Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

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## Chapter LXXIII

### RENAISSANCE IN NORTH AFRICA THE SANŪSIYYAH MOVEMENT

#### A

#### RISE OF THE SANŪSIYYAH ORDER

The rise of the Sanūsiyyah 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 Sanūsiyyah 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 Sultān—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 Sanūsiyyah Order was founded and began to grow. Its rise was indeed a reaction to both the spiritual disintegration 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 “community of Islam”; and, *thirdly*, to combat the growing encroachments of European imperialism upon the Muslim homeland.

The founder of the Sanūsiyyah Order, Sayyid Muḥammad bin ‘Ali al-Sanūsi (known as the Grand Sanūsi), was born in 1202/1787<sup>1</sup> in the village of al-Wasita, near Mustaghanem, in Algeria. Politically, socially, and economically, 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 Sultān had become exceedingly unpopular in the country.

By the time Sayyid Muḥammad 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 governors. 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

<sup>1</sup> This is the date given by Sayyid Aḥmad al-Sharīf al-Sanūsi in his book, *al-Anwār al-Qudsiyyah fi Muqaddamāt al-Ṭariqat al-Sanūsiyyah*, and also by E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, Oxford University Press, London, 1946, p. 11, and by M. Fu‘ād Shukri, *al-Sanūsiyyah Dīn wa Dawlah* (The Sanūsiyyah as a Religion and as a State), Cairo, 1948, p. 11. Other authorities, however, mention other dates: 1206/1791, 1207/1792, 1211/1796, 1218/1803.



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 *débâcle* 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!"<sup>2</sup>

The Grand Sanūsi received his early education from a number of Shaikhs in Algeria—at Mustaghānem and later at Mazun. His instructors included abu Ṭālib al-Mazuni, abu al-Mahl, ibn al-Qanduz al-Mustaghānemi, abu Rās al-Mu'askari, ibn 'Ajibah, and Muḥammad bin 'Abd al-Qādir abu Ruwainah. Under these Shaikhs he studied the Qur'ān, the Ḥadīth, and Muslim jurisprudence in general. Then he moved to Fez, where for eight years he studied in its grand mosque school, generally known as *Jāmi' al-Qurāwiyyīn*, 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 Hammūd bin al-Ḥājj, Sidi al-Ṭayyib al-Kirāni, Sidi Muḥammad bin 'Āmir al-Mi'wāni, Sidi abu Bakr al-Idrīsi, and Sidi al-'Arabi bin Aḥmad al-Dirqawi.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, while still in his early thirties, he left Fez for Egypt. There he studied under Shaikhs al-Mili al-Tūnisiyy, Thu'ailib, al-Sawi, al-'Aṭṭār, al-Quwaisini, and al-Najjār. From there he went to the Ḥijāz, where he studied under Shaikhs Sulaimān al-'Ajami, abu Ḥafṣ bin 'Abd al-Karīm al-'Aṭṭār, and Imām abu al-'Abbās Aḥmad bin 'Abd Allah bin Idrīs.

While studying under all these Shaikhs, Sayyid Muḥammad bin 'Ali seems to have fallen under the influence of their Sufi teachings, particularly those of the Tijāniyyah Order in Morocco. Later, however, he became a member of other Sufi Orders, including the Shādhiliyyah, Nāṣiriyyah and Qādiriyyah. But he does not seem to have been wholeheartedly in favour of their teachings.<sup>5</sup> 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."<sup>6</sup>

In pursuing his studies in Algeria, Morocco, and Egypt, Sayyid Muḥammad

<sup>2</sup> Salīm bin 'Āmir, "*al-Sanūsiyyūn fi Barqa*" (The Sanūsis in Cyrenaica), *Majallāt 'Umar al-Mukhtār*, Benghazi, Vol. I (September 1943), p. 6. See also Shukri, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Salīm bin 'Āmir, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>6</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

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.<sup>7</sup> 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 Hijāz, the birth-place of the Prophet Muḥammad and the original spring-board 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 prevailing 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 Muḥammad 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.<sup>8</sup>

One of Sayyid Muḥammad'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 Hijāz. 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 Sanūsiyyah Order.

He had already succeeded in converting to his viewpoint a considerable number of Algerians and other "Brethren" (*Ikhwān*). These were now his disciples, and a few of them accompanied him on his journey eastward through

<sup>7</sup> Muṣṭafa B'ayyu, *Dirāsah fi al-Tārikh al-Lubiyi* (Studies in Libyan History), Alexandria, 1953, p. 23.

<sup>8</sup> Salīm bin 'Āmir. *op. cit.*, p. 12.



Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and the Hijāz, and helped him in the dissemination of his teachings.

Sayyid Muḥammad'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 Muḥammad '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 Muḥammad 'Ali decided for his part to stifle the rapid advance of the Sanūsi 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 Hijāz.<sup>9</sup> But his studies in Egypt left a deep impression on his mind. There Muḥammad 'Ali had succeeded in shaking the authority of the Ottoman Sultān 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 Sultān 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 Sultān. 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 Muḥammad 'Ali, he seems to have felt that the kind of political triumph of the latter over the authority of the Sultān was not the real victory he would wish for himself. He wanted political victory to be coupled with a real movement for reform and advancement. 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 which 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.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> B'ayyu, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>10</sup> Salim bin 'Amir, *op. cit.*, p. 2.



It was with this in mind that the Sayyid set out for the Hijāz. 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 Hijāz, but was particularly influenced by Shaikh Aḥmad bin Idris al-Fāsi, the fourth head of the Moroccan Order of the Qādiriyyah dervishes and later the founder of the Idrisiyyah or Qādiriyyah-Idrisiyyah Order.<sup>11</sup> In addition through his contacts with the pilgrims, flocking in thousands to Makkah and al-Madīnah 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 Aḥmad bin Idris in the Yemen (where he had gone into exile following the hostility of the Māliki Shaikhs at Makkah), Sayyid Muḥammad al-Sanūsi 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.<sup>12</sup> Here he made great progress, particularly among the Bedouin tribes of the Hijāz, chief among which was the Harb tribe between Makkah and al-Madīnah.<sup>13</sup> This success among the Hijāzi 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 Muḥammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhāb. In this they found great support in the attitude of the 'ulamā' and the Sharifs of Makkah and the Turkish administration.<sup>14</sup> 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."<sup>15</sup>

The Sayyid now decided to leave the Hijāz, 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 Hijāz. 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.

<sup>11</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> B'ayyūn, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

In 1257/1841, he left the Hijāz, 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,<sup>16</sup> 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 conditions he had conceived of for a new centre for his Order.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup> 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 which no doubt made his task all the easier and thus speeded up his progress.

In 1259/1843, with the help of the 'Awāqir and Bara'sa tribes, Sayyid Muhammad al-Sanūsi founded his first lodge (*zāwiyah*) near Sidi Rafī' on the central Cyrenaican plateau (*al-Jabal al-Akhdar*).<sup>20</sup> This first lodge came to be known as the White Lodge (*al-Zāwiyah al-Baidā'*), 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 Jaghbūb, about one hundred and fifty kilometres south-east of Sidi Rafī', 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-

<sup>16</sup> Salim bin 'Amir, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> B'ayyu, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-35.

<sup>18</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-98.

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> Salim bin 'Amir, *op. cit.*, p. 3. See also Evans-Pritchard, *op. cit.*, p. 14

West Africa through Egypt to Makkah; at Jaghbūb itself, this route bisected one of the trade-routes from the coast to the Sahara and the Sudan. Jaghbūb 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.<sup>21</sup>

Actually, Sayyid Muḥammad al-Sanūsī's transfer of the seat of his Order to Jaghbūb 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 influence of Islam.<sup>22</sup> Sayyid Muḥammad must have been alarmed by the Christian missionary work in the Sudan, and he seems to have wanted to combat their activities. In this he was encouraged by the success which his movement had already scored in the coastal regions and the successful establishment of so many Sanūsī lodges in North Africa.<sup>23</sup>

Jaghbūb soon became not only a centre for the Sanūsī 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 Sanūsīs and "Brethren."<sup>24</sup> This community included the Algerians, Tunisians, Moroccans, Libyans, and others.

As time went on, the University of Jaghbūb, 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/nineteenth century. It was at this university that the future leaders of the Sanūsī Order were trained, and it was from here that Sayyid Muḥammad bin 'Ali, his followers, and successors directed their missionary activities in Libya, the Sahara, and the Sudan.<sup>25</sup>

When the Sayyid died in 1276/1859, he had already founded twenty-one lodges in Cyrenaica alone.<sup>26</sup> 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 (*Āshqār Pāsha*) became a member of the Sanūsī Order.<sup>27</sup> In accordance with this courteous attitude of the Ottoman Government towards the Sanūsīyyah Order, Sultān 'Abd al-

<sup>21</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-16.

<sup>22</sup> B'ayyu, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>24</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>27</sup> Shukri, *op. cit.*, p. 30.



Majid I issued in 1273/1856 a *firman* exempting Sanūsī properties from taxation and permitting the Order to collect a religious tithe from its followers.<sup>28</sup>

The Grand Sanūsī was succeeded in 1276/1859 by his elder son, Sayyid Muḥammad al-Mahdi, as head of the Order,<sup>29</sup> 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. Sultān 'Abd al-'Azīz (1278/1861–1293/1876) issued a *firman* confirming the privileges granted by the earlier *firman* of Sultān 'Abd al-Majid (1273/1856) and further recognized the right of sanctuary within the confines of the Sanūsī lodges.<sup>30</sup> Yet, in spite of these flattering advances made by the Ottoman Government towards them the Sanūsīyyah leaders refused to take any part in Turkish political entanglements abroad. In 1294/1877, thus, they refused to accede to the Sultān'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 Sanūsī 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.<sup>31</sup> In 1304/1886 the Ottoman Sultān sent General Ṣādiq Pāsha to Jaghbūb with presents for Sayyid al-Mahdi (al-Sanūsī). Ten years later, Rashīd Pāsha, Governor of Cyrenaica, dressed in civilian clothes and unarmed, visited the Sayyid and paid him homage.<sup>32</sup>

Sanūsī 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 Sanūsīs remained unresponsive to Italian presents and flattery. One year later they refused to give support to 'Arabi Pāshā's rising in Egypt, although at the time there were some who thought that 'Arabi was a mere tool in the hands of the Sanūsīs and that he had risen in revolt under their influence.<sup>33</sup>

In 1313/1895 Sayyid al-Mahdi moved the seat of the Order to Kūfra, a hitherto insignificant oasis, about one hundred and fifty kilometres south

<sup>28</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

<sup>29</sup> Shukri, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>30</sup> A summary of this *firman* is given by Salīm bin 'Āmir, *op. cit.*, Vol. II (May 1944), pp. 5–6. The issue of this *firman* seems to have been necessary because the Turkish administration appears to have considered the earlier *firman* to be covering only the Sanūsī lodges in Cyrenaica; a new *firman* was to cover the Tripolitanian lodges as well as those to be established in future by Sayyid al-Mahdi. See M. Tayyib al-Ashhab, *al-Mahdi al-Sanūsī*, Tripoli, 1952, pp. 149, 157.

<sup>31</sup> Shukri, *op. cit.*, pp. 70–73.

<sup>32</sup> Cumming, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* See also Shukri, *op. cit.*, pp. 69–70.

of Jaghbūb. This may have been done to be out of the reach of the Turkish authorities.<sup>34</sup> It may also have been instigated a reaction to the attitude of Sultān 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II who, it is alleged, arranged with the 'ulamā of al-Azhar University in Cairo to issue a *fatwa* discrediting the Order by condemning Sanūsi practices which they considered to be innovations in the rules of prayer.<sup>35</sup>

Following this transfer of the seat of the Order to Kūfra, the affairs of the Order continued to prosper. Economically, the Order profited greatly from customs dues as well as from directly engaging in trade. Kūfra now became a relatively important commercial centre through which caravans were constantly passing.<sup>36</sup> In the political and religious fields the Order extended its influence to the then independent Sultānates in the Sahara: Kawar, Tibesti, Borku, Ennedi, Darfur, Wadai, Kanem, Chad, the Azgar, the Air, and Baghirmi. It also reached the Sudan.<sup>37</sup> In fact, contact with some of these Sultānates had already been made by the Grand Sanūsi shortly after his move to Jaghbūb in 1273/1856. But it was not until Sayyid al-Mahdī's tenure that the Order began to infiltrate into the Sahara and the Sudan. This not only brought the various Sultānates in the area under Sanūsi 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.<sup>38</sup>

This advance of the Sanūsiyyah into the Sahara and the Central Sudan brought the Order face to face with the French, and Franco-Sanūsi relations henceforward became greatly strained. In 1317/1899, therefore, Sayyid al-Mahdi moved the seat of the Order from Kūfra 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.<sup>39</sup>

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 Sanūsi forces in the area, with results alternating between Sanūsi victory and French ascendancy.<sup>40</sup> 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 Aḥmad 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

<sup>34</sup> See Evans-Pritchard, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>35</sup> Cumming, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

<sup>36</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21–22.

<sup>38</sup> Cumming, *op. cit.*, pp. 23–25.

<sup>39</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

<sup>40</sup> Cumming, *op. cit.*, p. 24. See also Shukri, *op. cit.*, pp. 63–66.



any of these powers.<sup>41</sup> 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 Kūfra. 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-Mahdī's tenure began now to diminish. In addition, personal rivalries among members of the Sanūsi family, after Sayyid al-Mahdī's death, helped to further weaken the solidarity and strength of the Order and to halt the extension of its influence.<sup>42</sup> 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 SANŪSIYYAH ORDER

It has already been stated that the main objective of the Sanūsiyyah 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 Sanūsi, moved the seat of the Order in 1273/1856 to Jaghbūb. 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 Sanūsiyyah 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 which would ultimately lead to communion with God. The process of accomplishing this "salvation" is described by the Grand Sanūsi himself in three of his nine books: *al-Salsabil al-Ma'in fi al-Ṭarā'iq al-Arba'in* (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; *Kitāb al-Masā'il al-'Ashr*, *al-Musamma Bughyat al-Maqāsid fi Khulāṣat al-Marāṣid* (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

<sup>41</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.



the Muslims encounter in their daily prayers), and *Iqād al-Waṣnān fi al-'Amal bi al-Ḥadīth w-al-Qur'ān* (Awakening the Slumberer through Observance of the Ḥadīth and the Qur'ān), in which, in an effort to extol the virtue of following the Prophet's sayings and practices, he deals with the various ways and means followed by the Muslim 'ulamā' for understanding the Ḥadīth.<sup>43</sup>

But the Sanūsiyyah 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 Sanūsiyyah leaders declared themselves in favour of the rational approach to religion and the reform and guidance of Muslims.<sup>44</sup> This was not only the attitude of the founder of the Sanūsiyyah Order and his immediate successors, but is also that of the present leader of the Order (Sayyid Idrīs) who, shortly after his proclamation as the first king of independent Libya, issued orders to his followers not to resort to what he called antiquated physical practices.<sup>45</sup>

A basic feature of Sanūsi philosophy is its attempt to combine and reconcile the two methods familiar to Islamic religious thought: that of the 'ulamā' who adhere to the *Sharī'ah* and that of the Sufis. In this he tried to follow the example of al-Ghazālī. But the Grand Sanūsi, in trying to follow the path of the 'ulamā', admired and was greatly influenced by ibn Taimīyyah, though he differed with him in his attitude towards Sufism, for ibn Taimīyyah had evinced open hostility to all Sufi teachings and methods, while the Grand Sanūsi (and his successors) showed tolerance towards these Orders.

It has already been stated that the Grand Sanūsi 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-Salsabīl al-Ma'īn* contains an account of the chief Orders which he had studied including the Muḥammadiyyah, the Ṣiddīqiyyah, the Uwaisiyyah, the Qādiriyyah, the Rifā'iyyah, the Suhrawardiyyah, the Aḥmadiyyah, and the Shādhiliyyah.<sup>46</sup> 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."<sup>47</sup> Nor

<sup>43</sup> For a brief summary of the contents of these books, consult Shukri, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-44.

<sup>44</sup> See M. M. Merene, *Brevi Nozioni d'Islam*, 1927, p. 58.

<sup>45</sup> See *Barqa al-Jadidah*, Benghazi, June 28, 1953.

<sup>46</sup> Shukri, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>47</sup> Carlo Giglio, *La Confraternita Senussita dalle sue Origine ad Oggi*, Padova, 1932, p. 17, cited by Evans-Pritchard, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

is his Order a mere offshoot of the *Shādhiliyyah* Order.<sup>48</sup> 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.<sup>49</sup>

In its teachings the Sanūsīyyah 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.<sup>50</sup> It followed the Māliki school of Muslim thought which was and still is prevalent in North Africa. The Grand Sanūsi placed great emphasis on the Sunnah which, together with the Qur'ān, he regarded as the basic source of Islamic Law. Though he also attached a certain degree of importance to *qiyās* (analogy) and *ijmā'* (consensus of opinion) as the sources of law in Islam he considered these to be of secondary importance.<sup>51</sup>

But the most courageous stand which the Grand Sanūsi took in this connection was his recognition of *ijtihād* (independent reasoning) as a method for understanding and developing Islam. It was in fact this doctrine which evoked the hostility of the '*ulamā*' of the time in Egypt and the Ḥijāz and made him stand at variance with them; for many centuries before, it was considered that the door of *ijtihād* had been closed, and the '*ulamā*', therefore, held that the advocacy of this method was likely to lead to innovations in Islam.<sup>52</sup>

## C

### ACHIEVEMENTS: AN EVALUATION

The success of the Sanūsīyyah Order was spectacular in more ways than one. The rapid progress which it scored among the tribes of Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and the Fezzan, together with the extension of its influence to other countries, particularly Tunisia, Egypt, the Ḥijāz, 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 Aḥmad al-Sharīf relinquished the head-

<sup>48</sup> Shukri, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>49</sup> M. al-Ṭayyib al-Ashhab, *Barqa al-'Arabiyyah Ams w-al-Yaum* (Arab Cyrenaica Yesterday and Today), Cairo, 1945, p. 187.

<sup>50</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *The Place of the Sanūsīya Order in the History of Islam*, p. 13.

<sup>51</sup> Nicola A. Ziadeh makes the sweeping statement that the Grand Sanūsi "rejected both *ijmā'* (agreement or consensus of opinion) and *qiyās* (analogy)." See his book, *Sanūsīyah: A Study of a Revivalist Movement in Islam*, Leiden, 1958, p. 87. However, this book—which actually no more than a restatement, in somewhat varied phraseology, of what other writers have written before—should be read with more than the usual caution, particularly in view of the many sweeping generalizations and the factual errors found in it. But consult Evans-Pritchard, *The Place of the Sanūsīya Order in the History of Islam*, and also B'ayyu, *op. cit.*, pp. 38–39.

<sup>52</sup> See in this connection B'ayyu, *op. cit.*, pp. 38–39.

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.<sup>53</sup> 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 which 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 Sanūsi teachings took as their basis the true and original tenets and rites of Islam. This, no doubt, made the Sanūsiyyah 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 which the Sanūsiyyah 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 Sanūsiyyah 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 Sanūsiyyah Order is indeed a constructive movement which aims primarily at introducing a positive element into the *Ummat al-Islām* (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."<sup>54</sup>

Considered in this light, the Sanūsiyyah Order is far from deserving the accusations of extreme puritanism and fanaticism which H. Duveyrier<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>54</sup> Shukri, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

<sup>55</sup> H. Duveyrier, *La Confrerie Musulmane de Sidi Mohammed ben Ali es Senousi et son Domaine géographique en l'Année 1300 de l'Hégrie—1883 de notre ère*, Paris, 1884.



levelled against it. He asserted that the Sanūsiyyah 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 Sanūsi agents, and even considered that the Sanūsiyyah propaganda was in fact at the root of every misfortune which befell the French interests.<sup>56</sup> Similarly, Professor Arnold J. Toynbee<sup>57</sup> has accused the Sanūsiyyah 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 Sanūsiyyah Order has been manifested by Sanūsi 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.<sup>58</sup> This tolerance may be attributed to the broadmindedness and complacent disposition of the Sanūsi leaders themselves, and the high degree of learning and accomplishment they had attained. It may also be because the Sanūsiyyah Order itself partook of and was influenced by many Sufi Orders which had been in existence before it came to flourish. We have already noted that the founder of the Order himself had deliberately studied the tenets and rites of these various Orders and had chosen the best of each for incorporation into the Order which he was going to establish in his own name. In any case, as the Sanūsiyyah 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 Sanūsiyyah 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 Sanūsiyyah 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.

<sup>56</sup> See the defence of the Sanūsiyyah Order on this point by Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, pp. 6-7. Also in this connection, see Louis Rinn, *Marabout et Khouan*, Alger, 1884, *passim*.

<sup>57</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial*, Oxford University Press, London, 1949, pp. 188-89.

<sup>58</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.

This was inevitable in view of the Grand Sanūsi'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 Sanūsi 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 Sanūsiyyah Order to the religious affairs of Muslims should have also touched upon their political affairs.

The attitude of the Sanūsiyyah Order towards the position of the Ottoman Sultān 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 Sultān, 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 Sanūsiyyah Order. What actually happened in this respect is that the Sanūsi leaders were ever ready to support the Ottoman Sultān 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 Sultān 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 Sanūsis saw that they, equally with the Turks, were being threatened by common foreign enemies, particularly France and Italy, they hastened to rally around the Sultān. This, as we shall see later in this chapter, became all the more evident when Italy proceeded to occupy Libya, thereby provoking the Sanūsi leaders, together with other prominent figures in Libya, to rise on the side of the Turks and declare a war of *jihād* against the Italians.

What is of particular interest at this juncture is to note how the Sanūsiyyah Order developed from being a purely spiritual movement into one also political.

One important factor which helped the Sanūsi 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 Sanūsi 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.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11, 84-89.



It was actually in the economic and social fields that the Sanūsiyyah Order made its greatest contribution to Libyan life, and it was this role which 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 Sanūsiyyah 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 capable, devoted, and commanding personality of the Sanūsi leaders themselves, not only in the social, economic, and political conditions under which the Libyans had been living before the advent of the Sanūsiyyah movement and which made the teachings of the movement more readily acceptable, but also in the type of organization which the Sanūsi leaders were able to give the country and which aimed at creating people who were "healthy in body and mind."<sup>60</sup>

It has been already noted that it was the avowed purpose of the Sanūsi leaders to associate their movement with the tribes themselves. This is why the vast majority of the Sanūsi lodges were founded in tribal centres and not in towns, and the distribution of the lodges also followed tribal divisions.<sup>61</sup>

The distribution of the lodges was carefully planned by the Sanūsi 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 Sanūsi 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."<sup>62</sup>

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 Sanūsiyyah 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

<sup>60</sup> Knud Holmboe, *Desert Encounter*, London, 1936, p. 275, citing Sayyid Muḥammad Idris al-Sanūsi (present King of Libya). See also Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>61</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, pp. 71-73.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.



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.<sup>63</sup>

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 *jihād* (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 *Imām* on Fridays; and assisting in preaching and teaching.<sup>64</sup>

Every lodge, small or large, usually contained a mosque, school-rooms, guest-rooms, living quarters for teachers and pupils, and houses for the *Ikhwān* (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.<sup>65</sup>

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 totalled some 50,000 hectares.<sup>66</sup> 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 Sanūsi 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 Sanūsi family and the teachers and administrative officials of the Order usually lived at Jaghbūb and Kūfra, 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.<sup>67</sup> 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

<sup>63</sup> Shukri, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

<sup>64</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, p. 80. See also Shukri, *op. cit.*, pp.

<sup>65</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, pp. 73-74.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.

for the most part used to carry correspondence from the seat of the Order to the various lodges and *vice versa*. In this way, Jaghbūb was closely connected with Egypt, Tripolitania, the Fezzan, Wadai, and the rest of Cyrenaica.<sup>68</sup>

Later, however, during the life-time of Sayyid Aḥmad al-Sharīf, 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 Sanūsī family, and these members came to be regarded as patrons of the lodges which supplied them their needs and were under their supervision.<sup>69</sup>

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.<sup>70</sup>

The importance of the Sanūsī lodges in the history of Libya and, indeed, of every other country to which the Sanūsīyyah 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 Sanūsī 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.<sup>71</sup> The Sanūsī leaders are, in fact, known for insisting that

<sup>68</sup> Shukri, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>69</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, p. 77.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80-88.

<sup>71</sup> Shukri, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-61.

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 which it had not known for centuries. Sanūsi influence in Libya, as indeed in the other countries to which the Sanūsiyyah 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 Sanūsi 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.<sup>72</sup>

By this time the Sanūsis had succeeded in establishing in Libya a position almost independent of the Turkish administration, recognizing only the *de facto* authority of the Turkish Sultān, 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

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<sup>72</sup> For a detailed account of Europe's, particularly Italy's, designs over Libya, see W. C. Askew, *Europe and Italy's Acquisition of Libya*, Duke University Press, 1942. See also Roberto Cantalugo, *L'Italia Musulmana*, Rome, 1929.



Turkey into war over the mastery of Libya.<sup>73</sup> 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, Tripolitanians, 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 Aḥmad al-Sharīf, leader of the Sanūsi Order, who was then at Kūfra. Immediately on learning of the Italian invasion, Sayyid Aḥmad issued a call to *jihād*. A large number of tribal chiefs and tribesmen, roused by the call, hastened to rally around the Sanūsi flag. In the Fezzan, the call to *jihād* sent out by Sayyid Aḥmad 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 Sultān reserved for himself a number of rights which he insisted on exercising in Libya. But shortly before signing the Treaty, the Sultān issued a *firman* granting the Libyans self-government, thereby making Libya a semi-independent State.

But the Libyan leaders, including Sayyid Aḥmad al-Sharīf al-Sanūsi, disclaimed the Treaty of Ouchy and decided to continue the war against Italy.<sup>74</sup>

Actually, the Turks wanted to encourage Libyan resistance against the Italians, and they soon nominated Sayyid Aḥmad as the leader of the new Libyan State.<sup>75</sup>

The designation of Sayyid Aḥmad al-Sharīf as the leader of the future Libyan State meant that the unchallenged Sanūsi rule in the country now received final and definite recognition on the part of the Turkish Government.

Turco-Sanūsi relations remained cordial all the time. And Libyan resistance continued until 1335/1916, when a serious difference of opinion arose between Sayyid Aḥmad and his cousin, Sayyid Idrīs al-Sanūsi, over the alignments of the Sanūsiyyah in the War. Sayyid Aḥmad wanted to join Turkey and Germany against Italy, while Sayyid Idrīs, who was known for his affection

<sup>73</sup> See on this point L. Villari, *Expansion of Italy*, London, 1930, pp. 71-72. See also A. Ravizza, *La Libia nel suo Ordinamento Giuridico*, Padova, 1931, p. 7. See further Askew, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

<sup>74</sup> See Shukri, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-48.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

for the British and who seems to have been impressed by the understanding reached at the time between the Arabs and the British Government,<sup>76</sup> preferred to join Britain against Turkey and, thus, reach an understanding with the Italians.<sup>77</sup>

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.<sup>78</sup> 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 Sanūsi Sayyids. In this it was Sayyid Idris who took the initiative. He now wanted to take over the leadership of the Sanūsi 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 Sanūsīs were to share with the new head the management of Sanūsi affairs in Cyrenaica and the Fezzan. At the same time, Sayyid Ahmad was to remain the religious head of the Sanūsi 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.<sup>79</sup>

Following this, Sayyid Ahmad retired to Jaghbūb, but was soon forced to leave it under British threat to destroy that place and demolish the tomb

<sup>76</sup> Reference is made here to the Husain-McMahon negotiations for Arab participation in the First World War against Turkey and on the side of the Allies, in return for British recognition of Arab unity and independence at the end of the War. Consult on this point George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, London, 1946, *passim*.

<sup>77</sup> See Shukri, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 165-82.

<sup>79</sup> Consult in this connection the "Memoirs" of Sayyid (King) Idris, published in Arabic in *al-Zamān*, Benghazi, January 26, 1955. See also Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, p. 128, and Shukri, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-87.



of Grand Sanūsi. 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 Nūri Bey, however, he had to go to 'Aqaila, some 250 kilometres south-west 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 Waḥid al-Dīn 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 Aḥmad al-Sharīf. "It was," remarks Sir Harry Luke, "probably in order to stimulate sympathy for the Sultan in Islamic circles that [Sayyid Aḥmad] was invited to officiate."<sup>80</sup> In April 1921, the Turkish Parliament nominated him as King of Iraq. He proved to be a staunch supporter of Muṣṭafa Kemāl Atātürk and later tried to work for the restoration of the *Khilāfat* 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 Hījāz, where he was well received by King ibn Sa'ūd, and remained there until his death at Madīnah in 1352/1933.<sup>81</sup>

Sayyid Idrīs took over control of Sanūsi affairs at a very critical time. The Sanūsīs 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 Idrīs, therefore, decided (with the approval of Sayyid Aḥmad 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 Idrīs's long-awaited opportunity for establishing himself not only as the political leader of the Sanūsi movement, but also as its spiritual head. However, although an agreement ('Akrama Agreement of April 1917) was reached between Sayyid Idrīs 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 Idrīs could not agree without meeting the opposition of the Sanūsi leaders.<sup>82</sup> Eventually, in 1339/1920, another agreement (Agreement of al-Rajma) was concluded between Sayyid Idrīs and the Italians. According to the terms of this agreement, the Italian Government agreed to grant the Sanūsi Order a limited degree of self-government within specified areas. Sayyid Idrīs was designated as the hereditary chief of this "Sanūsi Government" with the title of Amir. The Sanūsi lodges were exempt from taxation, and a parliament was to be

<sup>80</sup> Sir Harry Luke, *The Old Turkey and the New*, London, 1955, p. 163.

<sup>81</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, pp. 132-33.

<sup>82</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 135-46. See also Shukri, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-201.



set up on the basis of proportional representation from the oases under the Amīr's jurisdiction. The Italian Government, moreover, promised to respect Arab lands and properties including those of the Sanūsi lodges. Among other things, the Amīr promised to put an end, within eight months of the signing of the agreement, to all the Sanūsi military camps and other military formations within his area.<sup>83</sup>

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 Sanūsi leaders in Cyrenaica and the Fezzan, eventually met at Ghāryān in Tripolitania, proclaimed a "Tripolitanian Republic" in 1340/1921, and decided to invite Sayyid Idris to be its head.<sup>84</sup> Following this, in 1341/1922, a Tripolitanian delegation left for Ajadabiyah—seat of the Sanūsiyyah Government since 1339/1920—in order to lay before and explain to the members of that Government the resolutions adopted at the Congress of Ghāryān. On November 22, 1922, Amīr Idrīs formally accepted the Tripolitanian offer.

The Tripolitanian *bai'ah* to Amīr Idrīs 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 Sanūsi leaders and the Tripolitaniāns, it made it possible for the latter to accept Sanūsi hegemony.

This *bai'ah*, 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.<sup>85</sup> Even Amīr Idrīs, 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 Sanūsi Government, and three days later the Italian Governor declared the unilateral abrogation of all the agreements concluded between the Sanūsiyyah Order and the Italian Government.<sup>86</sup>

Libyan resistance was once again weakening. By the end of 1342/1923 resistance in Tripolitania had collapsed, and the Italians had established

<sup>83</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, pp. 148-49.

<sup>84</sup> Shukri, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

<sup>85</sup> See Ravizza, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>86</sup> Shukri, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

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-Riḍā' as spiritual head of the Sanūsiyyah Order in Cyrenaica and 'Umar al-Mukhtār as political and military leader of the territory. Cyrenaican resistance continued until the end of 1350/1931, when 'Umar al-Mukhtār, 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, Sanūsi fortunes suffered terribly; almost all the Sanūsi leaders were forced to leave the country and live in the neighbouring Arab lands, particularly in Egypt. On December 22, 1930, a Royal Decree was issued, whereby the various pacts between the Italians and the Sanūsis 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 administration. The Sanūsiyyah Order itself was considered by the Italians to be an illegal association.<sup>87</sup> 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 Sanūsi 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 Sanūsiyyah Order.

<sup>87</sup> For a brief but able exposition of the legal aspects of Italy's treatment of the Sanūsiyyah Order, including the sequestration of its estates, see Evans-Pritchard, "Italy and the Sanūsiyyah Order in Cyrenaica," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, Vol. XI, Part 4, pp. 843-53.

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## Chapter LXXIV

### JAMĀL AL-DĪN AL-AFGHĀNĪ

#### 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 which 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 consonant 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 which 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 complacently 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 civilization, 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 Muḥammad bin ‘Abd al-Wahhāb of Arabia (Chap. LXXII) and Shāh Wali Allah of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent (Chap. LXXIX) be considered to be precursors of the modern awakening in Islam and their movements the signs of the coming dawn, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (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-Afghānī 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-Afghānī was for the Muslim world a comprehensive personality, being at the same time a great thinker,

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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 Muhammad 'Abduh, he was also a man of heart and strong will, ever ready to undertake 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-Afghāni 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 thoughts, 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 Jamāl al-Dīn 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-Afghāni, i. e., coming from Afghānistān, 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 Afghānistān 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 Afghānistān, 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 Shīr 'Alī. On this Amīr's accession in 1286/1869, Jamāl al-Dīn 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-Islām, 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 Muḥammad ‘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.

Repairing 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 Muḥammad ‘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-Afghāni 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 Shāh of Persia, ending in his expulsion in 1308/1890 or 1309/1891 when his reforming zeal antagonized the Shāh.

Then followed another brief visit to England where Jamāl al-Dīn started his campaign against the Shāh and published his “Splendour of the Two Hemispheres” (*Diā’ al-Khāfiqain*) ending in his ill-fated acceptance of the Sultān 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-Afghāni 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 which 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 ‘Abbās al-‘Aqqād has said, Jamāl al-Dīn 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-Radd ‘ala al-Dahriyyīn*). “Sometimes the materialists,” says al-Afghāni, “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." Jamāl al-Dīn 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-Afghānī'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," "depopulation," and "destruction." It was this view that made al-Afghānī 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-Afghānī was a true Muslim and a rationalist. He appealed to the Muslims of all sects to make use of the principle of rationalism which 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-Afghānī advocated the Mu'tazilite doctrine of free-will against fatalism; this latter is an attitude commonly but wrongly attributed to the Muslims by the Western people. According to Jamāl al-Dīn, there is a great difference between the Muslim belief in *al-qadā' w-al-qadar* (predestination) and that in *al-jabr* (fatalism). *Al-qadā' w-al-qadar* is a belief which 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 (*bid'ah*) which was introduced maliciously into the Muslim world for political purposes.

## D

## POLITICAL THOUGHT

Al-Afghāni 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-Afghāni maintained, began to fall apart when the 'Abbāsīd Caliphs became contented with their titular powers ceased to encourage scholars and those trained in religious matters, and stopped the exercise of *ijtihād* (free thinking). He said, "Today we see Muslim rulers giving a free hand to 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-Afghāni 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 common 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 which exercises such profound influence on the political and social life of those who profess it.

In advocating the defence of one's own country, Jamāl 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-Afghāni, 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 Jamāl al-Dīn, 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-Afghāni 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.



## Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī

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-Afghānī, 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 Muṣṭafa 'Abd al-Rāziq, al-Afghānī 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 LXXV

### RENAISSANCE IN EGYPT MUHAMMAD 'ABDUH AND HIS SCHOOL

#### A

#### LIFE

Nobody has contributed to the renaissance of Muslim thought in modern Egypt more than Muḥammad '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-Ustādh al-Imām" (The Master and Guide); this title alone shows the influence which he had upon his contemporaries. A young Egyptian writer, Kāmil 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 Muḥammad 'Abduh's life, thanks to a source which is excellent because authentic. It is a form of autobiography which the Egyptian philosopher himself composed towards the end of his life, by way of replies to questions put to him by his disciple, Raḥīd Riḍā'. We also possess, written by the hand of the Master, a number of very interesting documents about his family and his early education.

Muḥammad 'Abduh was the son of an Egyptian farmer. He was born in 1266/1849 at Maḥallāt 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 Tanṭa, at the Mosque of al-Aḥmadi, 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 Muḥammad '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 which 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 Ismā'īl*, Dr. Muḥammad Ṣābri 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 which he had to follow. This was Jamāl al-Dīn al-Aghfāni, already famous as the courageous champion of religious and political freedom for Oriental peoples. Jamāl al-Dīn, on arriving in Egypt, drew many disciples around himself, notably Muḥammad 'Abduh. It was the spiritual direction of Jamāl al-Dīn 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 Jamāl al-Dīn 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 Jamāl al-Dīn the awakening of national feeling, the love of liberty, and the idea of a constitutional regime. 'Abduh showed his enthusiasm for Jamāl al-Dīn in his first work, *Risālat al-Wāridāt* (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 prevalent in the Azharite circles.

In 1294/1877 'Abduh obtained the *al-'Alimīyyah* 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



which 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 *Dār al-'Ulūm* 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 Jamāl al-Dīn 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 which characterized the work of Muḥammad 'Abduh.

Then occurred the *coup d'état* of 1296/1879 which precipitated the fall of the cabinet of Nubar Pāsha and some European ministers, the first consequence of the nationalist movement which 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 which resulted in the occupation of Egypt by the British troops in 1300/1882.

After 'Urabi's failure, Muḥammad '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-Afghāni, having returned from India, invited him to join him in Paris. 'Abduh accordingly joined Afghāni in Paris the following year; there they founded a society and started *al-'Urwah 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, Muḥammad '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. Muḥammad '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, Muḥammad 'Abduh returned to Beirut. There he was appointed teacher in the Sultāniyyah School, and gave his famous course of lectures on theology which served as a basis for his future treatise on Monotheism (*Risālat al-Tauḥīd*). 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, Sultān 'Abd al-Ḥamid 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 Muḥammad '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 which 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 contemporary life. Nominated as a member of the Administrative Council of al-Azhar University, Muḥammad '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 which had not previously appeared in the curricula of this University.

Nominated in 1307/1899 as Grand Mufti of Egypt, Muḥammad '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 Qur'ān, a course animated from beginning to end by a new spirit. As Grand Mufti, Muḥammad 'Abduh took three religious decisions (*fatāwa*) which 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 Renaissance 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 (*maḥākīm Sharī'ah*); 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-Qasṭ al-Shar'i*) 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-Jāmi'ah* drew a reply from Muhammad 'Abduh which, published at first in a series of articles in the *Manār*, then collected in one volume *al-Islām w-al-Naṣrānīyyah* (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 favoritism of the latter proposed the awarding of an Azharite distinction to a special



Imām 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, Muḥammad '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 Jamāl al-Din that he developed within him that happy balance between an altogether inner mysticism and an overwhelming need for action.

Muḥammad '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-'Afīfi 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, Muḥammad 'Abduh soon emerged from the Azharite scholastic position and developed pragmatic and humanistic views which 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 (*Kalām*), which were tolerated at the University, were those which had been composed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries of the Christian era. It was al-Afghāni 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-Afghāni himself turned to the study of ibn Sina, the ever-fresh source of inspiration unspoilt by centuries of neglect. According to Muḥammad 'Abduh, this standpoint of al-Afghāni was received by the orthodox and by the Azharites as a heresy of an unprecedented 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 *Kalām* 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-Sāwī's treatise on logic, *al-Baṣā'ir al-Naṣīriyyah*, 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. Muḥammad 'Abduh's own system of logic showed the influence of Aristotle, ibn Ruṣhd, 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 which 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 Muḥammad 'Abduh constantly upheld the principle of *ijtihād*, that is, the right of unfettered personal inquiry, of thought free from all fetters, and did not cease to fight against *taqlīd*, 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 *ijtihād*, 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 which 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 négation 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 Ash'arites (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, Muḥammad '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, Muḥammad 'Abduh, like Descartes, almost always appeals to the testimony of conscience. Again, he points to the testimony of common sense which 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 Muḥammad '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 *qadā'*, 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 Qur'ān 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 Muḥammad 'Abduh's theory of good and evil. In his *Risālat al-Tauḥīd* 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 *ḥusn* denotes both "beauty" and "good," and *qubḥ*, both "ugliness" and "evil." He deals with beauty, first in the sensible realm, and then in that of the intelligible, 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 Mū'tazilah), 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 philosophers. "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. Muḥammad 'Abduh established a third parallelism between beings (*al-akwān*) and human actions (*al-af'āl*): "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 *ḥusn* (good) in the three fundamental senses of the Muslim theologians (Mutakallimīn), 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* (*mulā'amah*), 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 Ash'arites and the Mu'tazilites 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 Mutakallimīn arises. According to the Ash'arite theologians, *ḥusn* and *qubḥ*, 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-Shāri'*) 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 (*naskḥ*) of a prohibition (*ḥurmah*) to make it an obligation (*wujūb*). And so, in the Ash'arite 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 Muḥammad 'Abduh was could not subscribe to a thesis of which the consequences seemed to him to be irremediably compromising the freedom which he had so strongly defended. It is, thus, deliberately but without ever departing from his customary good sense that Muḥammad 'Abduh ranges himself, on this point, on the side of the Mu'tazilah, of al-Fārābi, 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 *élite*." 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 superior 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 societies. 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 *Risālat al-Tauhīd*, "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 controversies among Muslim philosophers—that of the *élite* (*al-khāṣṣah*) and the common man (*al-kāffah*)—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 *élite* 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 Mu'tazilite rationalism, the Egyptian reformer undoubtedly hoped to contribute to the restoration in the Muslim world of the principle of *ijtihād* and of the freedom of research on every subject. It is thus, he thought, that the *fuqahā'* (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 (*qiyās*), 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 rationalism, 'Abduh hoped to realize the ideal of emancipating minds from routine, imitation, and intellectual stagnation which had marked the past few centuries of Islam.

As good and evil have a social significance, Muḥammad 'Abduh was drawn at an early stage towards the study of human society. Muḥammad Ṣābri, one of the historians of modern Egypt, speaks of Muḥammad '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 *Dār al-'Ulūm*, a course of lectures on the "Prolegomena" of ibn Khaldūn, 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 which Muḥammad 'Abduh, according to Rashīd Ridā', 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 Muḥammad 'Abduh, to have recourse to the more or less detailed accounts contained in his various writings. He appears to share the ideas of ibn Khaldūn, the great Muslim sociologist and the precursor of Auguste Comte. Like ibn Khaldūn, '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 *Risālat al-Tauḥīd* and his commentary on the Qur'ānic 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 which 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 Qur'ān, 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 Muḥammad '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 law-suits are those between relatives. Their causes generally are feelings of hatred and antipathy existing between members of the same family, feelings which, 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 which 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 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 an 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, Muḥammad '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 which 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. Muḥammad '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 Muḥammad '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 Muḥammad '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 philosophical 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 Muḥammad '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 (*tafsīr*) on the Qur'ān. This commentary aims at explaining the Qur'ān as a scripture containing moral guidance (*al-hidāyah*) on which rests human happiness in this life and the next. The understanding of the Qur'ān is a duty incumbent on all Muslims without distinction of race or culture. As the only question for Muḥammad 'Abduh is to explain the spirit and general sense of the Qur'ānic 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 Qur'ānic 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 Qur'ān. For 'Abduh, it is necessary, on the contrary, to make the Qur'ān 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 Qur'ān which 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 Muḥammad 'Abduh tends to eliminate from his *tafsīr* all the questions giving rise to differences between the commentators. And he insisted upon taking the Qur'ān 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 Zāhiriyyah and the anthropomorphists, who explain the religious texts literally and without recourse to reason. For example, in explaining the *Sūrah al-Kauthar*, certain commentators pretended that the Kauthar was the name of a river in paradise which God had given to the Prophet. According to 'Abduh, there is no such thing; the Kauthar here simply means the great gift which 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 *tanzīh*, 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 *tafsīr* of Muḥammad '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 Qur'ān. Islam is in harmony with enlightened reason; one must, therefore, make a sound and right interpretation which 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 Qur'ānic text but left rather vague, 'Abduh observes that his method is to abstain from going into 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 Sūrah ii, 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 *tafsīr* of Muḥammad 'Abduh shows a constant concern for affirming the universal message of the Qur'ān, whilee always fitting this belief into an evolutionistic and progressive conception. The old commentators often had a tendency to interpret certain Qur'ānic 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 Sūrah cii, for example, alluded to two tribes of the Anṣārs 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 Sūrah, like those of so many others, must not be interpreted in so particularized and narrow a manner; the Qur'ān 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 Muḥammad '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 *tafsīr* of Muḥammad 'Abduh has largely contributed to the purification of religious belief, as much among the mass of Muslims as among the 'ulamā' and theologians, by freeing the minds of the believers from certain legends and ideas which are too materialistic and anthropomorphic. His *tafsīr*, as Rashīd Ridā' has put it, tends to offer an interpretation of the Qur'ān in a spiritual sense conforming to reason.

In religious and social life, Muḥammad 'Abduh takes the position of a critic and puts on trial the ideas, morals, and customs which 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 'ulamā' 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 most lively criticism of the *bid'ah*, that is, the false



innovations introduced into the religious practices of the Muslims in later times. The 'ulamā' 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 MUḤAMMAD 'ABDUH IN EGYPT

In July 1935, on the thirtieth anniversary of the death of Muḥammad 'Abduh, "The Society of Muslim Youth" of Cairo held a public meeting to honour the memory of him who had justly been called *al-Ustādh al-Imām* (The Master and Guide). Testimony of Muḥammad '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, Muḥammad 'Abduh promoted, in Egypt, the cause of science, religion, and patriotism. All the noble and generous sentiments of the Egyptian *élite* 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 Muḥammad 'Abduh was the profound influence which he exerted upon the people. The words of M. Bougle about the philosopher Frederic Hauh (*Les Maitres de la Philosophie Universitaire en France*, 1938) might equally well have been applied to Muḥammad '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 which he had upon his contemporaries.

There were, in Egypt, many disciples of Muḥammad '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 Muḥammad 'Abduh are to be found. First, the personality and the writings of Muḥammad 'Abduh lent valuable support to social, religious, and philosophical reformers, represented by Qāsim Amīn, Rashīd Ridā', and Muṣṭafa 'Abd al-Rāziq. Thanks to the authority of the Master's name, wrote Ḥusain Haikal Pāsha, his disciples were able to make the people accept principles which 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 Muḥammad '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 Muḥammad '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 Muḥammad '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: Qāsim Amīn.*—One of the ideas dear to Muḥammad '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 Qur'ān, 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 fulfil 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 which he ardently wished, it was left for one of his colleagues and friends, Qāsim

Amīn, to distinguish himself by tireless activity in the domain of the defence of feminism in Egypt.

Like Muḥammad 'Abduh, Qāsim Amīn 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 which Qāsim Amīn 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 Qāsim Amīn, 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-Sufūr* (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. Ṣafīya Zāghlul, the wife of the national leader, was venerated by all the people, and was called "The Mother of the Egyptians."

2. *The Religious School: Rashīd Riḍā*.—Rashīd Riḍā' is considered to be the interpreter of the religious school of Muḥammad 'Abduh. Of all the disciples of Muḥammad '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-Afghāni 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 Jamāl al-Dīn in order that I might perfect myself, through philosophy and personal effort, to serve the faith. On the death of al-Afghāni, when it became well known that it was the politics of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd that ruined him, I felt myself suffocated in the Ottoman Empire and decided to leave Egypt because of the liberty of thought which existed there; what I had hoped to acquire in Egypt was to profit from the wisdom, the experience, and the spirit of reform which Muḥammad 'Abduh represented in that country." Thus wrote Rashīd Ridā' in his *Tārīkh*.

Rashīd Ridā' contacted Muḥammad '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-Manār* which aimed at arousing the desire for education and reforming text-books and teaching methods, besides denouncing the innovations which had been introduced in religious beliefs and criticizing customs and practices foreign to the spirit of Islam.

Following the Master, Rashīd Ridā' 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-Manār* 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 Imām.

In following the path traced by Muḥammad 'Abduh, Rashīd Ridā' was simply continuing the liberal modernism of his Egyptian Master. Nevertheless, because of a reaction against the growing European influence, Rashīd Ridā', according to Laoust, "became more and more conservative."

There are other things in which the disciple departs from the Master's path. Muḥammad '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 contested. Rashīd Ridā' 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 'Alī 'Abd al-Rāziq on the Caliphate and that of Ṭāḥa Husain's on pre-Islamic literature, Rashīd Ridā', without being fully aware of it, departs from the line of thought of the Master. In any case, the conservative modernism of Rashīd Ridā' has, at the present time, been superseded by a secular modernism of Western inspiration conforming to the ideas of Muḥammad 'Abduh.

3. *The Philosophical School: Muṣṭafa 'Abd al-Rāziq*.—Having graduated from al-Azhar in 1326/1908 at the age of twenty-three, Muṣṭafa 'Abd al-Rāziq continued his studies in France. He studied first at the Sorbonne, where, among other courses, he followed that of Emile Durkheim 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 Muḥammad '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-Rāziq himself gave a valuable course of lectures on Muḥammad 'Abduh.

When the Egyptian University was officially founded in 1344/1925, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Rāziq 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-Fārābi and ibn Sīna as in the theological speculations of *Kalām* and the principles of Muslim jurisprudence.

Besides his functions in the Universities of al-Azhar and Cairo, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Rāziq 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 (*Auqāf*), and in the Chamber of Deputies he was President of the Commission of *Auqāf* 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-Marāghī, as Rector of the University of al-Azhar. In this exceptional position of Shaikh al-Islām 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 Ḥijāz to study the faith at the sacred places of Islam.

Shaikh 'Abd al-Rāziq 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 prophets, 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-Fārābi 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.

Muṣṭafa 'Abd al-Rāziq 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 which 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 which 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. Muṣṭafa 'Abd al-Rāziq practised what he preached, recognizing wisdom in the constancy of conduct which guards against the instability of emotions. Muḥammad 'Abduh glimpsed these qualities in the young 'Abd al-Rāziq, whose faithfulness to his Master was to survive him. 'Abd al-Rāziq aroused in his pupils at the University the desire to learn more of the doctrine of Muḥammad 'Abduh, besides writing upon him and translating into French his *Risālat al-Tauḥīd*. Thus he sought to keep alive the spiritual flame kindled by the reformer, 'Abduh.

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## Chapter LXXVI

### RENAISSANCE IN TURKEY ZIA GÖKALP 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 liberation 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 transformation. 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 interpret phenomena in a very different way from that indicated by tradition. In these, however, Western European thinking served as a model. As this transformation 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. None the less, 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* which were the highest schools of learning in Turkey even in the eleventh/seventeenth century. Hājji 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 philosophical 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) which 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 Fénelon, 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 'ulamā' corps, Taḥsin 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-Ḥamīd'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. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī's *Refutation of the Materialists* did a great service in the suppression of these ideas under the Ḥamīdian regime. Presented personally by the author to 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, 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 Afghānī 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 Büchners 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 which 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 Ḥamīdian 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-Ḥamīdian 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-Ḥamīd'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 *dahrīyyūn*. The first philosophical review, *Yeni Felsefe Mecmuası*, began to appear at this time. This review was 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 philosophy represented by Kant, Hegel, Comte, Spencer, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and 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 Rıza 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 Ziya Gökalp. 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.

Gökalp'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, Gökalp 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, Gökalp's idealism

exercised tremendous influence over Turkish thinking. Part of this influence has been to the advantage of philosophy itself because Gökalp 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.

Gökalp'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 Gökalp's thinking or were direct continuations of some aspects of his analysis. Another contribution of Gökalp's personality to the Turkish mind was the road he prepared for closer contacts with Western philosophy.

As Zia Gökalp 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 Gökalp'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 favourable view of philosophy. It was either a heresy or an idle phantasy.

Zia Gökalp 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, psychology, and sociology were introduced in the syllabi for undergraduates. While teachers for these courses were sent to study in European universities, a department 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 philosophies, courses were given in systematic philosophy, metaphysics, logic, ethics, and aesthetics as branches of philosophical inquiry. Gökalp 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.

Gökalp'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 understanding 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. Gökalp'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 which, 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 which 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 which 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.

Gökalp's contribution in improving this situation was great. He attached so much importance to the question of uniformity in scientific and philosophical 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.

Gökalp'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 Şekip Tunç, 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 philosophical writing; he showed skill both in translation and in original composition. In this he was perhaps influenced by his major inspirer, Henri Bergson. Tunç's scope of philosophical interest was much wider than that of Gökalp. He avoided the conceptual and doctrinal rigidity of Gökalp. 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 progressive leanings to supporting fascist anti-intellectualism. The saddest manifestation of this was Tunç'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 Gökalp in cultivating philosophy was Mehmed Izzet. If Tunç's was an anti-intellectualistic reaction to Gökalp, Izzet's was a sceptic's reaction. Much better organized, more subtle, and far more systematically 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 Tunç and Izzet were expressions of an attempt to break with Gökalp'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 Gökalp'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 Gökalp, it penetrated into the several facets of the Turkish mind and provided another diffused form of escape from Gökalp's influence.

All of these were expressions of a challenge to philosophy by the radical reforms carried out under Kemāl Atātürk. All these were mere experiments in discovering new values compatible with those which 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 philosophical 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 philosophical 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 internationally 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 philosophy. The University of Istanbul, in particular, can boast of having a presentable 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 philosophical 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 philosophers of the past; (d) philosophical dictionaries; and (e) text-books on philosophical 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.

I. *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 *taṣawwuf* which was cultivated outside the *madrasahs*. Ibn al-'Arabī and Rūmi were the thinkers having the greatest influence on the educated classes. See Katib Chelebi (Ḥājjī Khalifah), *Mizān al-Ḥaqq fi Ikhtiyār al-Aḥaqq*, translated by G. L. Lewis as *The Balance of Truth*, London, 1957; A. Adnan-Adivar, *Osmanlı Türklerinde İlim*, Istanbul, 1943, particularly pp. 105-06. There arose during the eleventh/seventeenth century a strong fundamentalist opposition to philosophy and mysticism both of which were branded as *ilhād*. 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.

II. *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 Tāhir Münif (later Pāḡha). This contained selections from the writings of Voltaire, Fénélon, and Fontenelle. During the *Tanzimāt* period (1838-1916), the Turkish thinkers were interested mostly in the ideas of John Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Diderot, d'Holbach, Helvétius, and Cabanis. The influence of materialism, especially that of Ludwig Büchner, was represented by Taḡsin who was the first director of the *Dār al-Funūn* and a friend of Jamāl al-Din Afghāni. The philosophy of natural rights and social contract was reflected in the writings of Namık Kemāl. See Şerif Hulūsi, "Namık Kemāl 'in Eserleri," in *Namık Kemāl Hakkında*, Istanbul, 1942, pp. 395-401; M. Kaplan, *Namık Kemāl*, Istanbul, 1948, p. 31; C. O. Tütengil, *Montesquieu 'nun Siyasi ve İktisadi Fikirleri*, Istanbul, 1956, Chap. IV, pp. 53-73; Kamiran Birand, "18 inci Asır Fransız Tefekkürü ve Namık Kemāl," in *Felsefe Arkivi*, Istanbul, 1945, Vol. I, No. 1, pp. 90-140; and *Aydınlanma Devri Devlet Felsefesinin Tanzimata Tesirleri*, Ankara, 1955.

III. *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 Afghāni and Ahmed Midhat, the famous publicists of the period, dedicated to the refutation of materialistic systems. Despite this, naturalistic 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 *Meşrutiyet* (Constitutional) period. No monographic study is available about this period. In general, see H. Z. Ülken, "Tanzimattan Sonra Fikir Hareketleri," in *Tanzimāt*, Istanbul, 1940, pp. 757-75.

IV. *The Constitutional Period*.—After 1908, various philosophical tendencies came to light. Two philosophico-sociological reviews were published: *Yeni Felsefe*

*Mecmuası*, Salonika, and *Ulûm-u İctimaiye ve İktisadiye Mecmuası*, 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. Ülken, "Bizde Fikir Cereyanları," in *Felsefe ve İctimaiyat Mecmuası*, Istanbul, 1927, Vol. I, No. 4, pp. 311-14; "Türkiyede Positivizm Temayülü," in *İnsân*, Istanbul, 1939, No. 11, pp. 849-53; "Türkiyede İdealizm Temayülü," *ibid.*, Istanbul, 1939, No. 12, pp. 929-38; C. O. Tütengil, *Prens Sabahaddin*, Istanbul, 1954. The works produced by writers and translators such as Baha Tevfik, Ahmed Nebil, Haydar Rifat, Subhi Edhem, Muşafa Şubhi, Edhem Necdet, and others were not original but transmitted mostly Western philosophical ideas. The idealistic trend was ushered in by Zia Gökalp; see his *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization*, translated and edited by N. Berkes, London and New York, 1959, pp. 46ff.

V. *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 İctimaiyat Mecmuası*, Istanbul, 1927-1930, edited by Mehmed Servet; *Felsefe Yıllığı*, Istanbul, 1931-1932, edited by H. Z. Ülken; *Is*, Istanbul, 1934, edited by F. Findikoğlu; *Edebiyat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, 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 Şekip, Tunç, "Türk İnkilâbının Felsefeye Tesiri," in *Hayât*, Ankara, 1927, No. 9, pp. 164-65; *Memleketimizde Felsefenin İnkişafı İçin Lâzım Gelen Şartlar*, Ankara, 1938; Mehmed İzzet, "Dar-ul-Fununda Felsefe Dersleri," in *Edebiyat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, Istanbul, 1925, Vol. IV, No. 2, pp. 121-32; Mehmed Servet, "Fikir Hayatımızda Bir Muhasebe," in *Hayât*, Ankara, 1929, Vol. V, Nos. 116-31—this is the best survey of the trends before 1929; H. Z. Ülken, "Türk Felsefe Dilinin Gelişmesi," in *Felsefe Tercüme Dergisi*, Vol. I, 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 İzzet, *Milliyet Nazariyeleri ve Milli Hayat*, Istanbul, 1925; "Büyük İnsanlar ve Mısır Hayatı," in *Edebiyat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, Istanbul, 1923, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 51-61, Nos. 2-3, pp. 91-102; Mustafa Şekip (Tunç), *Terakki Fikrinin Menşe ve Tekâmülü*, Istanbul, 1928; *Bir Din Felsefesine Doğru*, Istanbul, 1959; Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Aşk Ahlakı*, 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-Adıvar, *Tarih Boyunca İlim ve Din*, 2 Vols., Istanbul, 1944; Macit Gökberk, *Kant ile Herder'in Tarih Anlyışları*, Istanbul, 1948; Kâmiran Birand, *Dilthey ve Rickert'te Manevi İlimlerin Temellendi-rilmesi*, Ankara, 1954; Nermi Uygur, *Edmund Husserl'de Başkasının Ben'i Problemi*, Istanbul, 1958.



RENAISSANCE IN IRAN  
GENERAL

In early thirteenth/nineteenth century, Iran presented a gloomy picture of political and social decline. After the collapse of the Şafawid power (907/1501-1135/1722) it was never able to regain its old glory. The military achievements and political consolidation under Nādir Shāh (1149/1736-1160/1747) were short-lived, and the admirable efforts of Karīm Khān 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 Āqa Muḥammad Qājār, 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 Şafawids 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 which ended in the treaties of Gulistān 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 which at times deprived the country of nearly all its resources.<sup>1</sup>

The tale of internal administration is no less sombre. The Shāh of Iran was absolute and his decisions were unquestionable. "The taxes were collected,

<sup>1</sup> L. P. Elwell-Sutton, *Modern Iran*, p. 60.



concessions were granted, and presents were offered, all for the benefit of the Shāh and his courtiers, whose extravagance kept Persia poor."<sup>2</sup> Power was abused in strange ways as Court decisions were sold and robbers were licensed.<sup>3</sup> Public offices were monopolized by a host of princes—Fateh 'Ali Shāh (1212/1797–1250/1834) alone had one hundred and fifty-nine children<sup>4</sup>—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 'Abbās Mirza, the eldest son of Fateh 'Ali Shāh, and Mirza Taqi Khān Amīr-i Kabīr or Amīr-i Nizām, the Prime Minister of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh (1265/1848–1314/1896). Prince 'Abbās Mirza, whom Watson describes as "the noblest of the Qajar race,"<sup>5</sup> 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 Khān Amīr-i Kabīr was an extraordinary 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.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps his greatest reform was the foundation of the *Dār al-Funūn* 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

<sup>2</sup> P. Sykes, *A History of Persia*, Vol. II, p. 382.

<sup>3</sup> V. Sheean, *The New Persia*, p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> R. G. Watson, *A History of Persia*, p. 269.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Some authors have paid great tributes to him: see E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, Vol. IV, p. 152; Robert Curzon, *Armenia*, p. 55; R. G. Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 264; Bahār, *Sabk Shīnāsi*, Vol. III, p. 401.

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 Shāh, who had once remarked that an ideal Persian was one who did not know whether Brussels was a city or a cabbage.<sup>7</sup> In 1289/1872, a school of languages known as *Maktab-i Mashīriyeh* was opened under the supervision of Muḥammad Ḥasan Khān I'timād al-Sultāneh. 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 Isfahān in 1301/1883 and 1304/1886 respectively. The first school for girls was opened in Chāltas near Kirmān in 1315/1897. The next year a society was founded for the express purpose of co-ordinating 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 Isfahān 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,

<sup>7</sup> V. Sheean, *op. cit.*, p. 10.



Firdausi's *Shāhnāmeḥ*, 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 Šāleh Shīrāzi<sup>8</sup> who was, incidentally, a member of the first batch of students sent to England in 1225/1810. The next newspaper *Rūznūmeḥ-i Waqāyi'i Ittiḥāqīyah* 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 short-sighted 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 *Qānūn*, founded in London in 1307/1889,<sup>9</sup> the *Hikmat*, printed in Cairo in 1310/1892, and the *Habl al-Matīn*, 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 books<sup>10</sup> and commanded an ardent readership. By the turn of the century the tone of the Iranian newspapers had grown more bitter, even fierce. Some of these were suppressed. One of the editors of the *Šūr-i Isrāfīl*, Mirza Jahāngir Khān Shīrāzi, 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 Nāmeḥ* 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 Sulṭāniyeh. 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

<sup>8</sup> Bahār, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 344.

<sup>9</sup> This paper was started by Mirza Malkom Khān 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.

<sup>10</sup> E. G. Browne, *The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia*, p. 17.



the last century Iran had built up a system of telegraphic communications which connected most of her important towns.<sup>11</sup>

In the later half of the thirteenth/nineteenth century, Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh 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 which had far-reaching political and economic consequences. In the words of William Haas, "Teheran became a meeting place for concession hunters of European nations. Many were adventurers and crooks. . . ."<sup>12</sup> This created a sense of frustration not only in the people but also in the Shāh 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 concessions 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 Jamāl al-Dīn, popularly known as Afghāni.<sup>13</sup> 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 Muḥammad 'Abduh were the direct outcomes of his

<sup>11</sup> 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 telegraph played a substantial part in indirectly enlightening the Iranian mind.

<sup>12</sup> W. S. Haas, *Iran*, p. 35.

<sup>13</sup> The Iranian writers like Mirza Luṭf Allah, the author of *Sharḥ-i Hāl-o Athār-i Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn*, and Mirza Şifāt Allah, the editor of *Maqālat-i Jamāliyyah*, claim Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn, who was born at Asadābād in 1254/1838, to be of Iranian origin. Mirza Luṭf Allah describes himself as the son of the Sayyid's sister.

creative genius. Most of the future leaders of the Iranian revolution in its early phase were inspired by him. Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn'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 *Diā' al-Khāfiqain* with the help of Mirza Malkom Khān. In his newspaper Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn wrote his historic letter to the Iranian 'ulamā'. In this letter he appealed to the divines to rise to a man to save the independence of their country. The effect was miraculous. The famous tobacco riots followed and shook royal absolutism. The real success of this revolutionary figure lay in winning over the 'ulamā' 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.

Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh was assassinated in 1313/1896 by Mirza Reza Kirmāni and was succeeded by Muẓaffar al-Dīn Shāh (1313/1896–1324/1906). At this time Iran presented a sordid picture of heartless exploitation by Western nations. The new Shāh 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 Shāh'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 which drove people to organize an anti-government movement in the country. A secret society was formed by the name of Iṣlāh Ṭalabān<sup>14</sup> or "the reformists" under the leadership of Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā'i, which rendered considerable service to the cause of freedom. Along with Ṭabāṭabā'i the other most prominent religious leader was Sayyid 'Abd Allah Bahbahāni.<sup>15</sup> The orators like Malik al-Mutakallimīn and Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Wā'iẓ Iṣfahāni tried to awaken people by fiery speeches.<sup>16</sup> At this time an originally minor incident took place which 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

<sup>14</sup> 'Abd Allah Rāzi, *Tārīkh-i Muṣaṣṣal-i Irān*, p. 532.

<sup>15</sup> Ḥabīb Allah Mukhtāri, *Tārīkh-i Bidāri-i Irān*, pp. 39–40.

<sup>16</sup> Both of them lost their lives after the bombardment of the Parliament in 1326/1908; see 'Abd Allah Rāzi, *op. cit.*, p. 521.



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-Shāh. The same night the 'ulamā' decided to lodge the customary form of protest, that is, to take "bast" in the sanctuary of Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīm 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 Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā'i who had prevailed upon the 'ulamā' to start immediately the movement which, according to an earlier decision, was to be launched three months hence.<sup>17</sup>

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 Shāh agreed to dismiss the Governor of Teheran as well as the Belgian head of the Customs<sup>18</sup> Department and to institute the 'Adālat Khāneh 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 Fārs and Khurāsān and the consequent riot at Meshed and the closing down of the bazaar at Shirāz 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 Āqa Ṭabāṭabā'i in one of his public speeches.<sup>19</sup> 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 kilograms of wheat per head.<sup>19</sup> Such inhuman conditions drove the people to desperation. It was the arrest of one of the divines, viz., Shaikh Muḥammad Wā'iz, and the consequent mass agitation and shooting by the army which led some 'ulama' and merchants to take refuge in the Jāmi' Masjid and to demand the dismissal of the Governor of Teheran. Not content with this form of protest, the 'ulamā' led a mass migration movement known as *hijrat-i kubra* to the holy city of Qūm, 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.

<sup>17</sup> 'Abd Allah Rāzi, *op. cit.*, p. 509.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> 'Abd Allah Rāzi, *op. cit.*, p. 512.



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 Shāh had to concede to the irresistible popular demand. The Governor had to go. The '*ulamā*' made a triumphant return from Qūm and on Jamādi al-Thāni 14, 1324/August 5, 1906, the Shāh 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 Shāh inaugurated the *Majlis* (Parliament) in Sha'bān/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.<sup>20</sup> A nation which 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. Muẓaffar al-Dīn Shāh died within five months of the granting of the constitution and his successor Muḥammad 'Alī Shāh, 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 Ādharbaijān and Isfahān, and ultimately the Bakhtiyāri tribes from Isfahān marched in Teheran under the leadership of Sardār-i As'ad. This victory in Jamādi al-Thāni 1327/July 1909 sealed the fate of Muḥammad 'Alī Shāh who had to abdicate in favour of his twelve-year old son Aḥmad Shāh, destined to be the last of the Qājārs, while he himself took refuge at Odessa in Russia. He struggled to stage a come-back in 1329/1911, but failed.

Muḥammad 'Alī Shāh's abdication brought an end to what is known as *Istibdād-i Ṣaghīr* 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

<sup>20</sup> E. Groseclose, *Introduction to Iran*, p. 61.

their husbands and sons if they yielded to pressure and compromised with the national honour,<sup>21</sup> 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 international events. It was occupied by the Russians in the north and the British in the south. *Ādharbaijān* had to suffer the havoc of war on a large scale.<sup>22</sup>

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 *Wuthūq 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 a strong feeling in foreign countries and even amongst the British people, especially in view of the scandalous circumstances in which it had been negotiated.<sup>23</sup> The world opinion stirred up against the British deal, the withdrawal 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 Khān*, a colonel in the Cossak Brigade,<sup>24</sup> appeared on the scene. In collaboration with *Sayyid Qiā' al-Dīn Ṭabāṭabā'i*, editor of the Teheran newspaper *Ra'd*, *Reza Khān*, staged a *coup d'état* on

<sup>21</sup> 'Abd Allah Rāzi, *op. cit.*, p. 532.

<sup>22</sup> "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).

<sup>23</sup> "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).

<sup>24</sup> "It had been created in 1296/1878 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).



April 21, 1921. He arrested members of the Cabinet and formed a new Government of which Sayyid Ḍiā' al-Dīn was selected the Prime Minister. Reza Khān 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 which it had so long resisted. To provide an element of dramatic surprise the new Iranian Government signed on the same day a pact of friendship with Soviet Russia, by which the Soviet Government revoked all the concessions which 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 abolished."<sup>25</sup> 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 which 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 Gilān, 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 Khān 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 Sawād Kūh in the Caspian province of Māzandarān. He inherited the military profession from his father, Major 'Abbās 'Ali Khān, 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 Ḍiā' al-Dīn, 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 Khān, who eventually stepped into the office of the Prime Minister in 1342/1923. Shortly afterwards Ahmad Shāh, who

<sup>25</sup> *Modern Iran*, p. 69.



was destined to be the last Qājār ruler, left for France never to come back to his country.

Immediately after the coup, Reza Khān 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 Kūchik Khān, who had established an independent republic in Gilān, and defeated him in 1340/1921. In 1342/1923 he liquidated the power of the Kurd leader Ismā'il Āqa Simitqo, who was planning to establish himself in Ādharbaijān and had become dangerously strong for the central government. Next, he turned his attention to Shaikh Khaza'l of Mohammereh, who posed the greatest threat in the oil-rich region of the south-west. Very soon he was able to bring the Shaikh into complete submission. Different turbulent tribes including the Bakhtiyāris 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 Sardār-i Sipāh, as Reza Khān 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 Khān, 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 Shāh 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 '*ulamā*' in Turkey. The apprehension that in a republic they would fare no better led them to oppose the new demand. In April 1924, Reza Khān forbade any discussion on the republican form of government.<sup>26</sup> In February 1925, he was officially given dictatorial powers; on October 31, Ahmad Shāh was deposed and on December 12 Reza Shāh was chosen the Shāh of Iran by a majority vote in the Parliament. On April 25, 1926, the coronation of the new Shāh took place amidst scenes of pomp and festivity. He now became the founder of the new royal dynasty of the Pahlawis.

<sup>26</sup> 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).

The word "Pahlawi" has great historical associations. It is not only the name of the language which was spoken in western Iran during the Sāssānian period, as has been pointed out by so many writers, but it is also the name of the brave tribe known as the Parthians,<sup>27</sup> 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 Shāh'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 which 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 which 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 Shāh and the memory of the philosophers ibn Sīna and Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī and the poet Rūdaki has been similarly honoured in recent years. A society known as the "Anjuman-i Āthār-i Milli"<sup>28</sup> 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 Sīna, Khayyām, 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 Hāfiz Avenue, Sa'di 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

<sup>27</sup> 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.

<sup>28</sup> *Rāhnumā-i Irān*, pp. 85-87.

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 Shāh'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 Shāh 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.<sup>29</sup> These schools generally branch off into liberal arts and sciences after three years. There is a number of technical, vocational, industrial, agricultural, medical, and other schools which 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.<sup>30</sup> The stress now is on village schools and on manual and technical training.<sup>31</sup>

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

<sup>29</sup> *Modern Iran*, p. 136.

<sup>30</sup> D. N. Wilber, *Iran, Past and Present*, p. 204.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.



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.<sup>32</sup>

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 Shāh 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, Isfahān, Shirāz, 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 painting, 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

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

there is 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 is 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.<sup>33</sup> 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 which is the dream of every educated citizen.

In the thirteenth/nineteenth century few facilities existed for the maintenance 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 is 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 Shāh, inspired by the example set by Mustafa Kemāl, whom he looked upon as his model and whom he visited in 1353/1934, introduced far-reaching social changes. The Shāh 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 Shāh provided a dramatic touch to his policy of emancipating women when, accompanied by the Queen and his

<sup>33</sup> 'Abd Allah Rāzi, *op. cit.*, p. 365.



two grown-up daughters, all the three unveiled, he 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 Shāh 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 *muta'h* (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 Shāh 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 *chādūr* (veil).<sup>34</sup> 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, Kamāli 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 Shāh. 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

<sup>34</sup> A veil or mantle used by Iranian women to cover their body.



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 which 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 degeneration, 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 1375/1955<sup>35</sup> 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 which 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

<sup>35</sup> Naficy, *A General Survey of the Existing Situation in Persian Literature*, p. 2.

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 Hādi Sabziwāri 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 which reflect the cavalcade of Iranian history and culture. These include the archaeological and ethnographical museums and the Gulistān 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 movements and of the institution of new sciences and philosophy. The present

conflict between the old and the new, the traditional and the modern, 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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Chapter LXXVIII

RENAISSANCE IN IRAN (Continued)  
HĀJI MULLA HĀDI SABZIWARĪ

A

LIFE AND WORKS

After the death of Mulla Ṣadra, the school established by him found its most famous interpreter and expositor in Hāji Mulla Hādi Sabziwāri who was the greatest of the Hākims of the Qājār period in Persia. After a period of turmoil caused by the Afghān invasion, in which the spiritual as well as the political life of Persia was temporarily disturbed, traditional learning became once again established under the Qājārs, and in the hands of Hāji Mulla Hādi and his students the wisdom of Mulla Ṣadra began once again to flourish through the Shī'ah world. This sage from Sabziwār gained so much fame that soon he became endowed with the simple title of Hāji by which he is still known in the traditional *madrasahs*,<sup>1</sup> and his *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah* became the most widely used book on *Hikmat* in Persia and has remained so until today.

Hāji Mulla Hādi was born in 1212/1797-98 at Sabziwār in Khurāsān, a city well known for its Sufis and also for Shī'ah tendencies even before the Ṣafawid period, where he completed his early education in Arabic grammar and language.<sup>2</sup> At the age of ten he went to Māshed 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

<sup>1</sup> 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 Sīna being called *Shaikh*; Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Khawājah*; Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmi, *Mulla*; ibn 'Arabi, *Shaikh al-Akbar*; and Mulla Ṣadra, *Akhūnd*. In view of these designations it is easy to see what an exalted position has been accorded to Hāji in Persia.

<sup>2</sup> There is an account of the life of Hāji by himself on which we have drawn much for our information. See M. Mudarrisi *Chahārdihi*, *Tārīkh-i Falāsifih-i Islam*, 'Ilmi Press, Teheran, 1336-37 Solar, Vol. II, pp. 131ff.; and also by the same author *Life and Philosophy of Hāji Mulla Hādi Sabziwāri*, Ṭahūri Bookshop, Teheran, 1955. The story of the life of Hāji as related by his son as well as a summary of some of Hāji'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 *Qisaṣ al-'Ulamā'*, *Maṭla' al-Shams*, and *Riyād al-'Ārifīn*. When Gobineau visited Persia, Hāji 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 Hāji in A. M. A. Shushtery, *Outlines of Islamic Culture*, Bangalore, 1938, Vol. II, pp. 452-54; and in M. Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, Luzac & Co., London, 1908, pp. 175ff.

that the Hāji left Meshed as well and journeyed to Iṣpahān, as Mulla Ṣadra had done two hundred and fifty years before him, to meet the greatest authorities of the day in *Hikmat*. Iṣpahān in that period was still the major centre of learning, especially in *Hikmat*. Hāji spent eight years in this city studying under Mulla Ismā'il Iṣpahāni and Mulla 'Ali Nūri both of whom were the leading authorities in the school of Ākhūnd.

Hāji Mulla Hādi, having completed his formal education, left Iṣpahān once again for *Khurāsān* 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 Kirmān where he married and then settled down in Sabziwār 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 Sabziwār to benefit from his personal contact and to attend his classes. Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh in his visit to Meshed in 1274/1857-58 came specially to the city of Hāji in order to meet him in person. In Sabziwār, away from the turmoil of the capital, Hāji spent forty years in teaching, writing, and training disciples, of whom over a thousand completed the course on *Hikmat* under his direction.

Hāji's life was extremely simple and his spirituality resembled more that of a Sufi master than just of a learned Hākim. 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.<sup>3</sup> He was not only called the "Plato of his time" and the "seal of the Hukamā'" (*khatam al-Hukamā'*), 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, Hāji 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 Shī'ah world.

Unlike Mulla Ṣadra all of whose writings with one exception were in Arabic, Hāji wrote in Persian as well as in Arabic. Moreover, he composed a great deal of poetry collected in his *Dīwān* which consists of poems in Persian of gnostic inspiration and poems in Arabic on *Hikmat* and logic. The writings of Hāji, of which a complete list is available, are as follows: *Al-La'ālī*, Arabic poem on logic; *Ghurar al-Farā'id* or the *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah*, Arabic poem with commentary on *Hikmat*; *Dīwān* in Persian written under the pen name Asrār; commentary upon the prayer *Du'ā'-i Kabīr*;<sup>4</sup> commentary

<sup>3</sup> Among his special disciples one may name Sulṭān 'Ali Shāh Gunābādi who later became the founder of the Gunābādi brotherhood of Sufis which is one of the most widely expanded brotherhoods in Persia today. For the stages through which Hāji's students had to pass before being able to participate in his courses on *Hikmat*, see E. G. Browne, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-48.

<sup>4</sup> There are many prayers composed by the various Shī'ah Imāms, especially the fourth Imām Zain al-'Ābidīn, like the *Du'ā'-i Kubra*, *Miṣbāḥ*, and the *Ṣahīfah-i*



upon the prayer *Du'ā-i Ṣabāḥ*; *Asrār al-Ḥikam*, written at the request of Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh, on *Ḥikmat*; commentaries upon the *Asfār*, the *Mafātīḥ al-Gḥaib*, *al-Mabdā' w-al-Ma'ād*, and *al-Shawāhid al-Rubūbiyyah* of Mulla Ṣadra; glosses upon the commentary of Suyūṭi upon the *Alfiyyah* of ibn Mālik, on grammar; commentary upon the *Mathnawi* of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmi; commentary upon the *Nibrās*, on the mysteries of worship; commentary upon the divine names; glosses upon the *Sharḥ-i Tajrīd* of Lāhījī; *Rāḥ Qarāḥ* and *Rahīq* in rhetoric; *Hidāyat al-Ṭālibīn*, as yet an unpublished treatise in Persian on prophethood and the imāmate; questions and answers regarding gnosis; and a treatise on the debate between Mulla Muḥsin Faiḍ and Shaikh Ahmad Aḥsā'i.<sup>5</sup>

Of these writings the most famous is the *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah*, which, along with the *Asfār* of Mulla Ṣadra, the *Shifā'* of ibn Sīna, and the *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt* of Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī, is the basic text on *Ḥikmat*. This work consists of a series of poems on the essential questions of *Ḥikmat* composed in 1239/1823 on which Hāji himself wrote a commentary along with glosses in 1260/1844. The book contains a complete summary of *Ḥikmat* 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 Muḥammad Hīdājī and the late Mīrza Mehdi Āshtiyāni as well as that of Muḥammad Taqī Āmuli whose commentary called the *Durar al-Fawā'id* is perhaps the most comprehensive of all. The other writings of Hāji, especially the *Asrār al-Ḥikam* which is of special interest because, as Hāji himself writes in the introduction, it is a book concerned with the *Ḥikmat* derived from the Islamic revelation (*ḥikmat-i imāni*) and not just with Greek philosophy (*ḥikmat-i yūnāni*), and the commentary upon the *Mathnawi* are also of much importance, but the fame of Hāji is due primarily to his *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah*.

## B

### SOURCES OF HĀJĪ'S DOCTRINES AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HIS APPROACH

Hāji cannot be considered to be the founder of a new school; rather, he expanded and clarified the teachings of Mulla Ṣadra without departing from the basic features of Ākhūnd's doctrines. The sources of Hāji's writings are, therefore, the same as those enumerated in our study of Mulla Ṣadra, viz., gnostic doctrines drawn mostly from the teachings of ibn 'Arabi, the teachings of the Shī'ah Imāms, *ishrāqi* theosophy, and Peripatetic philosophy.

*Sajjādīyyah* (Sajjād being the title of the fourth Imām) which are read and chanted throughout the year, especially during Ramaḍān, 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 Ḥukamā' and gnostics, who, like Hāji, have drawn out their inner meaning by the light of their own inspiration.

See M. Mudarrisi *Chahārdihī*, *op. cit.*, pp. 63ff.



In his writings the sage from Sabziwār drew mostly on the *Asfār* of Mulla Ṣadra, the *Qabasāt* of Mir Dāmād, the commentary upon the *Hikmat al-Ishrāq* of Suhrawardi by Qutb al-Dīn Shīrāzi, the *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt* of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, and the *Shawāriq* of Lāhijī. In general, Hāji 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 Ṣadra, was his inner *imām* 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 Ākhūnd and, secondly, Ākhūnd's teachers and students some of whom have already been mentioned.<sup>6</sup>

Hāji, following the path trod by Mulla Ṣadra, sought to combine gnosis, philosophy, and formal revelation; throughout his writings these three are present in a harmonious blend. He differed from Ākhūnd in that he was able to expound the gnostic elements of his doctrines much more explicitly than Ākhūnd 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 Qājārs and the 'ulamā'; the Qājārs were indeed not so opposed to Sufism and *Hikmat* as the Ṣafawids 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, Hāji wrote openly on Sufism and appears more as a Sufi well versed in philosophy and theosophy than a Ḥakīm interested in gnostic doctrines. He was, like Mulla Ṣadra, among the few sages who were masters of both esoteric and exoteric doctrines, and of philosophy and gnosis.<sup>7</sup>

## C

### TEACHINGS

As already mentioned, Hāji's doctrines are in reality those of Mulla Ṣadrā's condensed and systematized into a more orderly form. Hāji 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 Hāji criticizes his master: first, on the nature of knowledge which in some of his writings Ākhūnd considers a quality of the

<sup>6</sup> It is difficult to understand Iqbāl's statement made in his *Development of Metaphysics in Persia* that with Sabziwāri Persian thought went back to pure Platonism and abandoned the Neo-Platonic theory of emanation. Actually, Hāji, like other Muslim Ḥakīms 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 Hāji's doctrines as he himself was for nearly all the later Persian Ḥakīms after Suhrawardi, but this is not to deny Hāji's affinity to the doctrines of Plotinus and his commentators, especially concerning the hierarchy of the intelligences.

<sup>7</sup> See the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtūl.

human soul while Hāji considers it to belong to its essence, like Being itself, above all the Aristotelian categories such as quality, quantity, etc.: and secondly, on Mulla Ṣadrā's doctrine of the union of the intellect and the intelligible which Hāji accepts, criticizing, however, his method of demonstrating its validity. Otherwise, the principles of the teachings of Hāji in *Hikmat* are already to be found in the writings of Ākhūnd.

It must not be thought, however, that Hāji Mulla Hādi simply repeated the teachings of his predecessor verbatim. It is enough to glance at the voluminous writings of Mulla Ṣadra, in which one would surely be lost without a capable guide, and compare them with the precise form of *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah* to see what service Hāji rendered to *Hikmat* in general and to Mulla Ṣadrā's school in particular. Hāji prepared the way for the study of Mulla Ṣadra, and his writings may be considered to be an excellent introduction to the doctrines of his master.

The *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah* depicts a complete cycle of *Hikmat*, containing in summary form all the basic elements of Mulla Ṣadrā's teachings on the subject. In discussing its contents, therefore, one becomes better acquainted with Mulla Ṣadra as well as with Hāji himself, and one gains a glimpse of traditional philosophy as it is taught in the *Shī'ah madrasahs* today.

The *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah*, 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 which is in a sense the basis of the whole work and is on general principles (*al-umūr al-'āmmah*) 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 substance and accidents, and the third, which is called *al-ilāhiyāt bi al-ma'āni al-akhaṣṣ*, of the divine essence, the divine qualities and attributes, and the divine acts. The fourth book contains a summary discussion of natural philosophy (*tabī'iyyāt*)—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 happenings, 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 *Kitāb al-Luma'* of abu Naṣr al-Sarrāj.

Hāji 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 (*wujūd 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.<sup>8</sup> 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 Hāji discusses is that it is self-evident and undefinable. There is no concept more evident than Being, because all things, by virtue of their existence, are drowned in the ocean of Being.<sup>9</sup> 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 concept 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 principal 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 Hākims. The Peripatetics gave priority to existence or Being over the quiddities, considering each being to be in essence different and distinct from other beings. Although Suhrawardi Maqtūl never speaks of the principiality of the quiddities as understood by the later Hākims, he can be interpreted to consider existence to have no reality independent of the quiddities. It was Mir Dāmād who re-examined this whole question and reached the conclusion that either the quiddities or existence would have to be principal, and divided the philosophers before him into the followers either of the principiality of existence or Being (*iṣālat-i wujūd*), or of the principiality of the quiddities (*iṣālat-i māhīyyah*) while he himself sided with the latter group.<sup>10</sup> Mulla Ṣadra in turn accepted his teacher's classification but sided with the followers of the principiality of existence. Hāji, likewise, follows Akhūnd in accepting the principiality of Being which he considers to be the source of all effects partaking of gradations.

Another question which arises concerning the concept of Being is whether It is just a verbal expression shared by particular beings or a reality which particular beings have in common. It is known that the Ash'arites considered

<sup>8</sup> The relation of particular beings to extended being is like that of knots to the chord in which they are tied. See *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah*, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1298/1880, section on *Ilāhīyāt*, pp. 1ff.; and M. R. Ṣaliḥi Kirmāni, *Wujūd az Naẓar-i Falāsifah-i Islām*, Pirūz Press, Qum, 1336/1917, pp. 55ff.

<sup>9</sup> See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Polarisation of Being," *Pakistan Philosophical Journal*, Vol. III, No. 2, Oct. 1959, pp. 8-13.

<sup>10</sup> We can, therefore, justly say that this issue as understood by the later Hākims is one of the distinguishing features of *Hikmat* in the Ṣafawid 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 Hākims.



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. Hāji, like the other Hākims, 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.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup>

Another point on which Hāji criticizes the Ash'arites is that of the existence of the images of things in the mind which is one of the important aspects of his doctrines. The Ash'arites 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. Hāji 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 which, although deprived of the power which makes fire burn and give off heat, is nevertheless a being.<sup>13</sup>

Reality, then, is a unity comprising stages or grades of intensity<sup>14</sup> the

<sup>11</sup> The whole discussion concerning Being occupies the first section of the *Ilāhiyāt* of *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah*, pp. 1-131.

<sup>12</sup> The theologians (*Mutikallimūn*) believed that each creature in the objective world is a quiddity including the divine essence which is an unknowable quiddity. Although this view is diametrically opposed to the view of the Hākims, in certain passages Hāji 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.

<sup>13</sup> For this view Hāji is indebted partly to Mulla Ṣadra and partly to Jalāl al-Dīn Dawwāni.

<sup>14</sup> In his commentary upon the *Mathnawi*, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1285/1868, p. 8, Hāji names these stages as the divine essence or ipseity; its first determination; the archetypes (*al-a'yān al-thābitah*); the world of the spirits (*arwāḥ*); the world of inverted forms or similitudes (*amthāl*); the world of bodies (*ajsām*); and, finally, the stage which is the summation of all those before it, i.e., the stage of the perfect man (*al-insān al-kāmil*). In other places Hāji considers the seven stages of universal existence to be the divine essence which 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.

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 (*tūli*) 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. Ḥāji 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 (*'uqūl*), and if they are free but have need of matter to become actualized, they are the souls (*nufūs*). And in the world of bodies, if the quiddities possess a subtle form of matter, they belong to the world of inverted forms (*'ālam al-mithāl*), 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, Ḥāji turns to a study of substance and accidents.<sup>15</sup> 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 (*kaiḥ*) which is closely connected with that of knowledge. Dawwāni, the ninth/fifteenth-century philosopher and jurist, had considered knowledge (*'ilm*) to be in essence of the category of the known (*ma'lūm*) and in accident of the category of the quality of the soul. Mulla Ṣadra, on the contrary, believed that knowledge belongs in essence to the category of quality and in accident to the that of the known. Ḥāji 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.<sup>16</sup>

The third chapter of the *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah* concerns theodicy, i. e., what

<sup>15</sup> *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah*, pp. 131-40.

<sup>16</sup> Mulla 'Ali Zunūzi, a contemporary of the sage of Sabziwār, in his *Badāyi' al-Ḥikam* criticizes Ḥāji's view and defends Mulla Ṣadra against his criticism. The view of Mulla Ṣadra as mentioned above appears in some of his works, while in others he also considers knowledge to be, like Being, above the categories.



pertains to the Divine Being, His names, attributes, and acts.<sup>17</sup> Hāji, 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 Qur'ān, and interprets each following the tradition of the Hākims and Sufis before him. Of special interest is his account of the epithet "Knower" (*al-'Alīm*) in which Hāji 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.<sup>18</sup>

The knowledge of God consists of knowledge of beings at several stages which Hāji enumerates as follows:<sup>19</sup> *'ilm-i 'anāni*, 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;<sup>20</sup> *'ilm-i lauḥi*, 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 qadā'i*, 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, Hāji turns to His acts<sup>21</sup> 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,<sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah*, pp. 140–51.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157. M. T. Āmuli, *Durar al-Fawā'id*, Muṣṭafawi Press, Teheran, Vol. I, pp. 480ff. It is in this discussion that Hāji criticizes Mulla Ṣadra for having proved the identity of the knower and the known in the *Mashā'ir* through the argument of relation (*tadāyuf*) which Hāji considers to be insufficient.

<sup>19</sup> *Asrār al-Hikam*, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1286/1869, pp. 83ff.

<sup>20</sup> This knowledge, Hāji 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 Muḥammad (*al-ḥaqīqat al-Muḥammadiyyah*) and the first victorial light (*nūr al-qāhir*) of the Illuminationists.

<sup>21</sup> *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah*, pp. 183–84.

<sup>22</sup> Refer to the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtūl. This seven-fold hierarchy is essentially the same as mentioned above with only a change in terminology which occurs often among the Hākims.



In the chapter on natural philosophy, Hāji briefly outlines the physics of the Muslim Peripatetics as contained in detail in the *Shifā'* of ibn Sīna and other similar texts, and the Ptolemaic astronomy of epicycles as perfected by Muslim astronomers with the modifications made in it by Mulla Ṣadra and the other later Ḥakims. 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. Hāji 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 Ṣadra, identifies with the breath of the Compassionate (*naḥas al-Raḥmān*) 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, Hāji 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.<sup>23</sup> 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 which Hāji calls the *ispahbad* light<sup>24</sup> 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 which 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.<sup>25</sup>

As for the practical intellect, it too consists of four stages: *tajlīyyah*, which consists in following the divine Laws revealed through the prophets; *takhlīyyah*, purifying the soul of evil traits; *taḥlīyyah*, embellishing the soul with spiritual virtues, and, finally, *fanā'* or annihilation, which has the three degrees: annihilation in the divine acts, in the divine attributes, and finally in the divine essence.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah*, pp. 284ff.; *Asrār al-Ḥikam*, pp. 152ff. These faculties are also outlined in Iqbal, *op. cit.*, and Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

<sup>24</sup> For the meaning of this expression which is taken from the terminology of the Illuminationists, see the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtūl.

<sup>25</sup> See Iqbal, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-86.

<sup>26</sup> These stages have already been discussed in the chapter on Mulla Ṣadra whose terminology Hāji has adopted directly. See also A. M. A., Shushtary, *op. cit.*, p. 454.

In the chapter on prophecy<sup>27</sup> Hāji discusses the qualifications and characteristics which 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 (*'iṣmah*) in all his acts and deeds.

Sainthood (*wilāyah*) 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 *rasūl*, the latter being distinguished by the fact that he possesses a divine Book in addition to his prophetic mission. Among those who are called *rasūl* there is a further distinction to be made between the *ulu al-'azm*, i.e., those whose *Shari'ah* abrogates the *Shari'ah* before theirs, and those with whom this is not the case.<sup>28</sup> Finally, there is the Seal of the Prophets (*khatam al-anbiyā'*) the Prophet who envelops all these stages within himself.<sup>29</sup>

The mission of the Prophet Muḥammad—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 so subtle that he was able to make the Nocturnal Ascent (*mi'rāj*) 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 was in the west or in the world of multiplicity and that of Jesus in the east or the world of unity. The *qiblah* of the Prophet Muḥammad, on the other hand, is

<sup>27</sup> *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah*, pp. 318–29; also *Asrār al-Hikam*, pp. 307 ff.

<sup>28</sup> 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. V to VII.

<sup>29</sup> Hāji considers the greatest miracle of the Prophet Muḥammad, who is the Seal of Prophecy, to be the Qur'ān, 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 which conform to the mentality of the people of that age. That is why the miracle of the Qur'ān lies in its language as the Arabs considered eloquence to be of such great importance; likewise, in the case of Moses his miracle was in magic which was at his time one of the basic arts, and in the case of Christ raising the dead to life because medicine occupied at that time an exalted position among the sciences.

neither in the east nor in the west,<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup>

As a Shi'ah, Hāji was greatly concerned with the question of the Imāmate in addition to that of prophecy and, therefore, discusses the political and religious differences which distinguish the Shi'ah conception of the Imāmate from that of the Sunnis'. For the Shi'ahs, as Hāji writes, the spirit of 'Ali is in essence one with that of the Prophet. It is the universal soul as the spirit of the Prophet is the universal intellect. Moreover, the light of 'Ali is passed on to his descendants until the last and twelfth Imām 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 Imāms of whom the last is like *Pisces* for all the stars of the Imāmate and sainthood.<sup>32</sup> The Last Day which means the end of the longitudinal hierarchy of existence is also the day of the manifestation of the twelfth Imām who is himself the last stage of the hierarchy which extends upwards to the divine essence or Light of lights (*nūr al-anwār*).

On the question of eschatology,<sup>33</sup> Hāji follows closely the teachings of Mulla Ṣadra 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 *ispahbad* 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. Hāji 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 (*mīzān*), the Bridge (*ṣirāt*), and the Account-taking (*ḥisāb*) of good and evil. The physical *ṣirāt* is that which, as the Qur'ān mentions, covers the chasm over the inferno, but the spiritual *ṣirāt* is the path which the universal man treads towards the Truth (*Ḥaqq*) and which connects him with the Truth.

In the final chapter on ethics Hāji outlines the degrees of faith (*īmān*) from simple acceptance to demonstration and from that to spiritual vision. This last degree can be reached only through the purification of the soul

<sup>30</sup> This is with reference to the verse of Light in the Qur'ān (xxiv, 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.

<sup>31</sup> By this symbolism Hāji implies that the message of Moses was essentially the exoteric aspect of the Abrahamic tradition, and the message of Jesus 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. VI.

<sup>32</sup> *Asrār al-Hikam*, p. 369.

<sup>33</sup> *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah*, pp. 329ff.; *Asrār al-Hikam*, pp. 261ff.



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 which 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-SABZIWĀRIAN HIKMAT

The doctrines of Hāji which 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 Hāji Sabziwāri 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 Hāji and to a certain extent some of the other Qājār Hakims infused into it.<sup>34</sup>

Of the famous masters of *Hikmat* in Persia during the last century, we may name abu al-Hasan Jilwah, Muḥammad Riḍā' Qumshī'i, Jahāngīr Khān Qashqā'i, Mulla 'Ali Zunūzi, the author of *Badāyi' al-Hikam*, and Mīrza Tāhir Tunikābuni, all of whom were contemporaries of Hāji, and those of a later date like the late Mīrza Mehdi Āshṭiyāni, the author of *Asās al-Tauḥīd*, who passed away only recently. Of the masters living today there are several who are worthy of special attention like Sayyid Muḥammad Kāzīm 'Aṣṣār,<sup>35</sup> Hajj Muḥammad Husain Ṭabāṭabā'i, the most prolific writer among the present Hakims of Persia,<sup>36</sup> and Sayyid abu al-Hasan Rafī'i 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 Muḥyi al-Dīn Qumshī'i, the author of *Hikmat-i Ilāhi* and a large *Dīwān* of Sufi poetry and the holder of the chair of Mulla Ṣadra in the Theological

<sup>34</sup> A list of some of these Hakims is given by Gobineau, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-20. See also I'timād al-Salṭanih Muḥammad Husain Khān, *Kitāb al-Ma'āthir w-al-Āthār*, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1306/1888, pp. 131-226.

<sup>35</sup> This great authority on *Hikmat* and gnosis has trained a generation of students in Teheran University and the Sepahsālār *madrasah* but has not written extensively on these subjects.

<sup>36</sup> This sage whom we mentioned in the chapter on Mulla Ṣadra is the author of many important works in Arabic and Persian including the commentary *al-Mizān, Usūl-i Falsafih wa Rawish-i Realism* with commentary by Murtiḍa Muṭahhari, a book on the principles of Shī'ism which came as answers to a set of questions posed by Henri Corbin and published as the *Sālānih-i Maktab-i Tashayyū'*, No. 2; commentary upon the *Asfār*, etc. Ṭabāṭabā'i has revived the study of *Hikmat* in Qum which is the most important centre of Shī'ah studies today and has produced many scholars who have themselves become authorities on the intellectual sciences

Faculty of Teheran University Mirza Raḥim Arbāb who lives in Iṣpahān, the old centre of *Hikmat* in Persia; Hā'iri Māzandarāni, now residing in Simnān, the author of *Hikmat-i bu 'Ali* and one of the most erudite of the living Ḥakīms; Jawād Muṣliḥ, the author of a commentary upon the *Asfār* and its translator into Persian; Murtida Muṭahhari, Muḥammad 'Ali Ḥakīm, Husain 'Ali Rāshid, and Maḥmūd Shibāhi, all with the exception of Mirza Raḥim Arbāb and Hā'iri Māzandarāni being Professors at the Theological Faculty of Teheran University; Aḥmad Aṣhtiyāni, the author of several works on *Hikmat* and gnosis; Fādil-i Tūni, the commentator of the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* of ibn 'Arabi and many other treatises and a Professor at the Faculty of Letters of Teheran University; and Muḥammad 'Taqi Āmuli, the author of the commentary *Durar al-Fawā'id* upon the *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah*.

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 civilizations of the Middle East and which has been preserved in Persia and in the bosom of Shi'ism to this day.<sup>37</sup> The outstanding figure of Hāji Mulla Hādi was able to revive and strengthen this tradition in the Qājār period as Mulla Ṣadra had done two centuries before him, and to make this wisdom to continue as a living spiritual and intellectual tradition till today.

<sup>37</sup> It is for this reason that with great obstinacy and despite some awkwardness we have refused to translate *Hikmat* and *Ḥakīm* 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.

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## Part 2. Renaissance in South and South-East Asia

### Chapter LXXIX

#### RENAISSANCE IN INDO-PAKISTAN SHĀH WALI ALLAH DIHLAWI

##### A

#### INTRODUCTION

Of the two leaders of thought who appeared during the early years of decadence, Muḥammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhāb of Arabia and Shāh 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 Muslims 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 Shāh Ismā'il Shahīd and Sayyid Aḥmad Bareilvi for liberating the Muslims from the clutches of Western imperialism.

##### B

#### LIFE AND WORKS

Qutb al-Dīn Aḥmad, popularly known as Shāh Wali Allah, was born in 1114/1703, four years before the death of Aurangzīb. His genealogy can be traced back to the family of 'Umar Fārūq, 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 Shāh 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 Shāh Jahān, and that he fought bravely against the Marathas of the Deccan.<sup>1</sup>

Shāh Wali Allah's father, Shāh 'Abd al-Raḥīm, was greatly loved and respected by the people for his great scholarship and piety. He was entrusted by the Emperor 'Ālamgīr with the delicate and important task of revising the *Fatāwā-i 'Ālamgīri*. He acquitted himself creditably of the duty assigned to him and declined to accept any remuneration for the work.<sup>2</sup>

In his booklet *al-Juz' al-Laṭīf fī Tarjamat al-'Abd al-Ḍa'īf*, Shāh Wali Allah

<sup>1</sup> *Al-Furqān* (Special Number on Shāh Wali Allah), 2nd edition, Bareilly, 1941, pp. 203–04, 402.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 113, 170.



gives an account of his brilliant educational career. Even a cursory reading of this booklet shows that Shāh 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 *Tafsīr*, *Ḥadīth*, *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 *Hijāz* on a pilgrimage and stayed there for fourteen months studying *Ḥadīth* and *Fiqh* under such distinguished scholars as abu Ṭāhir al-Kurdi al-Madani, Wafd Allah al-Makki, and Tāj al-Dīn al-Qāli. 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 Shāh 'Ālam II.<sup>3</sup> The most important of Shāh Wali Allah's works is his *Hujjat Allah al-Bālighah* 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, metaphysical, as well as purely theological. Whether one agrees or disagrees either with Shāh 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 SHĀH WALI ALLAH'S THOUGHT

The pivotal point on which revolves the philosophical thought of Shāh Wali Allah is religion. Since it is religion alone which, 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. Shāh 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.

<sup>3</sup> Thus, he lived to see the reigns of ten kings who followed one another in quick succession, namely, 'Ālamgīr, Bahādur Shāh I, Mu'izz al-Dīn Jahāndār Shāh, Farrukh Siyar, Rafi' al-Darajāt, Rafi' al-Daulah, Muḥammad Shāh, Aḥmad Shāh, 'Ālamgīr II, Shāh 'Ālam.

Shāh Wali Allah was fully aware of the gap between the pattern of life as enunciated in the Qur'ān 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, Shāh 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 Shāh 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 which engraved the deepest mark upon his mind was that which came from his own father. From him he learnt the Holy Qur'ān 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 Qur'ān and the Sunnah formed the bedrock on which he raised the superstructure of his thought system.

Shāh Wali Allah was also greatly influenced by Imām Ghazālī, Khaṭābī, and Shaikh al-Islam 'Izz al-Dīn bin 'Abd al-Salām. From them he learnt the art of rational interpretation of the different aspects of Islam. In his introduction to *Hujjat Allah al-Bālighah* he mentions these names with great respect. He also seems to be interested in abu al-Ḥasan al-Ash'ari, abu al-Mansūr Māturīdī, ibn Taimīyyah, and Imām Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī.

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

Shāh 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 which Shāh Wali Allah has taken up in great detail in his famous work *Hujjat Allah al-Bālighah*.

*Adālah* (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 which 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.<sup>4</sup>

Under the head *Irtifāqāt*,<sup>5</sup> *Shāh Wali Allah* discusses the problem of human relations. He starts with the fact that man has innumerable wants which 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.

*Shāh 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.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> 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

<sup>4</sup> *Hujjat Allah al-Bālighah*, Idārah Ṭabā'at al-Muniriyyah, Cairo. Vol. I, pp. 50-53.

<sup>5</sup> Maulana 'Ubaid Allah Sindhi has translated this word as "social institutions" in his *Shāh Wali Allah aur Unki Siyāsi Tahrik*, Sind Sāgar Academy, Lahore, 1952, p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> *Hujjat Allah al-Bālighah*, Vol. I, p. 38.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.



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. Shāh 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."

Shāh 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.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> Besides, the State should adopt ways and means to encourage trade and industry. Thus, according to Shāh Wali Allah, the richness of society as a whole depends upon its diversity—a truism which 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.

Shāh 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 tax-payers by government officials at the time of collecting the taxes. The people groan under the heavy weight of taxes

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 47.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

while their economic position deteriorates at an alarming speed. This is how the country has come to ruin."<sup>10</sup>

In this connection Shāh Wali Allah points out also a great misconception which 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 which 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 Shāh Wali Allah calls it, "is highly detrimental to the welfare of society. It is no virtue but a crime. Islam grants no licence 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."<sup>11</sup> "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—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."<sup>12</sup>

Shāh 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 *Izālat al-Khifā' 'an Khilāfat al-Khulafā'* Shāh Wali Allah lays down in very clear terms the duty of an Islamic State (*Khilāfat*). "*Khilāfat*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>11</sup> For a detailed study of this problem, see *Hujjat Allah al-Bālighah*, Chap. "Iqāmat al-Irtifāqāt wa Iṣlāḥ al-Rusūm," pp. 104-09.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* Shāh Wali Allah enumerates the mean tactics which the ruling class employed to corrupt the masses.

in general terms is a form of State which is established for the enforcement of the Laws of Shari'ah in accordance with the will of the Holy Prophet. The foremost functions of the Khilāfat are the revival of Islamic teachings and their translation in practical life, preparing the *millah* for endeavour (*jihād*), and carefully suppressing all those evils which arise from the misuse of its functions."<sup>13</sup>

Shāh 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.<sup>14</sup> Shāh 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

<sup>13</sup> Shāh Wali Allah, *Izālat al-Khifā' 'an Khilāfat al-Khulafā'*, published in Bareilly, n.d., p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, George Allen & Unwin, London, Vol. I, p. 3.



follies committed in the past because of overlooking this important distinction.

In his book *Tāwīl al-Aḥādīth*, 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. Shāh 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-Kabīr*, Shāh 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 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."<sup>15</sup>

In his book *Tāwīl al-Aḥādīth*, Shāh Wali Allah traces the development of society right from Adam down to the last of the prophets and discusses in detail the peculiarities of each age. Amongst the Muslim thinkers Shāh Wali Allah is the first<sup>16</sup> 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.

Shāh 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,<sup>17</sup> etc. The Prophet Idris later was possessed of all these qualities which his predecessor, Adam, 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.<sup>18</sup>

The period between the death of Prophet Idris and the birth of Prophet Noah 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, therefore, made

<sup>15</sup> *Al-Fauz al-Kabīr*, Urdu translation, Maktabah Burhān, Delhi, p. 16.

<sup>16</sup> It appears that Shāh Wali Allah has taken most of the material under this heading from ibn Kathīr's *Bidāyah w-al-Nihāyah*, Maṭba'at al-Sa'ādah, Egypt.

<sup>17</sup> *Tāwīl al-Aḥādīth*, Maṭba' Aḥmad, Madrasah 'Azīziyyah, Delhi, pp. 9-13.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

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 which had then taken full hold of the mind of the people.<sup>19</sup>

The above example should be sufficient to give an idea how Shāh 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 Sharī'ahs to which Shāh 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 were inspired by God alone, there could not be any difference in their fundamental teachings. Belief in the unity of God, charity and brotherhood 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 Sharī'ahs. In his work Hujjat Allah al-Bālighah, Shāh 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 of God and it is this alone which 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 have unanimously preached the gospel of divine unity."<sup>20</sup> At another place he reiterates: "Just as articles of faith are the same in all religions, similarly the basic virtues preached by them are necessarily the same."<sup>21</sup>

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 which are the spring-boards of all action have remained the same. It is this sameness of human nature which led the celebrated philosopher-historian ibn Khaldūn 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."<sup>22</sup>

Shāh Wali Allah completely agrees with ibn Khaldūn on this point<sup>23</sup> and considers history "remembrance of the days of God," to be a key to the

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15. See also ibn Kathir, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-18.

<sup>20</sup> Hujjat Allah al-Bālighah, Vol. I, pp. 86-87.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Charles Issawi, *An Arab Philosophy of History*, John Murray, London, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> For a detailed study of this subject, see Hujjat Allah al-Bālighah, Chaps. IV and VI.

study of the Holy Qur'an.<sup>24</sup> It is one of the remarkable doctrines of the Qur'an that nations are judged collectively and suffer for their misdeeds here and now. In order to establish this, the Qur'an 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"<sup>25</sup>; "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."<sup>26</sup>

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 Qur'an, Shāh Wali Allah gives a very valuable advice in the following words: "While reciting the Holy Qur'an 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."<sup>27</sup>

It may be noted that Shāh Wali Allah attaches great importance to the study of social phenomena as a preparation for the proper understanding of the Qur'an. 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 lighthouse which 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 Qur'an 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."<sup>28</sup>

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. Shāh 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 Qur'an and the Sunnah, but the way in which he has

<sup>24</sup> *Al-Fauz al-Kabir*, pp. 4, 17.

<sup>25</sup> Qur'an, xiv, 5.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, 137.

<sup>27</sup> *Al-Fauz al-Kabir*, pp. 21-23.

<sup>28</sup> Qur'an, xxx, 9, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* by Pickthall.



applied them to practical life bears ample testimony to his keen insight both into the Qur'ān and in the problems of human existence.

In his *Izālat al-Khiḡā'*, Shāh Wali Allah points out that the love of material wealth leads the nation to moral depravity which brings in its wake its downfall. "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."<sup>29</sup> In support of this view Shāh Wali Allah recalls the words in which the Prophet 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."<sup>30</sup>

Shāh Wali Allah is of the opinion, which in fact is based upon the teachings of the Qur'ān, 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 to keep others under the yoke of abject poverty. Society is split up into two distinct classes, *haves* and *have-nots*, the one which 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 wretchedness, and ultimately the whole nation collapses like a house of cards.

Shāh 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 which 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

<sup>29</sup> *Izālat al-Khiḡā'* (Urdu translation), Nūr Muḡammad Kārkhānah Tijārat-i Kutub, Karachi, Vol. I, p. 560.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 563-64. See also al-Nawawi, *Riyāḡ al-Ṣāliḡīn*, Dār al-Iḡyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, Cairo, pp. 213-14 (*muttafiq 'alaih*, Bukhāri wa Muslim).

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."<sup>31</sup>

Shāh 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.<sup>32</sup>

It is interesting to note that this brilliant analysis of the Roman as of the Persian society given by Shāh 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 arraigned 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."<sup>33</sup>

It is, however, wrong to conclude from the above discussion that Shāh Wali Allah favoured the life of renunciation and considered it as such conducive

<sup>31</sup> *Hujjat Allah al-Bālighah*, Vol. I, pp. 105–06.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Modern Library, New York, Vol. I, p. 48.

to the progress of any nation. No, not in the least. He condemns such a view of life<sup>34</sup> 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 Waḥdat al-Wujūd and Waḥdat al-Shuhūd.*—Like all great Muslim thinkers, Shāh Wali Allah penetrated deeply into the metaphysical problems raised by the teachings of the Qur'ān 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 Thāni. In order fully to appreciate this effort of Shāh 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. *Tauḥīd* 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-wujūd al-muṭlaq*) or "Universal Being" (*al-wujūd 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.<sup>35</sup> 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

<sup>34</sup> *Hujjat Allah al-Bālighah*, Vol. I, p. 53.

<sup>35</sup> A. E. Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muḥyid Dīn-Ibnul 'Arabi*, Cambridge, 1939, p



existent (or subsistent) to a particular "mode" or manifestation of that "universal" (say, red).<sup>36</sup>

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-ḥaqū'iq al-ma'qūlāt al-kullīyah*), no predications (*aḥkām*) of external objects would have been possible.<sup>37</sup>

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" (*dhāt-o ṣifāt*) 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 *khāriji* or existential. In the first descent, Unity becomes conscious of itself as pure Being, and the consciousness of attributes is only implicit and general (*ṣifat-i ijmāli*). In the second descent, it becomes conscious of itself as presenting the attributes explicitly and in detail (*ṣifat-i taṣṣīli*). These two descents seem to be conceived 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 determination of spirits (*ta'ayyun-i rūḥi*) when Unity breaks itself into so many spirits, e.g., angels. The fourth descent is ideal determination (*ta'ayyun-i mithāli*), whereby the world of ideas comes into being. And the fifth descent is physical determination (*ta'ayyun-i jasadi*): it yields the phenomenal or physical beings."<sup>38</sup>

This shows that for ibn 'Arabi "Being" (*dhāt*) of God is identical with His attributes (*ṣifāt*), and these attributes express themselves in manifestations (*tajalliyāt*) as modes which 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 which find their ultimate ground and explanation in the essential unity of the Real.<sup>39</sup>

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."<sup>40</sup> He explains this statement through the metaphor of the "mirror" and the "image."<sup>41</sup> The phenomenal world is the mirror-image,

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>38</sup> Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindi quoted by Burhan Ahmad Faruqi in his *Mujaddid's Conception of Tawhid*, pp. 88-89.

<sup>39</sup> A. E. Affifi, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>40</sup> *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam*, Cairo, p. 63.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

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 phenomenal world and it is thus that God is endowed with attributes.<sup>42</sup>

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 Thāni, 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 Qur'ān 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,<sup>43</sup> for example, human knowledge has no resemblance to God's knowledge, so the former cannot be called to be the *tajalli* of the latter.<sup>44</sup> 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"<sup>45</sup> clearly points to this.

So, while ibn 'Arabi bases his theory of *waḥdat al-wujūd* on the identity of *aṣl* and *ẓill*, i.e., the thing and its adumbration, the Mujaddid insists that the *ẓill* of a thing can never be identical with its *aṣl* or being.<sup>46</sup> 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

<sup>42</sup> A. E. Affifi, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>43</sup> *Maktūbāt Imām Rabbāni*, Urdu translation by Qāḍi 'Ālam al-Dīn, Lahore, Vol. III, pp. 113-14.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>45</sup> Qur'ān, xxxvii, 180.

<sup>46</sup> *Maktūbāt Imām Rabbāni*, Vol. II, Epistle 7.

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 which is a natural corollary of the doctrine of *wahdat al-wujūd*. 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-wujūd* was very severe, and few had the courage to oppose him. It was Shāh Wali Allah who for the first time tried to bridge the gulf that yawned between the views of these two great thinkers of Islam. Shāh Wali Allah professed that God had granted him the special gift of creative synthesis or reconciliation.<sup>47</sup>

According to Shāh Wali Allah, there is no substantial difference between the philosophy of *wahdat al-wujūd* and that of *wahdat al-shuhūd* 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."<sup>48</sup> Shāh 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 *asmā'-o ṣifāt* of the Necessary Being reflected in their *'adam al-mutaqābilah* or non-being as the Mujaddid maintains, is practically the same.<sup>49</sup> 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 short-sighted critics look upon these as matters of vital difference.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Shāh Wali Allah, *Faiṣalat al-Wahdat al-Wujūd wa Wahdat al-Shuhūd* (Arabic), p. 6.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*



*The Spiritual World and the Material World.*—Shāh 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 Shāh Wali Allah names it, the '*ālam al-mithāl*', 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 '*ālam al-mithāl*'. The things found in the spiritual world appear to a layman to be immaterial, but to the prophets they are tangible and concrete. For example, the Prophet 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. Shāh Wali Allah, quoting numerous examples in support of his contention, concludes, "It is an established fact that the prophets could not see all these phenomena with their physical eyes. Heaven and hell are too large to be comprehended physically. Had these been matters of common sight they would have been visible to the Companions also who were by his side at such occasions."<sup>51</sup> Thus, over and above the material world, there is another world which 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.*—Shāh 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.<sup>52</sup>

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.<sup>53</sup>

As regards matter, Shāh 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.<sup>54</sup>

*Freedom and Fatalism.*—Shāh 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

<sup>51</sup> *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*, Vol. I, pp. 13-14.

<sup>52</sup> Shāh Wali Allah, *al-Khair al-Kathir*, ed. Bashir Ahmad, Dā'irat al-Hilāl, Benares, pp. 29-30.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

it is not entitled to be called a Muslim.<sup>55</sup> The Qur'ān explicitly states that all beings and happenings in this world are due to a conscious creative power or divine will.<sup>56</sup> 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 which regulate the movements of celestial bodies, and, thus, belief in them forms the corner-stone of Islam.<sup>57</sup>

The above view of Shāh Wali Allah, however, should not be construed in terms of *waḥdat al-wujūd* 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 himself 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."<sup>58</sup>

## G

### JURISPRUDENCE

Shāh Wali Allah attempts a 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 which 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 *ijtihād*—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., Ḥanafī, Shāfi'i, Mālikī, and Hanbali.

<sup>55</sup> *Hujjat Allah al-Bālighah*, Vol. I, pp. 65-66.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Qur'ān, xv, 21; xvi, 79; xlviii, 21.

<sup>57</sup> For a detailed study of this aspect, see *Hujjat Allah al-Bālighah*, Vol. I, pp. 55-67.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

There is a consensus of opinion amongst the majority of 'ulamā' that *taqlīd* is essential. He agrees with them, but moderates the traditional view of *taqlīd* by saying: "No one can have any objection to the concept of *taqlīd*; but I neither look upon any Imām as infallible, nor do I believe that his judgments were revealed to him by God Himself and so are obligatory for us. When we follow a certain Imām we do so on the explicit understanding that he was possessed of a deep insight into the teachings of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and his findings were drawn from the Qur'ān 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 *naṣṣ*. This alone is the type of *taqlīd* which appears to me quite justifiable."<sup>59</sup>

Similarly, Shāh Wali Allah offers a workable solution of the differences of pure traditionists (*Muḥaddithīn*) and the followers of the four Imāms. "The general practice," he says, "with regard to the framing of *Fiqhi* Law is that either the deductions are directly based upon the *Ḥadīth* 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 *Sharī'ah* so erected would be sound and well consolidated. The *Muḥaddithīn* 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 *naṣṣ*, and see that their conclusions do not in any way contravene the injunctions of the *Ḥadīth*. In the same way it is not proper for any *Muḥaddith* to lay unnecessary stress on the principles laid down by the old compilers of the *Ḥadīth*. They were after all human beings and their principles could not, therefore, be claimed to be final and free from all errors."<sup>60</sup>

Shāh Wali Allah fully recognizes the importance of individual judgment (*ijtihād*), 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 Qur'ān and the Sunnah and should know the *ahādīth* which form the basis of *Fiqh*; (3) he must be capable of exercising his judgment to draw injunctions from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah in order to meet the new requirements of his times.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Shāh Wali Allah, *al-Inṣāf fī Bayān-i Sabab al-Ikhtilāf*, Urdu translation by Ṣadr al-Dīn Iṣlāḥī, Lahore, n.d., pp. 29-80.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.



Shāh 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 Shari'ah. He believes that the ijtihād of the old jurists, however high and exalted their status, is open to correction in the light of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. He, thus, opens the gate of ijtihād which 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-Bālighah, Budūr al-Bāzighah and Fauz al-Kabīr, 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 Shari'ah 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 Shāh 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 Imām abu Hanifah's juridical views. Jamāl al-Dīn Qāsimi, an eminent scholar of Hadith in Damascus, has time and again referred to Shāh Wali Allah's valuable thought in his famous book Qawā'id al-Taḥdīth, which is considered to be a basic work on the principles of Hadith. Abu Zahau in his scholarly treatise, al-Ḥadīth w-al-Muḥaddithūn, in which he traces the history of the revival of Hadith in different lands, pays glowing tributes to Shāh 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 Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kauthari, devotes a whole chapter to Shāh Wali Allah in his compilation Maqālāt al-Kauthari published in Damascus. Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, a leader of the liberation movement of Egypt and for several years editor of al-Fath, speaks of Shāh Wali Allah in several of his articles with great respect. 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Namar, another leading scholar of Egypt and a member of the Board of

'Ulamā' of Azhar, in his book *Tārīkh al-Islām fi al-Hind*, speaks of him as an authority on Hadīth and *Tafsīr*. He states that Shāh Wali Allah shattered the bonds of *taqlīd* and prepared the Muslim scholars for research. *Al-Mukhtārāt*, a compilation by abu al-Ḥasan Nadawī, which has been prescribed as a text-book for the secondary school stage in Damascus, includes a selection from *Hujjat Allah al-Bāliḡah*.

Shāh Wali Allah's most valuable book, *Hujjat Allah al-Bāliḡah*, has been published in Egypt in various editions and is widely read in the Arab lands. *Musawwa*, another important work of Shāh Wali Allah, has also been translated into Arabic. A French translation of *Hujjat Allah al-Bāliḡah* has recently been published in Paris.

## H

### CONCLUSION

Shāh 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 which made them highly beneficial to the Muslim society. According to Iqbāl, 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.

Shāh 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 Iqbāl; anyone delving deep into Iqbāl's *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* will find the spirit of Shāh Wali Allah pervading this work from beginning to end.

In Islamic mysticism Shāh 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 which assures progress and prosperity in this world and salvation in the hereafter. Commenting on Shāh 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 Nāblus (1641–1731) and the Indians Ahmad Sarhindi (1563–1624) and Shah Walī-Allāh of Delhi (1702–1762).”<sup>62</sup>

Shāh Wali Allah translated the Holy Qur’ān into Persian despite opposition and, thus, brought the Word of Allah within the reach of the common man. His illustrious son, Shāh Rafī’ al-Dīn, following his example, translated the Qur’ān in Urdu and, thus, dispelled the prejudice against translations of the Holy Book.

In *Hadīth* he revived interest in the study of Imām Mālik’s *Muwatta*, which became elevated in the eyes of scholars only through his efforts.

In *Fiqh*, Shāh 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 which 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 Shāh Wali Allah’s standpoint in *Fiqh* from the point of view of welding the Muslim community into one *ummah* cannot be over-emphasized.

Shāh 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 Shāh Wali Allah in the outlook of the Muslim community in the various walks of life that a mighty movement under the leadership of Shāh Ismā’il Shāhid and Sayyid Ahmad Bareilvi 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 Shāh Ismā’il 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 Shāh Wali Allah continued growing till it flowered into the birth of Pakistan.

<sup>62</sup> H. A. R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism*, The New American Library, New York, 1955, p. 125.



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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-Akhbār*. After the fashion of the time he took to composing poetry but the hobby did not hold his interest 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, practiced medicine for some time, and busied himself with the first round of his researches in history which culminated in the *Āthār al-Ṣanādīd*, 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. . . ." <sup>1</sup>

Sayyid Ahmad viewed the Mutiny as an outcome of racial misunderstanding and administrative blunders. After the outbreak had been quelled, he

<sup>1</sup> Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *Majmū'ah-i Lectures*.

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 journalism. 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 *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, 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 *Tahdhīb* gathered round itself a select and highly discriminating readership which 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 Muhammadan 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 circumstances 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 *Tārīkh-i Sarkashī-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 for ever. Thus, the sinful irresponsibility of the historian becomes everlasting."

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A résumé of Sayyid Ahmad's historical writings must naturally begin with the *Āthār al-Ṣanādīd* which 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 Minār. 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 *Āthār* included the life-sketches of the celeb-

rities 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 materials 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 *A'in-i Akbari*, the principal source book for the colourful reign of Akbar who presided over an administration 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 understanding 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 Firūz Shāh Tughlaq is another brilliant interlude in the annals of Medieval India. Firūz Shāh 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 Firūz Shāh's life and achievements was preserved by a contemporary named Diā' al-Dīn 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 *Jām-i Jam*, was a brief tabulated account of the kings of the House of Timūr,



beginning from the founder and ending with Bahādur Shāh 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 Jahāngir. 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.

*Jalā' al-Qulūb bi Dhikr al-Mahbūb* was a biographical account of the Prophet, old-fashioned but based on authentic sources, written to repair the deficiency of suitable reading texts at the annual birthday celebrations of the Prophet.

*Tārīkh-i Sarkashī-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 which 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.

*Risālah Asbāb-i Baghāwat-i Hind* is an outstanding contribution to contemporary 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 unconsciously, to resort to history for more practical ends. One of these new motivations 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 admirable 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 intensity 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 proportion 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 which were being developed in Europe about this time.

In *Risālah Asbāb-i Baghāwat-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 Englishman 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 belligerent" 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 Wahābi activities and the perennially disturbed state of the North-Western Frontier. The underground movement, he went on to say, was skilfully organized, and its leaders arrogated to themselves all functions of sovereignty over their constituents. The ties which 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 Wahābi transgressions against law evoked a sharp protest from Sayyid Aḥmad, 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 Wahābi 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 Aḥmad declared, could not be ascribed to Wahābi fomentations. It was largely prompted 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 constituted 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, Shāh Jahān, and Aurangzib (all Muslims) had failed to subdue the over-refractory highlanders. Studying *The Indian Musalmans* and its review by Sayyid Aḥmad together, it would appear that he had the better of the argument and many fairminded Englishmen were convinced of the invalidity of Dr. Hunter's deductions.

It has been sometimes suggested that Sayyid Aḥmad 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 Nu'māni, 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, he wrote a series of works on some of the leading personalities of Muslim history such as the Caliph 'Umar, al-Māmūn, Rūmi, al-Ghazāli, 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 Zakā' 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 Khaldūn's "Prolegomena" in the *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* 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 Muḥammad as an idol in the temple of Mecca and Muslims as blood-thirsty 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 which 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 *Aḥkām-i Ṭa'ām-i Ahl-i Kitāb*, 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 which 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 which 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 unfailing 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 backwardness. *The Life of Mohammad* 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 Islām; the doctrine of the Unity and infinite perfections of God . . . became a living principle in the



hearts and lives of the followers of Mohammad. . . . 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."<sup>2</sup>

Sayyid Ahmad wrote a refutation of this book under the title *Essays on the Life of Mohammed 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 Qur'an 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 other-worldly 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

Sir William Muir, *Life of Mohammad*, John Grant, Edinburgh, 1912, p. 521.

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 serviceable 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 romanticism 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 penmanship which 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 surrounded 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 perseverance 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 disapprobation. But ultimately he will succeed and win converts. Though he provokes opposition in the beginning he is acknowledged a benefactor in the end."<sup>3</sup>

"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

<sup>3</sup> Sayyid Ahmad Khān, *Madāmin-i Tahdhib al-Akhlāq*.



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."<sup>4</sup>

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 correspondence.

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### 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 intelligible. 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 which 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 Qur'ān) 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, Altāf Husain Hāli, 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 which he addressed to one of his English friends. He says, "I am a Musalmān 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

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*



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 which 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. . . ."<sup>5</sup>

The latter part of this declaration has invited strongly worded and undeserved 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 which will be recognized by anyone who follows his opinions carefully.

In post-Mutiny India the ruling race, with rare exceptions, displayed abnormal racial arrogance. In part this could be attributed to the Mutiny which furnished a grim background to the era which 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."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Nūr al-Rahmān, *Hayāt-i Sir Sayyid*, pp. 123-24.

<sup>6</sup> G. F. I. Graham, *Life and Work of Syed Ahmed Khan*, London, 1885, p. 188.

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."<sup>7</sup>

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."<sup>8</sup>

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."<sup>9</sup> Sayyid Ahmad did not consider such a temper dignified or helpful.

<sup>7</sup> Sayyid Ahmad Khān, *Majmū'ah-i Lectures*.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in *Eminent Musalmans*, G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras, n.d., p. 35.

<sup>9</sup> Sayyid Ahmad Khān, *Majmū'ah-i Lectures*, pp. 238-39.



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 which 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 which became the marketplace 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."<sup>10</sup>

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 adherence 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 Musalmāns. Faith in God and His Prophet 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."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Idem*, *Ākhiri Madāmin*, p. 46.

<sup>11</sup> *Idem*, *Majmū'ah-i Lectures*, p. 308.

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RENAISSANCE IN INDO-PAKISTAN (Continued)  
SIR SAYYID AHMAD KHĀN AS A RELIGIO-  
PHILOSOPHICAL THINKER

It was the experience of the Indian Revolt that made Sayyid Ahmad Khān 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 Khān to address himself to the reinterpretation of the whole cultural and religious heritage of the Muslims. For this purpose he started the famous periodical *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, 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 which stand in the way of progress. It is our aim to judge where Islam stands in this regard."<sup>1</sup>

The spread of Western education among Muslims and the general enlightenment which 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.<sup>2</sup> Discussing the spread of belief in naturalism, he said, "Today we are in need of a modern 'Ilm al-Kalām 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

<sup>1</sup> *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, Vol. II, pp. 4-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Majmū'ah-i Lectures*, pp. 21-22.

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 which 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."<sup>3</sup>

What is nature? Sayyid Ahmad Khān 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."<sup>4</sup> But this mechanical conception of nature, as James Ward put it, is totally antagonistic to the spiritual interpretation 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 Khān 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 (*dahrīyyūn*). 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

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 276-98.

<sup>4</sup> *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, Vol. I, p. 336.



interprets the experiences of Moses and Abraham in the same spirit. "None of the prophets," he says, "came to realize God except through this process. Moses expressed his wish to see God; he got the reply: 'By no means canst thou see Me but look upon the mount' (vii, 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 recorded in the Qur'ān (iii, 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.'"<sup>5</sup>

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."<sup>6</sup>

By reason Sayyid Ahmad Khān means the empirical reason, to which the Qur'ān appeals. He calls it human reason or '*aql-i kullī*'. "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 understand 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."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 340-41.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>7</sup> *Tafsir al-Qur'ān*, Vol. III, pp. 11-12.

In a very illuminating article, "Thoughts of Man," Sayyid Ahmad Khān 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 (*yaqīn*). "I fully realized," he says, "that without certitude knowledge 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 and Jesus 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."<sup>8</sup>

In the history of Muslim thought and especially among the mystics, however, reason has often been placed subordinate to intuition or mystic disclosure (*kashf*). Ghazālī, for instance, whose line of argument (as developed by him in the *Munqidh*), is adopted by Sayyid Ahmad Khān, 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.<sup>9</sup>

There is, however, no qualitative difference, according to Sayyid Ahmad Khān, 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

<sup>8</sup> *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, Vol. II, pp. 18-22.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

natural and rational demands of man. He looks at the problem of their relationship biologically and makes inspiration a natural development of man's instinctive and rational capacities. All insects and animals possess instinctive power which the Qur'ān calls *wahī*, revelation (xvi, 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 which he calls *wahī* 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 Shāh Wali Allah calls the *muṣḥimūn*. 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 *wahī*. 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 Khān 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."<sup>10</sup>

Thus, according to Sayyid Ahmad Khān, 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

<sup>10</sup> *Tafsir al-Qur'ān*, Vol. I, pp. 34-35.



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 prophethood. 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 which 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 (*kalām-i naʿsi*) 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."<sup>11</sup> Thus, according to Sayyid Ahmad Khān, 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 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 Qur'ān was revealed to the Prophet 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 expression to what is needed at the moment by direct revelation from God.<sup>12</sup>

Sayyid Ahmad Khān 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.<sup>13</sup> 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) is

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29-35; Vol. III, pp. 49-57.

<sup>13</sup> *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, Vol. II, p. 125.

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 connotation 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 came to distribute them the last of all, his prophethood is also the last. So it was declared in the Qur'ān (v, 5): "Today I complete for you your religion and complete My favour to you and have chosen for you your religion, Islam."<sup>14</sup> According to Sayyid Ahmad, this finality of prophethood lay in clarifying the conception of *tauḥīd* on which alone depends the ultimate salvation of man.<sup>15</sup>

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 Khān, 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 Khān 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 which operate in the universe. As the Qur'ān (xlviii, 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 which 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

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 290.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126



the universe that Sayyid Ahmad Khān 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."<sup>16</sup> He continues, "I do not deny the possibility of miracles because they are against reason, but because the Qur'ān 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."<sup>17</sup> In a way, Sayyid Ahmad was correct, for the Qur'ān emphatically and repeatedly refuses people their request to Muhammad to show miracles in proof of his veracity. To all such demands the Qur'ān replies, "Say: Glory to my Lord! Am I aught but a man—an apostle?" (xvii, 90–93). But he was wrong in a way, for the Qur'ān 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 which was perhaps the only cause why his *Tafsīr* did not gain among the Muslims the popularity it deserved.

By the same line of argument, Sayyid Ahmad Khān denied the efficacy of prayers (*du'ā'*) as it is usually understood. The laws of nature are inviolable 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 anxieties 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 Sūrah of the Qur'ān where Moses 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

<sup>16</sup> *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, Vol. III, p. 28.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.



Mahdi 'Ali rightly infers that Sayyid Ahmad Khān's conception of God and the function of prayer (*du'ā'*) 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.<sup>18</sup>

Sayyid Ahmad Khān 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 Fall as related in the Qur'ān. 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."<sup>19</sup> 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 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 which 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 and Eve "of their raiment and exposing the shameful parts of their bodies" (vii, 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.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, Vol. I, pp. 387, 396, 397, 407, 426, 428, 429; *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, Vol. I, pp. 12-13.

<sup>19</sup> *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, Vol. I, p. 56; see also Vol. III, pp. 37-38.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 52-77; Vol. III, pp. 75-78; *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, Vol. II, pp. 183-200.

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 which 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 "light 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, 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" (vi, 89).<sup>21</sup>

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.<sup>22</sup>

Man's freedom follows, as a matter of course, from his very nature, which, in the words of the Qur'ān, 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 Khān 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

<sup>21</sup> *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, Vol. I, pp. 19-25.

<sup>22</sup> *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, Vol. II, pp. 220-21.

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 Khān, that the astrologer has been the cause of this man's death? What is in God's knowledge—which he called fate (*taqdīr*)—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 *taqdīr*—not in man. In spite of this knowledge, man still retains his freedom of action.<sup>23</sup>

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 which are the instruments of their souls.

The soul is definitely immortal and does not die with the death of the body. Sayyid Ahmad Khān 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 Qur'ān 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 Qur'ān refer to the fact of the Resurrection; they are not intended to describe and reveal its nature and character.<sup>24</sup>

He holds that paradise and hell described in sensuous terms in the Qur'ān are mere symbolical representations of the psychological states of individuals in the life after death. The Qur'ān says, "No soul knoweth what joy of the eyes is reserved for the good, in recompense of their work" (xxxii, 17). It is impossible to express the reality of super-sensuous things in words, even though those be the words of God.<sup>25</sup>

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 'ulamā' 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

<sup>23</sup> *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, Vol. VI, pp. 140-45; *Tahdhīb al-Akh̄lāq*, Vol. II, p. 219.

<sup>24</sup> *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, Vol. III, pp. 84-119.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 39-47.



of meeting this challenge. Sayyid Ahmad Khān 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 *ijtihād* had been closed for ever. 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 Baghdād, when political and social life was disrupted, the doctrine of *taqlīd* was put forth with the intention of arresting any further deterioration and disintegration. Even Iqbāl accepted this plea and in *Rumūz-i Bekhudi* advocated *taqlīd*, 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 Khān realized, and he strove hard to convince others of it. He advocated that the door of *ijtihād* 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 circumstances of his age.

In every religion there are certain truths which form the very basis of spiritual life. Such principles are eternal verities which cannot change with the change of time and place. Thus the Qur'ān (xxx, 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 which is above spatial and temporal vicissitudes. For Sayyid Ahmad Khān the basic aspects of a religion such as Islam are belief in the unity of God (*tauḥīd*) 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 understood, is much more than this; it includes also what is usually called *Shari'ah*. Shāh 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 reorientation 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 environment 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.<sup>26</sup>

Accepting this explanation of the role of a prophet, Sayyid Ahmad made a distinction between *Dīn*, *Sharī'ah*, 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 which deal with moral and spiritual purification of mankind. He denies that a prophet is concerned at all with matters relating to our daily life. *Dīn* 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 *Dīn* and not the *Sharī'ah*. If the *Sharī'ah* 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 which 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 Khān's attitude was unequivocal. When the collections of *Hadīth* were compiled in the second/eighth century, political and social conditions of the time helped in the fabrication of innumerable traditions ascribing them to the Holy Prophet. 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 *rijāl* which 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 which 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 which are compatible with the letter and spirit of the Qur'ān. 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 which 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.<sup>27</sup>

Sayyid Ahmad Khān was not satisfied with the numerous available commentaries of the Qur'ān. According to him, they contained nothing but

<sup>26</sup> *Hujjat Allah al-Bāliqah* (Urdu translation, Lahore, 1953), Vol. I, pp. 521-23.

<sup>27</sup> *Khutabāt*, pp. 203-04, 215, 225-26; *Tahdhīb al-Akhlaq*, Vol. II, pp. 164-69.



fabricated stories and accounts of alleged miracles. Moreover, in the interpretation of the Qur'ānic 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 Qur'ānic verses was sacrificed at the altar of historical erudition. To him the interpretation of the Qur'ān 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 Qur'ān 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 Qur'ānic 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 Qur'ān. If there is any such contradiction, I would reject the tradition outright as untrue."<sup>28</sup>

Sayyid Ahmad Khān critically reviews the work done by the ancient jurists. In the *Khutabāt* his attitude towards their achievements is appreciative. He explains in details how they derived rules and laws from the Qur'ān 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 Qur'ān and the example set by the Holy Prophet. This magnificent work was successfully undertaken by our early jurists. But at present we must distinguish between what the Qur'ān 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 Khān rebukes Turkey for her negligence in the matter of legal reform. He holds that backwardness 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,

<sup>28</sup> *Tafsir al-Qur'ān*, Vol. I, pp. 162-69.



has produced an attitude of passive obedience to a static ideal of *taqlīd*, 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 *taqlīd* 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 '*ulamā*'.

(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.<sup>29</sup>

Like ibn Taimiyyah, Sayyid Ahmad refuses to accept *ijmā'* 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 *ijtihād* 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 *ijmā'* of the Companions of the Prophet 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 Qur'ān.<sup>30</sup>

For this purpose Sayyid Ahmad decided to go back to the Qur'ān as the only valid and sure ground of all our attempts at modern interpretation of Islam. In *Khutabāt-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 Qur'ān 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 *Tafsīr* he discussed the views and opinions of almost all important commentators and accepted and followed those which he thought were true. What he wished to emphasize was that the altered conditions of modern life, the

<sup>29</sup> *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, Vol. II, pp. 141-42.

<sup>30</sup> *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, Vol. I, pp. 217-18; *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, Vol. II, p. 487.

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 Qur'ān 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 Qur'ān 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 (*dīl*) 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 Qur'ān 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 Qur'ān in this respect. He strongly advocated that dividing of property by will is as valid according to the Qur'ān 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 Qur'ān (ii, 106; xii, 39; xvi, 101) as well as traditions that some of the Qur'ānic verses stood abrogated. The number of such verses came to hundreds, though Shāh Wali Allah held that they were only five. Sayyid Ahmad gave a serious thought to this problem and came to the conclusion that the Qur'ān being the eternal Word of God could not be looked upon as the notebook of a whimsical poet. He held that the Qur'ān as actually recited by the Muslims was exactly as it was revealed to the Holy Prophet; 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 Qur'ān refer relate to the laws of the previous prophets like Moses and Jesus. 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 Qur'ān. 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 which 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 potentialities 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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#### Chapter LXXXII

#### RENAISSANCE IN INDO-PAKISTAN (Continued)

#### IQBĀL

Muhammad Iqbāl was born, in 1289/1873, at Sialkot. His ancestors were Kashmīri 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 Nūr Muhammad was a saintly man for whom religion was a matter of living experience. As related by Iqbāl himself, he had distinct tendency towards mysticism. Heredity and parental influence made Iqbāl inherit and imbibe this tendency which continued to mature throughout his intellectual 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 Ḥasan 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 Ḥasan 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 Iqbāl.<sup>1</sup> 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 Iqbāl began to sprout forth and receive early admiration from great scholars and poets, the father was convinced that it was the spirit of Iqbāl which 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 Iqbāl 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 Iqbāl was rare type which goes its own way and carves its own destiny under all systems, good, bad, or indifferent. Mir Ḥasan, 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 Khān. He was not a teacher in the school where Iqbāl completed his secondary education, but it appears that Iqbāl'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 Iqbāl, he suggested that Mir Ḥasan, to whose scholarly influence he owed so much, had a better right to recognition by a title. For his graduate studies Iqbāl 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 Iqbāl's poem on Arnold, included in the collection of *Bāng-i Dara*, bears evidence.

<sup>1</sup> Khalifah Abdul Hakim states that Iqbāl's father personally related this dream to him.

Iqbāl'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 Khān's Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, where he had written his famous book, *The Preaching of Islam*. It was Sayyid Ahmad Khān 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 Iqbāl went to England for higher studies in Western philosophy, he re-established his contact with him. Iqbāl 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, Iqbāl 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, Iqbāl decided to repay the debt by acquainting the West with some currents of philosophical thought in pre-Islamic and post-Islamic Persia.

Even while Iqbāl was completing his formal academic education his genius had already developed a creative synthesis of the East and the West. Before Iqbāl 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 Ghālib could be considered to be his forerunner, but in the choice of themes his predecessors were also Āzād and Hāli 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. Āzād had predicted in his book *Nairang-i Khayāl* 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. Hāli was also of the same opinion and in his *Muqaddimah*, 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 Khān, Āzād, and Hāli had visualized was embodied in Iqbāl. 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. Iqbāl 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 heartfelt 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 Iqbāl 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.

Iqbāl 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 powerful 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 translated 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 Iqbāl and his co-eval, said that if the Qur'ān had been revealed in the Urdu language, it would have been poured in the mould of Iqbāl's poetry. And about the Qur'ān 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. Iqbāl 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 Sīna (Avicenna), with a typical mystical poet, Rūmi, 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 uncalculating courage and unveils the veiled beauty. Iqbāl 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 Rūmi 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. Iqbāl might have endorsed this view of Rūmi 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 Iqbāl; there is hardly any problem of human life which he did not grapple with to find a satisfactory solution. Let us pick up a few basic problems of life and note some of Iqbāl'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 which 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 Iqbāl 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 progressive, and the only way that they considered to be effective was to adopt Western attitudes uncritically. Iqbāl 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. Iqbāl was convinced that Europe was heading towards a catastrophe, because of its purely materialistic 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 philosophical grounding was producing thinkers like Nietzsche and Trotsky for whom

the power of the super-man or super-nation had become the ultimate goal of individuals as well as of nations. Iqbāl was disillusioned by a closer study of the West and some of the poems that he wrote in Europe expressed dark prophecies 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 Iqbāl 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 Iqbāl'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.

Iqbāl 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 lopsided 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. Iqbāl not only gave up writing inspiring songs about nationalism and patriotism but began to denounce these narrow urges of collective egoism which are idealized by patriotic songs. He now decided to devote his philosophy and his art primarily to rejuvenating the dormant Muslim community. 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 which 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 mechanistic materialism that was responsible for a false view of reality. Iqbāl 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 Rūmi and Bergson as a monadologist.

A question is often raised about Iqbāl'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 super-man had been developed by Muslim mystical metaphysicians like ibn 'Arabi, Rūmi, 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 is eternally creative, it would never repeat itself. Nietzsche's super-man is ruthless and loveless, riding roughshod over all tender emotions in his advance towards greater biological fitness. Among his contemporary thinkers Iqbāl felt a much keener kinship with Bergson who successfully demolished mechanistic materialism and Darwinian biological philosophy along with intellectualism which 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. Iqbāl supports Bergson in this view and thus runs counter to the orthodox Muslim conception of *taqdīr* or destiny which envisages an eternal pre-ordination of all happenings in the universe, even to the minutest details.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1958, p. 49.



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 Iqbāl, 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 anticipate 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."<sup>3</sup> Iqbāl summarizes his criticism of Bergson's non-purposive *élan 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.'"<sup>4</sup>

Iqbāl 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 consciousness. 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

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53

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-creating. Iqbāl 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. Iqbāl could not attribute to the Cosmic Creative Genius anything less than what he had experienced in the process of his own poetic creation. The embodiment 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 metaphysics. 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. Iqbāl 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 archetypes. 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 conception of Ultimate Reality was Hegel's dialectic wherein nothing remains itself and every thing or process is moved by implicit and internal contradiction 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 which is being unfolded in time. This conception of God and the universe does not appeal to Iqbāl. 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. Iqbāl believed that the Qur'ān 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."<sup>5</sup>

*Ibid.*, p. 55.



If Iqbāl 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 himself 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. Iqbāl 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 Iqbāl 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 Qur'ān to be in complete agreement with faith in God. The Qur'ān uses the same word for revelation granted to saints and prophets and the instincts of animals whose unconscious rationality appears to be miraculous; 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? Iqbāl 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. Iqbāl's view is integrative, considering sense-perception, intellect, and intuition to be different modes of apprehension of the same reality. His outlook is unmistakably Qur'ānic, 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. Iqbāl accuses the early Muslim scholastics of having missed the spirit of the Qur'ān under the spell of Greek speculation. Ghazālī 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 Ghazālī, Iqbāl disagrees with him about the relation of thought and intuition and says that Ghazālī "failed to see that thought and intuition are organically related and that thought must necessarily simulate finitude and inconclusiveness because of its alliance with serial time."<sup>6</sup> 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, Rūmī 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, Rūmī called "particular reason" which he contrasted with universal reason which latter is one with the intuition of total reality. Iqbāl's view coincides entirely with Rūmī's. He recognizes the inadequacy of the logical understanding; it finds a multiplicity of mutually exclusive particulars 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 which 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." Iqbāl says that "both Kant and Ghazālī failed to see that thought, in the very act of knowledge, passes beyond its own finitude."<sup>7</sup> 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 interpenetrating 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

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7

it into itself and to illuminate its whole being.”<sup>8</sup> Iqbāl 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 without. The empirical no less than the rational attitude is an indispensable stage in the spiritual life of humanity.

Iqbāl gets solid support from the Qur’ānic verses for his philosophy of integration wherein senses, reasons, and intuition springing from what the Qur’ān calls *fu’ād* 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).”<sup>9</sup>

Quoting Rūmī, Iqbāl says the “heart” is a kind of intuition or insight which 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 religious 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.

Iqbāl’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.” Iqbāl derives his conception of God from

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

the Qur'ān wherein God is immanent as well as transcendent, personal as well as impersonal. There are verses in the Qur'ān 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."<sup>10</sup> In the famous Sūrah *al-Nūr* it is said that "God is the light of the heavens and the earth."<sup>11</sup> 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 which is self-luminous. The lamp is fed from the oil of a tree which is neither in the East nor in the West. Iqbāl says that the Qur'ānic 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. Iqbāl 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 manufactured 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 interpretations 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 Iqbāl refuses to accept the naïve 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, Iqbāl says that human thought is discursive 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. Iqbāl 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 Jalāl al-Dīn Dawwānī, 'Irāqī, and Josiah Royce conceived God's knowledge. Iqbāl 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. Iqbāl is not a believer in the correspondence theory of knowledge for which

<sup>10</sup> Qur'ān, lvii, 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, xxiv, 35.



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 which 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 which 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 Iqbāl, 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 Iqbāl God is an infinitely creative genius creating novelties at every moment.

The problem of free-will in man offers no great difficulties to Iqbāl. The difficulties are created by mathematically determined, mechanistic determinism which Iqbāl 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 materialists 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. Iqbāl 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. Iqbāl 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. Omnipotence, 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, Iqbāl 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 wrong-doing. 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. Iqbāl 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 which must be ended because it cannot be mended. God does not create evil; in the words of the Qur'ān, "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. Iqbāl 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. Iqbāl is neither an optimist nor a pessimist of any extreme type; he is a meliorist.

It may be asked if Iqbāl 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. Iqbāl 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." Iqbāl'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 which he believes to be the true meaning of the Qur'ānic version of this legend. He says, "The Qurānic 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 disobedience. 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."<sup>12</sup> 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. Iqbāl 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 Iqbāl 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 Rūmī, the creative evolutionist mystic poet of the seventh/thirteenth century. As Rūmī's religious consciousness was paralleled with intellectual consciousness so was the case with Iqbāl; 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 *élan 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. Rūmī took up the Hellenistic instruments of intellectualism and wielded them to support an outlook that transcended all Hellenism. Iqbāl did the same with the rich heritage of ancient and modern philosophy. Many

<sup>12</sup> Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 35.



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-Shu'arā' Bahār, the great poet-laureate of modern Irān, said of Iqbāl'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 Iqbāl 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 which, 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 which 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 Iqbāl's thoughts and sentiments are expressed within the framework 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 Iqbāl. His *Jāvīd Nāmeḥ*, 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 metaphysics 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 other-worldly. Like the ethical monism of Fichte, his mysticism is dynamic. Long before Bergson came to this conclusion Iqbāl 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 Iqbāl.

### 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 probeest 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.'"<sup>13</sup>

### 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 Ka'bah, 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 ungrateful 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 star-gazer 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 Universal 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."<sup>14</sup>

### The Nature of Life

"The motionless bank of the river said, 'In my long existence I have contemplated 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.'"<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Bāng-i Dara*, Lahore, 1949, p. 28.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150



"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."<sup>16</sup>

"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?"<sup>17</sup>

"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."<sup>18</sup>

"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."<sup>19</sup>

"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."<sup>20</sup>

### 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.'<sup>21</sup>

"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."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

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## Chapter LXXXIII.

### 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.<sup>1</sup> 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 which 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."<sup>2</sup> 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."<sup>3</sup>

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,<sup>4</sup> Tenku 'Umar,<sup>5</sup> Imām Bondjol,<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> For the role of *tariqahs* in general, see H. A. R. Gibb, *An Interpretation of Islamic History*, p. 11; *Muslim World*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, January 1955, p. 130.

<sup>2</sup> Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, Shirkat-i-Qualam, Lahore, p. 407.

<sup>3</sup> *Indonesia Today*, Vol. II, No. 6, Nov.-Dec. 1959, p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> For details, see Vlekke Nusantara, *A History of the East Indian Archipelago*, pp. 1, 265-69, 281.

<sup>5</sup> Nūr Aḥmad Qādri, *Tamaddun-i Indonesia*, Vol. I, pp. 464-68.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 449-52.



Of the modern Islamic reform movements in other countries that of Muḥammad '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-Manār*, *al-'Urwat al-Wuthqa*, *al-Mu'yyad*, *al-Siyāsah*, *al-Liwa*, and *al-'Adl* were smuggled into Indonesia and were widely read. Scholars like Imām Bondjol, H. Jalāl al-Dīn Ṭayyib, Mukhtār Luṭfi, H. H. Amarullah brought back with them modern Islamic ideas current in Islamic lands and particularly those introduced by Muḥammad 'Abduh and Jamāl al-Dīn Afghāni in Cairo. Indian modernist writings were equally welcome and widely read.<sup>7</sup> 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 rehabilitate Islam and combat the contaminating influences of Western impact." The "pesantren" 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 intellectually 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 Muḥammadiyyah founded by Kiaja Ḥāji Aḥmad 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 Buddhist religions and also from the debased Sufi doctrines; a rationalized

<sup>7</sup> 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*.

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 Qur'ān. 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."<sup>8</sup>

## B

### NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN INDONESIA

The degree of religious homogeneity in Indonesia which 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."<sup>9</sup>

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 which 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

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted by M. Eostein, *Statesman's Year Book*, 1937, p. 1176.

the Indonesian population, at least its *élite*, 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."<sup>10</sup>

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 analyzing 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 Movement (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 organizations.

The war led to the loosening of the ties which had formerly bound Indonesia to Europe and consequently Indonesia formed mercantile connections

<sup>10</sup> G. M. Kahin, *op. cit.*



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 convocation 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 food-stuffs 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 Indonesian 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.<sup>11</sup> The national Red and White flag of Indonesia became the symbol of the patriotic liberation movement.<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup> 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;

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<sup>11</sup> Ubani, "On Indonesian Language," *Merdeka*, No. 17, I. S. I., New Delhi, 12th November 1947, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

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."<sup>14</sup>

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 Sidenpuan. 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 propaganda 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 geographical mobility of the people as well as ideas of modern economic organization 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

<sup>14</sup> John Gunther, *Inside Asia*, 1942, p. 349.



in promoting discontent among Indonesian intelligentsia and patriots. In 1341/1922, the Sarekat Islam (S.I.) led by 'Abd al-Mu'iz and H. Salim established close relations with the Indian National Congress and adopted the policy of non-co-operation. The S.I. also sent delegations to the World Islamic Conference at Mecca in 1343/1924 and at Cairo in 1345/1926.<sup>15</sup>

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 Perhimpunan Indonesia (Indonesian Union)<sup>16</sup> 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 coordinate the activities of the member societies. The Indonesian Association in Holland was meanwhile appointed as their advance post for foreign propaganda.

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

<sup>15</sup> 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

<sup>16</sup> G. M. Kahin, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89.

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 which 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 unco-ordinated 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 Conference, 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 Sa'id 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-'Ulamā'.

The S.I. formed a Majlis 'Ulamā'-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 Congress, Partai Islam Indonesia (P.I.I.) was founded in December 1928 at Solo under the presidentship of K. M. Misoho.

The Muslim Union of Indonesia (Parmi) was founded in 1349/1930 in central Sumatra on the initiative of Mukhtār Luṭfi Jalāl al-Dīn Ṭayyib; it was based on Islam and nationalism with the ultimate object of achieving independence for Indonesia.

*The Nahdat al-'Ulamā'.*—The Nahdat al-'Ulamā' (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-'Ulamā'-i Muslimāt or N.U.M.) and a Youth Movement (Ansār) in 1354/1935, under the leadership of Tohir Bokri. Among the most outstanding leaders of the N.U. were Hasjim Asjari, 'Abd al-Wahhāb, Maḥfūz Şiddiq, and Wāhid 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 Wiryo-sojoyo. 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 unemployment, 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 co-ordinate the working of several Indonesian women's associations and promote the interests of the Indonesian women.

*Co-operation and Non-Co-operation 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 which 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 Indonesia 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-government 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 Mansūr. 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."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Sultān Shahriar, *Out of Exile*, Jakarta, 1936, p. 88



The Pusat Tenaga Rakyat 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-'Ulamā' 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-'Ulamā' 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 'Ulamā' refused to lend themselves 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 countrymen. By careful enunciation of his own "ideological synthesis" he succeeded in bringing about a measure of agreement amongst the various groups, particularly 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 freedom."

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 Wediodiningrat were flown to Tarachi 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."<sup>18</sup>

*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."

<sup>18</sup> Letter to the British Foreign Secretary by the Indonesian Association for Independence, quoted by Kaushak, *The Indonesian Question*, Thacker & Company, Bombay.

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 'Ulamā' in order to enable the Japanese to choose those who were willing to co-operate 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 Muḥammadan 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."<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup>

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.

<sup>19</sup> Takdir Alishahban, "The Indonesian Language—By-Product of Nationalism," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. XXII, No. 4, Dec. 1949.

<sup>20</sup> "The Press Under the Japanese," *Merdeka*, 15th May 1947.

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 nation-wide 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."

Sultān 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 which they had never before experienced throughout 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 fire-arms, 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 international 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 co-operate 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.<sup>21</sup> 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 independent 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 everything legally possible to give the nationalist struggle a broader legal scope and at the same time secretly support the revolutionary resistance.

Through two exceptionally skilful 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.<sup>22</sup>

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.

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<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> Hatta, because of his relationship with the underground leaders, had come to be considered dangerous by the Japanese authorities in Java.

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 Agreement, 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 co-operation 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 Conference, 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."<sup>23</sup>

Out of the four years' revolutionary struggle against the Dutch, the Indonesians 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 President. On 29th August, Soekarno replaced the Independence Preparatory Committee 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 constituted 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 Government," 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 Sjahrir responsible to the representative 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

<sup>23</sup> G. M. Kahin, *Major Governments of Asia*, p. 501.



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 Committee. Agreements were worked out ahead of time, and thus collisions between the Presidency and the Working Committee were avoided."<sup>24</sup>

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 Revolutionary Government.

The memories of the Japanese occupation and the revolutionary struggle for final freedom from colonial rule tremendously increased the political consciousness 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.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 508.

(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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## 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.



## Conclusion

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 Baghdād Muslim thought took a new turn in philosophy and scientific inquiry. Philosophy took either the garb of poetry as in Rūmi and Jāmi or that of theosophy as in the School of Ispahān, Mulla Ṣadra, and Mulla Hādi Sabziwāri, 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. Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif 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 Sinā's millenaries and Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī'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; Mas'ūdī's millenary in 1958 in the Aligarh Muslim University, India; al-Ghazālī'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. Ishtiyāq 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, substantial progress can be made within a short period. If one thousand promising 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 Qur'anic 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 which 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 co-operation which 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 which 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 precept. This is truer of the Muslim masses who 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 which 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 themselves 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 scepticism—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 Qur'ān 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 (*ijtihād*) 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 reorientating religious and cultural values in accordance with the requirements of the present age. Iqbāl's English work, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, is a splendid contribution to this reorientation.

In this scientific age, attention is focussed 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 over-all 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 Philosophical Society which was established in 1347/1928, and in Egypt by the Philosophical Society of Egypt of which Muṣṭafa 'Abd al-Rāziq was elected President in 1364/1945. In Iran, the followers of Mulla Ṣadra and Mulla Hādi Sabziwāri 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 countries of the East and the West. The Congress is affiliated to the Fédération Internationale des Sociétés 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,

## Conclusion

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-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*. 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 philosophical 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 Iqbāl, 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 Iqbāl's works shows a reawakening of interest in Islamic thought and a reorientation of our spiritual and religious values. Some of Iqbāl'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-a-days 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 penetrate 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. "Nothingness" may be taken to be a category of thought or imagination but not of reality, and "dread" may lose the significance which 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

## A History of Muslim 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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